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GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV): PERCEPTIONS, PREVALENCE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF USAID FEED THE FUTURE NIGERIA INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE ACTIVITY

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Abstract

The issue of GBV has become rampant in developing countries and attracted the attention of researchers, community leaders, policymakers, and local and international development agencies over the past few years. In view of the prevalence of GBV and its devastating effects which are often worsened by insurgencies and crises, The USAID Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity mainstreamed gender equality training and GBV awareness campaigns into its activities in Northeast Nigeria in an effort to reduce Gender stereotypes and the occurrence of GBV. This study focused on the intervention areas and examined the perceptions, prevalence and implications of GBV in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe states. The study employed survey research design and adopted purposive sampling and snowball strategies in selecting the study locations as well as the respondents (participants). Using proportional method to determine the sample size, the study collected data on 671 respondents/participants. The descriptive analysis shows that 62.12% of the respondents were female, 79.51% were married, over 60% have senior school education qualifications and above, about 74% fell within the ages of 18-45, over 60% have family size between 6 and 20, 45.83% were crop farmers and 64.74% have annual income between ₦100, 000-₦500, 000. More than 90% of the respondents indicated that the USAID/IITA GBV awareness campaign increased their understanding of GBV and their rights to speak out against it, 63% indicated witnessing GBV in either their households or communities, 69% reported rape as the most frequent GBV incidences followed by domestic violence. Lack of education/illiteracy was reported as the number one cause of GBV followed by poverty. The results of the regression analysis showed that age, annual income and educational level of the respondents are more likely to reduce GBV by 0.994 times, 1 time and 0.992 times, respectively while household size, marital status, gender (male) are more likely to increase GBV by 0.935 times, 1.312 times, and 1.371 times. The result further showed that USAID/IITA GBV awareness campaigns have contributed immensely towards reducing the incidence of GBV by improving the understanding of the participants through training. The study therefore recommended that more GBV awareness, education, income generating capacity building and support services should be provided to further reduce the incidence of GBV in Northeast Nigeria.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, Perceptions, Prevalence, Socioeconomic development, Northeast, Nigeria

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Introduction

By international standards of human rights, democracy and rule of law, gender equality is the essential goal of every human society. Gender equality concerns every aspect of human interaction and societal value; therefore, everyone has to be concerned by issues of gender inequality. For the developing countries of the world, gender equality has always seemed elusive, and the norm has been gender inequality. However, in societies where gender equality is relegated to the back burner, and especially in patriarchal societies, chances of gender- based violence become high. Gender based violence is a fundamental human rights violation and it affects not only the victim but the whole society (Gender Matters, 2024). Gender-Based violence (GBV) is a long-standing patriarchal system of dominance and oppression, primarily targeting women and girls. Gender-based violence refers to any, and all types of harm that is/are committed against a person or group of people because of their factual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It is a widespread issue and a serious public health problem that endangers women's health, particularly prevalent in underdeveloped countries around the world (Karl, Afeye & Eric, 2023). Meanwhile, even in the world's wealthiest and most industrialized nations, women are also subjected to fatal beatings by their partners (Karl, Afeye & Eric, 2023).

The incidence of sexual and gender-based violence is becoming increasingly alarming in Nigeria, particularly in the Northeast region, which is ravaged by insurgent groups such as Boko Haram terrorists and the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP), and in the North West region, currently suffering from terror inflicted by herdsmen and bandits (Okolie, 2023). Over the years, women in Nigeria have faced political, social, and economic discrimination. While striving for their social, political, and economic rights, they endure various forms of violence, including rape, physical abuse, verbal abuse, incest, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), denial of food, forced marriage, and child marriage, among others (Mshelia, 2021). Cultural and religious values, along with rapid modernization and westernization, have made gender-based violence (GBV) a common experience for many women in different communities across the country (Husain, 2021). Data from the Nigerian National Population Commission reveals thatNigerian women experience gender-based violence (GBV) from their current husbands at various rates throughout their lifetimes: 19% for emotional violence, 14% for physical violence, and 5% for sexual abuse. Prior to this, a study conducted in Nigeria indicated that GBV prevalence ranged from 31% to 61% for emotional and mental violence, 20% to 31% for sexual violence, and 7% to 31% for physical violence (Airaoje, Msughter, & Obada, 2022; World Bank, 2023).

Stylized Facts about Gender Based Violence in Nigeria

31% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence in Nigeria.

Nearly half of women (43%) get married before their 18th birthday while 1 in 5 girls is married by the age of 15

While the threats of GBV are still high in across Nigeria (National Population Commission, 2018) the following factors increase the risks significantly - displacement, limited access to services and protection, and disrupted livelihoods. The incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) is growing with the activities of the insurgency in the Northeast. It is reported that 1 in 3 - that's about 30% of Nigerian women have experienced physical violence by age 15 (National Population Commission, 2018). Women across the world, regardless of income,

age or education, are subject to physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence. The 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey reported alarming statistics of sexual and gender-based violence in North- East Nigeria (National Population Commission, 2018). The findings of the survey suggested that 31% of women aged 15 to 49 have at least been victims of physical violence while 9% have been victims of sexual violence, 4% percent have experienced sexual violence before age 18. More than half of women (55%) who have experienced physical or sexual violence never sought help to stop the violence; for those who did, women's own families were the most common source of help (73%). Only 1% sought help from doctors or medical personnel, the police, or lawyers. The widespread reluctance to discuss sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are generally attributed to the complexities around its domestic, family, and community context and fear of stigmatization, leading to significant under-reporting. SGBV is exacerbated by rigid sociocultural norms, harmful traditional practices, and weak legal framework for enforcement of gender-related issues (USAID, 2020).

Various government agencies as well as non-government actors have been responding to gender-based violence in varying capacities. The non-governmental organizations have been active in promoting gender integration and providing training on gender-based violence- how to mitigate it, its causes and consequences. The efforts of Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture, funded by USAID is worth mentioning in this regard innortheastern states of Nigeria – Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe. Other NGOs also respond by the creation of sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) and the establishment of forensic laboratory in Adamawa State for forensic evidence gathering in relation to sexual gender-based violence (UN, 2020; UNFPA, 2020).

African society is fundamentally patriarchal, heavily influenced by various religions and customs. Women are viewed as inferior to men and are often considered as property. This mindset has become deeply ingrained in the subconscious of the average African man (Tomi, 2021). Moreover, the effects of conflict especially insurgency in north-eastern states of Nigeria has increased poverty by destroying livelihoods thus increasing the vulnerabilities of women and girls to gender based violence especially those internally displaced in camps. Similarly, Nigeria's cultural practices have not been helpful in addressing the problem of gender-based violence in the country (George & Ndubuisi, 2022). This situation has drawn the interest of the authors to explore the causes, prevalence, effects and implications of gender-based violence in the northern hot zones of insurgency namely Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe states, in relation to the efforts of IITA implemented and USAID funded Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to assess the prevalence and perceptions of gender-based violence (GBV), and to evaluate its implications for economic development in the study area.

The study also aims to examine the effectiveness of existing policies and interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and reducing gender-based violence and to examine the influence of USAID/IITA gender equality and GBV awareness campaign intervention program on the perceptions and prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in the Northeast and implications for socioeconomic development. Despite the preponderance of studies on gender-based violence in various states and regions in Nigeria, few studies have focused their lens on the insurgency hotspots of the Northeast; namely, Adamawa, Borno, Yobe and Gombe states. In fact, no study has specifically examined the role of USAID/IITA gender equality and GBV awareness campaign in the Northeast.

Following this introduction, the paper is structured to capture literature review, where recent and pertinent issues on gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV) are reviewed, methodology, results and findings and finally, conclusion and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender Equality

Gender equality means considering the interests, needs, and priorities of women, men, girls, and boys, while acknowledging the diversity among different groups. It ensures that all individuals can develop their abilities and make choices free from gender stereotypes and prejudices. Gender equality is a fundamental human right and is viewed as both a prerequisite for, and an indicator of sustainable, people-centred development (UNICEF, 2017). Gender equality involves providing equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to all genders, acknowledging their distinct interests, needs, and priorities, and recognizing the diversity among different groups of women and men. It ensures that everyone has equal access to water and sanitation and is not discriminated against in accessing water, sanitation, and hygiene (Heller, 2022). Gender inequalities are present in every country and permeate all aspects of social life, reflecting significant disparities between men and women. Gender equality issues should take the centre stage on international policy formulation because women and girls make up half of the world's population and thus half of its potential. However, gender inequality remains widespread, hindering social progress. Women are still underrepresented in political leadership roles at all levels and around the world, they carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic work (Heller, 2022; UN, 2020).

Although it is worthy of mentioning that international commitments to advance gender equality have led to significant improvements in some area such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) but have decreased in recent years. There is also an increase in women's representation in politics. However, the vision of a world where every woman and girl enjoy full gender equality and all legal, social, and economic barriers to their empowerment have been eliminated remains unfulfilled. In fact, this goal seems even more distant now, as women and girls are disproportionately excluded from socioeconomic positions and benefits. In 2019 for example, women held only 28% of managerial positions globally. There is need to step up efforts to promote gender equality at all levels of government by advocating dialogue to foster partnerships on gender equality. It is important for agencies to develop country assistance strategies and at the activity level during design and implementation with gender equality considerations. Development workers need to engage with partners to discuss how women's needs, benefits, and rights are pertinent to the planned and ongoing development activities, considering the social, economic, and political context. This dialogue should highlight how ensuring equal benefits will enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the activities especially in fragile and developing settings like Nigeria, where culture, traditions, and weakness of institutions as well as insurgency have worsened the gender gap and promoted gender-based violence (UN, 2020; OECD, 2004).

Gender- Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence (or GBV) is a broad term for any act of harm that is committed against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental/emotional suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty (UNFPA, 2020). Gender-based violence can also be defined as any harm inflicted on a person or group due to their actual or perceived

sex, gender, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity. Broadly speaking, Gender based violence can be categorized into five types: sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment), physical violence (such as hitting, slapping, and beating), emotional violence (psychological and verbal abuse), economic violence (restriction of movement and denial of resources), and harmful traditional practices (such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, and so-called “honour” killings) (UNFPA, 2020; Gender Matters, 2024).

Gender-based violence is a widespread global issue, affecting approximately one in three women during their lifetimes. The international community has increasingly recognized the elimination of this violence as a priority. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a specific target to "eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in both public and private spheres"(Klugman, 2017). While government and several non-governmental actors are working towards eliminating gender-based violence in various places around the world, the situation does not seem to be abating in Northeast Nigeria due to cultural, traditional, legal and security frameworks in the region.

Types of Gender Based Violence: There are many forms of gender-based violence, however, five major categories are standard categorization for gender-based violence (GBV).

Physical Violence: Physical violence encompasses actions such as beating, burning, kicking, punching, biting, maiming, killing, and the use of objects or weapons. Some classifications also consider human trafficking and slavery as forms of physical violence because initial coercion is often involved, and the victims frequently endure further violence as a result of their enslavement. Physical violence in intimate relationships, commonly known as domestic violence, remains a widespread issue in every country. Additionally, physical violence in private settings also affects young people. A study, Ogbonna et al., (2014) found that the prevalence of physical violence was significantly higher among rural women than among urban women. This is also one of the most common forms of gender- based violence experienced by women in Northeast Nigeria.

Emotional/ Psychological Violence

Verbal violence can target personal aspects, such as insults (whether in private or in public), ridicule, use of offensive language particularly distressing to the individual, derogatory remarks about loved ones, and threats of other forms of violence against the victim or their loved ones. It can also relate to the victim's background, including their religion, culture, language, perceived sexual orientation, or traditions. Abusers often deliberately target these sensitive areas to inflict emotional pain, humiliation, and fear. All forms of violence have a psychological component, as the primary aim is to harm the integrity and dignity of another person. Additionally, some methods of violence cannot be categorized elsewhere and thus represent psychological violence in its "pure" form. These include isolation or confinement, withholding information, spreading misinformation, and threatening behaviour. A common example in the public sphere is the isolation of young women or men who do not conform to traditional gender roles. Such isolation is often enforced by peer groups, but can also be perpetrated by responsible adults, such as teachers and sports coaches.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment) encompasses engaging in non-consensual vaginal, anal, or oral penetration with another person using any body part or object; engaging in other non-consensual sexual acts with a person; or forcing someone to engage in non-consensual sexual acts with a third person. Marital rape and attempted rape are forms of sexual violence. Examples of coerced sexual activities include

being forced to watch someone masturbate, being forced to masturbate in front of others, forced unsafe sex, sexual harassment, and reproductive-related abuse (e.g., forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, female genital mutilation). In Nigeria, efforts to combat child marriage face difficulties due to the ambiguity surrounding the minimum legal age for marriage, despite the Child Rights Act (CRA) adopted in 2003. There is a correlation between early/ forced marriage and various forms of sexual and physical violence in Nigeria. Child marriage is prevalent in IDP communities in the Northeast. During the 2018 reporting period, 53% of SGBV cases were related to child marriage, with all survivors being girls (Council of Europe 2024). This is the most prevalent form of gender-based violence experienced by women during the covid-19 shut down as reported by Okeke and Obionu (2022), who found that about 50% of women experienced sexual violence in Nigeria in 2020.

Economic violence

Socio-economic deprivation (including restriction of movement and denial of resources) increases a victim's vulnerability to other forms of violence and can even be a catalyst for such violence. Global economic data indicate that one consequence of globalization is the feminization of poverty, meaning women are generally more economically vulnerable than men. However, economic vulnerability also exists on a personal level. It has been widely recognized in many abusive relationships as a distinct issue, which is why it warrants its own category.

Causes of Gender Based Violence

The immediate causes of gender-based violence are straightforward, however, there is an interplay of factors that can cause gender-based violence remotely. The core cause is the deeply ingrained belief in male supremacy which put women and girls at particular risk of discrimination and marginalization, increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence. This risk is further heightened during humanitarian crises, when basic protection mechanisms and social networks are disrupted or non-existent. Gender discrimination leads to an unequal distribution of power between men and women, compounded by socially prescribed gender roles and stereotypes that contribute to the cause, perpetuation, and acceptance of gender-based violence (UNFPA, 2020). According to the Council of Europe (2024), the remote causes of gender-based violence can be traced to the interplay of cultural/traditional factors, economic factors, political and legal factors.

Cultural/Traditional factors

Patriarchal views legitimize violence to maintain male dominance and superiority. Cultural factors contributing to this include gender stereotypes and prejudices, normative expectations of femininity and masculinity, the socialization of gender roles, the perception of the family sphere as private and under male authority. Religious and historical traditions have endorsed the physical punishment of women based on notions of entitlement and ownership. In some societies, traditional norms permit the killing of women suspected of tarnishing the family's honour by engaging in forbidden sexual activities or by marrying and divorcing without family consent, further perpetuating violence against women.

Economic factors

The lack of economic resources makes women especially susceptible to violence, fostering a self-perpetuating cycle of violence and poverty that is difficult to break. Furthermore, when men experience unemployment and poverty, they may turn to violence to assert their masculinity. The breakdown of security and loss of livelihoods, particularly in the crisis-

ridden states of northern Nigeria, contribute to the high incidence of gender-based violence in the region.

Political factors

The general under-representation of women in power and politics results in fewer opportunities for them to influence discussions, effect policy changes, or implement measures to combat gender-based violence and promote equality. As a result, gender-based violence is sometimes considered unimportant, and domestic violence often receives inadequate resources and attention.

Legal factors

In many societies, being a victim of gender-based violence is seen as shameful and a sign of weakness, with women often blamed for attracting violence through their behaviour. This perception partly explains the persistently low levels of reporting and investigation. Until recently, some countries' laws distinguished between public and private spaces, leaving women particularly vulnerable to domestic violence. The Istanbul Convention guarantees the right for everyone, especially women, to live free from violence in both public and private spheres. Although most forms of gender-based violence are criminalized, law enforcement practices particularly in African countries, and accordingly in the study area, are often rigorous and long - suffering, leading to low trust in public authorities and a high number of unreported crimes.

Prevalence and Perceptions of Gender Based Violence in Northern Nigeria

Authorities and scholars widely agree that the true extent of GBV remains unknown, as many incidents involving girls and women go unreported. The reasons for this include fear of the attacker, fear of negative reactions from others, and the belief that authorities will not take the case seriously (Afrobarometer, 2022). Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, faces a significant prevalence of gender-based violence within its institutions. Several reports highlight this issue. Two recent studies indicated that 15% of young females reported forced penetrative acts and 27% experienced attempted rape, while 44% faced unwanted touching. Additionally, a survey in Ondo state, western Nigeria, found that 27% of schoolgirls reported being pressured for sex by their teachers, and 79% experienced sexual harassment from male classmates. These findings predominantly come from institutions in the southern part of the country, with little similar research conducted in the culturally distinct northern regions (Iliyasu, et al., 2011).

UKAID and PERL (2020a) highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated incidents of GBV in Nigeria. They reported a significant rise in rape cases during the first wave of the pandemic, with 717 rape cases documented across Nigeria between January and May 2020. Between March and April 2020, a total of 1,095 GBV cases were reported. Although the lockdown was implemented to curb the spread of the pandemic, it was also seen as a human rights violation due to the restriction of free movement. The lockdown exacerbated GBV cases, raising serious human and national security concerns, which have not been thoroughly examined in most literature (UKAID and PERL, 2020a, as cited by George & Ndubuisi, 2022).

In studies conducted in the crisis hot spots of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe between 2017 and 2018, various forms of gender-based violence were reported. Forced and child marriages accounted for the majority of SGBV cases identified during the reporting period, making up

56%. Both males and females experienced sexual and gender-based violence during this time, though women and girls were disproportionately targeted, comprising 95% of the survivors. Many instances of SGBV against men and boys remained underreported. Cultural taboos and a lack of reporting have hindered a full understanding of the scope of SGBV among males, who continue to suffer the consequences in silence.

Efforts of Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity on Gender Equality and Gender Based Violence in Northeast Nigeria

To promote gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) practices in targeted households and communities, USAID, through Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture, routinely conducts Gender Mainstreaming Training of Trainers (ToT) for selected women, youth, partners, and other stakeholders from the eighteen (18) implementing LGAs in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe States. These regular training sessions include presentations, discussions, group activities, and plenary reviews on key gender topics such as gender concepts, sex and gender perspectives, gender equity and equality, gender roles and stereotypes, and gender-based violence (GBV) including its types, causes, consequences, and mitigation options.

To enhance gender awareness among staff and partners and ensure everyone approaches their work with a clear gender perspective, the gender activities were designed to include quarterly sensitization training sessions on gender equality, women's empowerment, and social inclusion (GEESI) concepts and practices. This initiative is based on the consensus among stakeholders across various sectors that Africa's true transformation begins with gender equity and women's empowerment. The key objectives of these activities are to: sensitize staff and partners on fundamental gender concepts, constraints, and gender mainstreaming techniques in intervention activities; reinforce efforts for gender equality and social inclusion within the Integrated Agriculture Activity interventions across components, target communities, and households in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe States; enhance stakeholders' understanding of the necessity to consistently integrate the interests of women, girls, boys, and men at every stage of the Activity; and deepen gender consciousness among staff and partners, ensuring they all operate with a clear gender lens in the field. Additionally, the training aims to improve understanding of the dynamics between the sexes, their relationships, access to resources and opportunities, activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other.

Following a typical Training of Trainers (ToT) session in 2021, 72 participants (42 from Adamawa, consisting of 20 males and 22 females, and 30 from Borno, consisting of 15 males and 15 females) composed of youth, women, and local stakeholder groups from both states committed to disseminate the training to at least 3,000 people within their communities. Staying true to their commitments, these participants immediately after the training, conducted training sessions in various communities across Adamawa and Borno States, ultimately reaching a total of 2,816 selected representatives of youth, women, and local stakeholder groups across the twelve LGAs involved in the intervention, spreading messages of gender equality.

Accordingly, during the International Women's Day (IWD) 2024 commemorative activities, deliberate efforts were made to spread the gender equality and social inclusion messages to Gombe and Yobe States with specific objectives, including amongst others to take IWD 2024 gender mainstreaming campaign to community gatekeeperswith a view to promoting:A gender equal world, A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination, A world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive, A world where difference is valued and celebrated,

Collective attitude toward gender equality, and Collective action towards conscious efforts at investing in women and girls and inspiring inclusion. These efforts are expected to lead to Improved community awareness on gender equality, empowerment of women and social inclusion (GEESI), Improved women participation and voice in group activities and leadership positions - participation in social networks (cooperatives, associations),Improved access to production knowledge and technologies, Improved access to productive economic resources, and Enhanced understanding of gender norms and stereotypes that shapes how females and males respond to and participate in development activities. The advocacy generally marks a call to action for investments in women and accelerating progress, celebrating women's achievement and bringing attention to issues such as gender equality, gender equity, reproductive rights, and Gender Based Violence (GBV) in all ramifications. The campaign sought to enhance the chances of women and girls having voice in household and community matters and promote women participation in group/cooperative activities thereby improving the window of women's access to productive economic resources.

Gender-Based Violence and its Socio-economic implications

Gender-based violence is closely linked to poverty and overall development. Economic downturns, such as recession, and rising poverty levels can trigger an increase in violence. Additionally, the consequences of gender-based violence—its effects on productivity, health and well-being, and intergenerational transmission—can exacerbate poverty and hinder development, suggesting that there is causation in both directions among these variables. Sexual and gender-based violence hinder the progress and socio-economic development of women by restricting their ability to pursue and achieve their life goals (Okolie, 2023; Irish Joint Consortium, 2019).

Women's low economic status and poverty, both within and outside marriage or intimate relationships, significantly contribute to the persistence of violence against them. This violence, in turn, impacts socio-economic development. Being a victim of intimate partner violence (IPV), especially over an extended period, can hinder women from securing and retaining employment due to their own poor health or that of their dependents. Common physical health issues or injuries experienced by female victims include cuts, bruises, broken bones, internal bleeding, and head trauma, as well as scratches and bruises that often necessitate time off work for medical visits or recovery at home. Domestic violence frequently prevents victims from attending paid employment, negatively affecting their earnings. As a direct result of the assault, victims' incomes can decrease by 35%, impacting household resources and their allocation (Ugowe, 2022). The high costs of violence against women also have a ripple effect on those who provide financial assistance to cover these costs. Gender based violence, and in particular domestic violence can affect women's career development. Gender based violence sabotages women's effort to gain employment, acquire job skills and education thus limiting their economic opportunities and making them dependent on men – which in itself increases the risk of domestic violence against women (Olojede, Ibukunoluwa & Qazeem, 2020). This is a very common phenomenon in the northeastern states of Nigeria, where oppression and dominance of women are worsened by culture, religion and the insurgency affecting some states in the region.

Role of Government in Gender Equality and GBV

Recently, there have been various laudable efforts by the governments using legal framework and policy guidelines to further enshrine gender equality in Nigeria, and to criminalize gender-based violence. More governments at the national level around the globe

are implementing laws that criminalize gender-based violence, while many countries are integrating considerations of gender-based violence into their national development agendas. Local interventions are crucial for effecting tangible change. Community-level efforts encompass providing support services for survivors of violence to help them rebuild their lives, reforming laws to combat impunity, conducting training programs for law enforcement, judicial, and medical personnel to enhance the implementation of relevant laws and policies, and raising awareness to challenge gender norms within communities and institutions (Irish Joint Consortium, 2019). On the part of the Nigerian government, The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MWASD), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE), oversees education and gender awareness training in both formal and informal educational settings on gender equality and gender-based violence. Additionally, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is tasked with providing legal support services for survivors of SGBV and their families (USAID, 2020).

The federal government of Nigeria has ratified several international laws and conventions to combat the historical discrimination and marginalization of women and girls, including gender-based violence (GBV) (al-Kyari et al., 2018; as reported by World Bank, 2019). Notable examples include: (1) the Child Rights Act of 2003, which offers comprehensive protection for girls up to the age of 18, aims to eliminate forced labour and child marriages, and ensures health services for pregnant women; (2) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified in June 1985; (3) the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), ratified on December 16, 2004; and (4) the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, which was finally enacted in 2015, over a decade after its initial presentation to the national assembly (World Bank, 2019).

However, many women and children, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, are completely unaware of the laws and policies designed to protect them. Although there is a national GBV referral pathway, key stakeholders have not been educated or mobilized to utilize it. Additionally, the directory within the national referral protocol is outdated, with most contacts either unavailable or having transferred to other ministries. Despite these challenges, the institutional and legal context has seen improvements. Some states have created special units within police stations specifically to address issues of gender-based violence, yielding encouraging results so far. The advocacies by government and non-government actors especially in the insurgency affected areas of the northeast have been helpful in addressing and increasing the reportage and prosecutions of gender-based violence cases. However, much is yet to be achieved to attain a society where there is no gender-based violence and there is laudable gender equality.

Role of Non-Government Actors in gender equality and gender-based violence in Nigeria

In the past decade, the Northeastern region of Nigeria has experienced continuous armed attacks, leading to a significant rise in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the area. It is estimated that there were averagely more than 2 million IDPs in the Northeastern region, residing either in camps or host communities. The upheaval in the socioeconomic conditions of women in this region puts them at heightened risk of various forms of abuse and sexual gender-based violence from insurgents, security personnel deployed to safeguard the communities, and other members of the community in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe states (USAID, 2020).

The USAID for instance is one international organization that has fronted several initiatives to enhance GBV response mechanisms, assist communities in transforming discriminatory gender and social norms that continue to subordinate women and make them vulnerable, and uphold and defend women's health and human rights in Northeast Nigeria and indeed in Nigeria as a whole. They have amplified women's voices and agency while reducing their vulnerability to gender-based violence. GBV is fuelled by structural inequalities and imbalanced power dynamics that keep women subordinate due to restricted access to education, employment, finances, healthcare, and opportunities to contribute to their family, community, and the nation's economic growth (USAID, 2021).

Review of Empirical Studies

A number of studies have been conducted on the perceptions, causes, and effectsof gender-based violence in Nigeria. A number of these studies have been reviewed in this section. Some of the studies reviewed include Chidi et al., (2023), Iliyasu et al., (2011), Oladepo, Yusuf and Arulogun (2011), Olayanju et al., (2016), Husain (2021), Chime et al., (2022) among others.

Chidi et al., (2023) investigated the perceptions and contributing factors of gender-based violence (GBV) among young adults in southern Nigeria using mixed methods expository study. The study was conducted to determine the socio-demographic variables of young adults and to identify factors that influence GBV among youth. A sample size of 384 was drawn from a population of 1,135,776 for the study area and found that 24.9% of the respondents perceive gender-based violence as normal experiences, and that it should be a secret experience in the opinion of 23.7% of the respondents in the study area. In a similar investigation, Iliyasu et al., (2011) examined the prevalence and causes of gender-based violence among female university students in Northern Nigeria. The study found that 50.2% of the respondents attributed gender-based violence to immodest dressing, while about 38.5% attribute it to exchanges for academic and financial favours.

Oladepo, Yusuf and Arulogun (2011) also investigated the factors influencing gender-based violence among men and women in selected states in Nigeria. The study found that female respondents who had partners that smoked cigarettes were 2 times more likely to experience gender-based violence, and that married female respondents were 1.71 times more likely to experience physical violence than single respondents. In another study, Olayanju et al., (2016) conducted a study on the magnitude, likely risk factors on gender-based violence and specifically, attitudes towards intimate partner violence (IPV) against women in Nigeria. A sample size of 719 women was drawn from Kwara state. The study found that life-time and current prevalence of IPV are 25.5% and 16.7%, respectively and that psychological abuse was the dominant form of intimate partner violence. The study also found that the predictors of violence show that factors such as women’s and partners’ educational attainments, partnership age and educational disparities, partnership discord, among others, are predictive of violence.

Ogbonna et al., (2014) also conducted a comparative study of domestic violence against women in urban areas and rural areas of southeast Nigeria. The study found that the prevalence of physical violence was significantly higher among rural women than among urban women (37.2% versus 3.5%; P=0.05). In contrast, rural and urban women did not differ significantly in the proportions that had experienced psychological or sexual violence. In another study using sociological analysis, Husain (2021) carried out a study to identify and examine the most prevalent forms of GBV in Nigeria; and to evaluate Nigerian legal framework on GBV. The study identified various forms of violence against women which

include beating, rape, humiliation, verbal abuse, widowhood practices, early marriage, sexual harassment and female genital mutilation. Consequences of the acts as identified in the study include depression, suicide, murder, sexually transmitted diseases, and physical injuries.

In another investigation, Chime et al (2022) conducted a study to determine the prevalence and patterns of GBV among victims presenting in a tertiary health facility in South-East Nigeria during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was conducted retrospectively using a sample of 710 victim's secondary data of GBV who received medical care at a facility between 2018 -2020. The secondary data were analysed descriptively, and the study found that 56.8% of the GBV cases had been sexually abused. The pattern of GBV over the three years period under study revealed an increase in proportion for both sexual and physical/emotional violence, with a peak in 2019 and a reduction of cases in 2020. Persons below 19 years of age were 23 times more likely to experience sexual violence, than those between 40-59 years of age.

George and Ndubuisi (2022) studied COVID- 19 pandemic and gender-based violence, a threat to human security. The study was conducted to examine the prevalence of cases of gender-based violence in Nigeria during COVID 19 period and the threat it poses to human security. The study was conducted using mixed research methods in Nigeria, deploying the use of questionnaires and interviews for which 136 respondents participated from 22 states and the FCT. The study found that the incidence of gender-based violence has increased during the COVID- 19 lockdown as 81.6% of the respondents agreed that GBV increased during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

Agbaje et al., (2022) investigated workplace gender-based violence and associated factors among university women in Enugu, southeast Nigeria: an institutional-based cross-sectional study. The study was conducted to examine the prevalence of GBV (workplace incivility, bullying, sexual harassment), and associated factors among Nigerian university women. A sample of 339 female staff of public and private universities in Enugu, Southeast were sampled in the study. The study found that the prevalence of GBV is high as the prevalence of workplace incivility, bullying, and sexual harassment (SH) was 63.8%, 53.5%, and 40.5%. In another study, Adinma et al., (2019) investigated the experience and perceptions of gender-based violence (GBV) by pregnant women in Southeastern Nigeria. A sample of 250 pregnant women was drawn from six health facilities in Anambra state, southeastern Nigeria. The study found among others that physical violence was the most commonly experienced form of gender-based violence in southeastern Nigeria among pregnant women represented by (58.1%) of the respondents, while marital quarrel and drunkenness were the most commonly perceived causes represented by (26.3%) of responses. About 33.7% of the respondents opined that they would report GBV to the law enforcement agencies; 22.5% would seek medical attention and only 2.5% would do nothing.

Okeke and Obionu (2022) also investigated the Effect of Covid-19 lockdown on women and girls in Nigeria: Experiences of gender-based violence, insecurity and wellbeing. The study was conducted to examine the perception of women and girls on gender-based violence, and insecurity due to COVID -19 lockdown in 2020. The study found that during the COVID-19 lockdown, respondents experienced physical 74 (30.8%), sexual 120 (50%), and emotional violence 46 (19.2%). Although various forms of insecurity were experienced among the respondents, the most common form experienced was financial insecurity 960 (77%). In a similar study, Uyanne (2021) also investigated the forms, causes and consequences of gender-based violence among in-school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis. A sample of 20 students each was drawn using simple random sampling techniques, from 10 schools in Ilorin metropolis totalling 200 respondents. The study adopted the use of descriptive analysis for

data management. The result revealed a significant difference in the violence against male and female in-school adolescents. Females were shown to be more physically and sexually harassed as well as marginalized when compared to their male counterparts.

Esere, Idowu and Omotosho (2014) also investigated gender-based domestic violence against children: experiences of girl children in Nigeria. The study drew a sample of 20 girl children aged 12 -15, who were living in two villages. The study employed descriptive analysis and found that physical violence was reported by 90% of the participants; psychological abuse by 80% and violent sexual abuse (rape) by 10%. The study also found that the following factors were attributed to domestic violence to girl children - inability to finish selling wares that were being hawked, late preparation of food, getting home late from the market, burning of the employer's cloth while ironing, refusal to be genitally cut and refusal to be raped by the man of the house. Self-reported consequences of domestic violence by victims included amongst others: constant headaches (30%) physical injury (25%), sleep disturbances (20%), excessive fear and anxiety (10%), hatred for men (10%) and suicidal ideation (5%). In another study, Odimegwu, Okemgbu and Ayilaa (2010) investigated the dynamics of gender-based violence among the Tivs of North Central Nigeria. The study was conducted to examine the experiences and perception of women towards gender-based violence in the study area. The study drew a sample of 650 women randomly from Gboko and Gwer communities in Benue State. The study employed the use of descriptive analysis and logistics regression for analysis. The study found that there is no consistent association between socioeconomic and demographic variables and types of gender-based violence perpetrated in the study area.

In another study conducted in Lagos state, Olojede et al., (2020) investigated gender-based violence and socioeconomic development in Lagos state, Nigeria. The study was conducted to evaluate the relationship between domestic violence and career advancement of women in Lagos and to examine the influence of early/child marriage on poverty reduction in Lagos state. The study employed the use of Pearson Correlation Coefficient for analysis, and the study found that domestic violence has affected career advancement of women in Lagos state. The study also found that child/early marriage which usually involves sexual violence has contributed to poverty in Lagos state.

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory

This perspective is one of the most prevalent in the literature on marital violence, and by extension, gender-based violence. Often referred to as the "cycle of violence" or "intergenerational transmission theory" in the context of family dynamics, it posits that individuals tend to replicate behaviours they were exposed to during childhood. Social (or Observational) Learning Theory posits that individuals can acquire new behaviours by observing others. While earlier learning theories focused on how people respond to environmental stimuli, such as rewards or punishments, social learning highlights the reciprocal relationship between the social characteristics of the environment and individual perceptions. It also considers how motivated and capable a person is to replicate observed behaviours. People both influence and are influenced by their surroundings (Bandura, 1977; Wanjiru, 2021).

The principles of social learning can be applied to nearly any social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) program aimed at influencing social behaviours, especially those that are complex or involve interactions with others. These principles are particularly

effective when a behaviour is difficult to describe but can be demonstrated or modelled. When adopting or practicing a behaviour involves overcoming barriers or challenges, social learning can illustrate how to successfully navigate these obstacles (Wanjiru, (2021). Additionally, since people often adopt behaviours they observe in others, social learning can alter perceptions of the social environment, making behaviours appear more common and providing social support for those contemplating a behaviour change (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

The social learning theory is adopted in this study as a theoretical underpinning because its basis is intimate partner violence and by extension gender-based violence. Perpetrators of gender-based violence must have learned from older men when they were younger as the theory suggests. And the reluctance from women to report any form of gender- based violence must have also been learned from older women perhaps in family settings. The behavioural change theory has to be applied to change the phenomenon of gender-based violence, and this will require some time for enlightenment and advocacy to various group to change the negative phenomenon.

METHODOLOGY

Description of Study Area

This study was conducted in four (4) of the six (6) States of Northeast Nigeria. The Northeast Nigeria, comprising six states—Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe—is a region known for its diverse landscape, ranging from the arid zone in the north to the more fertile plains in the south. The region shares borders with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, which has influenced cross-border trade and cultural exchanges.The population of Northeast Nigeria is estimated to be over 26 million people, with a significant proportion living in rural areas (Source). The region has been severely affected by insecurity, particularly due to the Boko Haram insurgency, which has led to widespread displacement, loss of lives, and destruction of infrastructure.

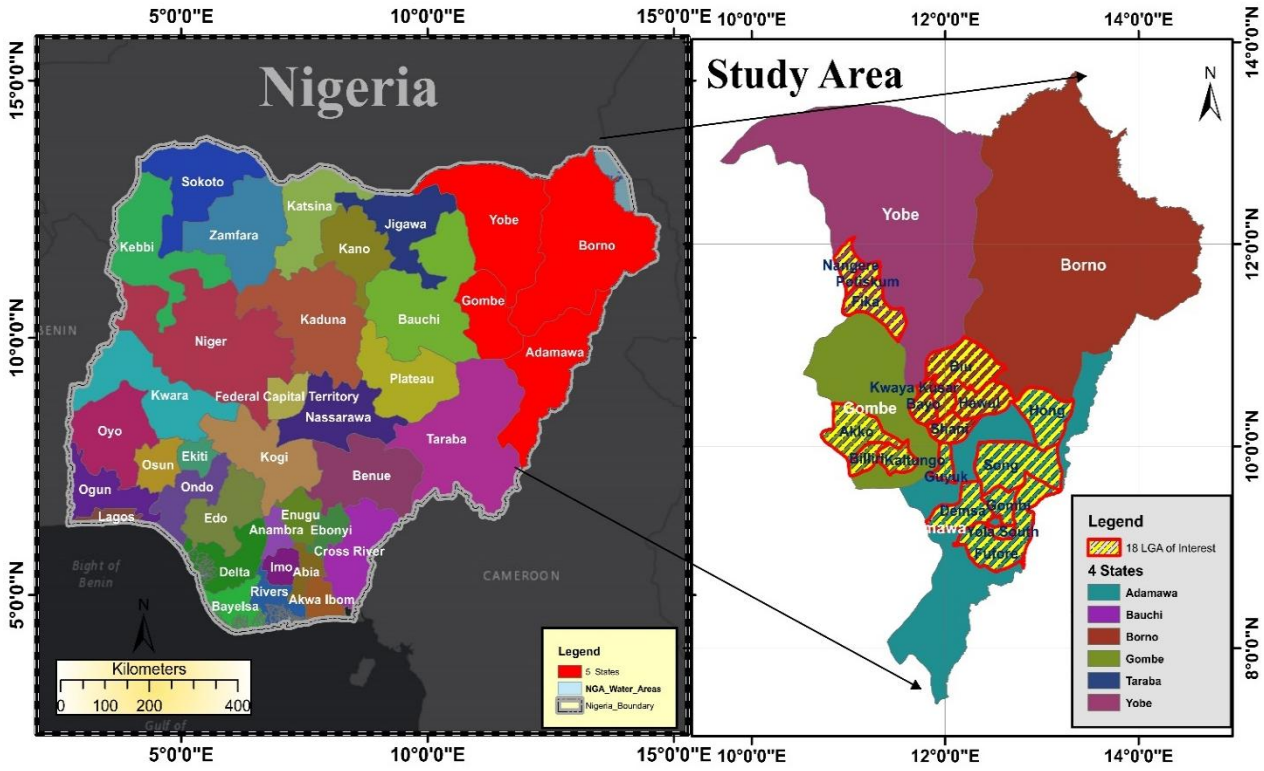


Figure 3.1: A Map Indicating the Study Area

Economically, the region is one of the poorest in Nigeria, with high levels of unemployment and poverty. Agriculture is the primary economic activity, with many residents engaged in farming, livestock rearing, and fishing. However, the ongoing conflict has disrupted these activities, leading to food insecurity and a decline in economic output.

The link between gender equality and GBV is evident in the region, where deeply rooted patriarchal norms and the ongoing conflict have intensified the prevalence of GBV. Women and girls are frequently subjected to various forms of violence, including sexual violence, domestic abuse, and forced marriages. These acts of violence not only violate the rights of women and girls but also perpetuate their economic and social marginalization, creating a vicious cycle that hinders progress toward gender equality.

Sampling Strategy and Sample Size

This study employs purposive and snowball sampling strategy to arrive at the beneficiaries of the USAID/IITA GBV awareness campaign in the study states of Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe. This method was considered the most appropriate because the study target population is the entire participantsof the GBV awareness campaign and other related interventions by the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity. This comprises of about 8,886 individuals across 18 local government areas of the four intervention states. To determine the appropriate sample size for the study, proportional method was adopted where samples were drawn from each LGA proportional to the number of the participating beneficiaries.

Table 3.1: Sampling Frame for Sample Size

	Adamawa	Borno	Gombe	Yobe	Total
Population	4,451	3,535	450	450	8,886
Sample (8% of the total population)	356.08	282.8	36	36	711

Source: Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity (2024).

Model Specification

Model specification is essential in regression analysis and this study attempts to identify the important socioeconomic factors influencing GBV in the Northeast Nigeria as well as the effect of the GBV awareness campaign on the likelihood of occurrence of GBV incidences. In line with these, the following general logit model has been specified to estimate the socioeconomic factors influencing GBV and the effect of USAID/IITA GBV awareness campaign.

$$f(\varphi) = \frac{1}{1+e^{-\varphi}} \quad (1)$$

with $0 \leq f(\varphi) \leq 1$, where φ is a linear function of the regressors such that:

$$\varphi = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 \pm \cdots + \beta_k X_k \quad (2)$$

Therefore, the logistic regression can assume the following form:

$$g(X) = \frac{1}{1+e^{-(\beta_0+\beta_1 X_1+\beta_2 X_2+\beta_3 X_3+\beta_4 X_4 \pm \cdots +\beta_k X_k)}} \quad (3)$$

where $0 \leq g(X) \leq 1$, Hence, the probability that the event (GBV in this case) will occur is given by:

$$p = \frac{1}{1+e^{-(\beta_0+\beta_1 X_1+\beta_2 X_2+\beta_3 X_3+\beta_4 X_4 \pm \cdots +\beta_k X_k)}} \quad (4)$$

The probability that the event (GBV) will not occur is given by

$$1-p = 1 - \frac{1}{1+e^{-(\beta_0+\beta_1 X_1+\beta_2 X_2+\beta_3 X_3+\beta_4 X_4 \pm \cdots \mp \beta_k X_k)}} \quad (5)$$

Dividing equation 4 by equation 5 we get:

$$\frac{p}{1-p} = e^{\beta_0+\beta_1 X_1+\beta_2 X_2+\beta_3 X_3+\beta_4 X_4 \pm \cdots +\beta_k X_k} \quad (6)$$

Taking the logs of both sides of equation, we have the following:

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \ln\left(e^{\beta_0+\beta_1 X_1+\beta_2 X_2+\beta_3 X_3+\beta_4 X_4 \pm \cdots +\beta_k X_k}\right) \quad (7)$$

The final general logit model for this study is given as:

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \cdots + \beta_k X_k \quad (8)$$

From equation (8), we have:

p = probability of GBV occurring

1-p = probability of GBV not occurring

For the estimation of socioeconomic factors influencing GBV,

X_1 to X_k = socioeconomic factors (average age, average household size, annual income, marital status, educational level, gender).

On the other hand, for the effect of USAID/IITA GBV awareness campaign on the likelihood of GBV occurrence,

X_1 to X_k = USAID/IITA awareness campaign (USAID/IITA improve understanding of beneficiaries' rights regarding GBV, USAID/IITA GBV campaign empowered beneficiaries to speak out against GBV, USAID/IITA campaign helps reduce GBV)

Method of Data Analysis

This study employs both descriptive and inferential methods of data analysis. The descriptive method that has been adopted consists of frequency table and charts where the data collected have been adequately summarized and reported. The inferential method used consists of Logit regression method which was used to estimate the socioeconomic factors influencing GBV and the effect of USAID/IITA GBV awareness campaign on the likelihood of GBV occurrence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides the analysis of the results based on the survey data collected from the respondents/participants of the USAID/IITA GBV awareness campaign program. The study collected data on the total of 671participantsacross the four states in Northeast Nigeria providing about 95% return from the field based on the 711 total sample size and the availability of the beneficiaries at the time of data collection.

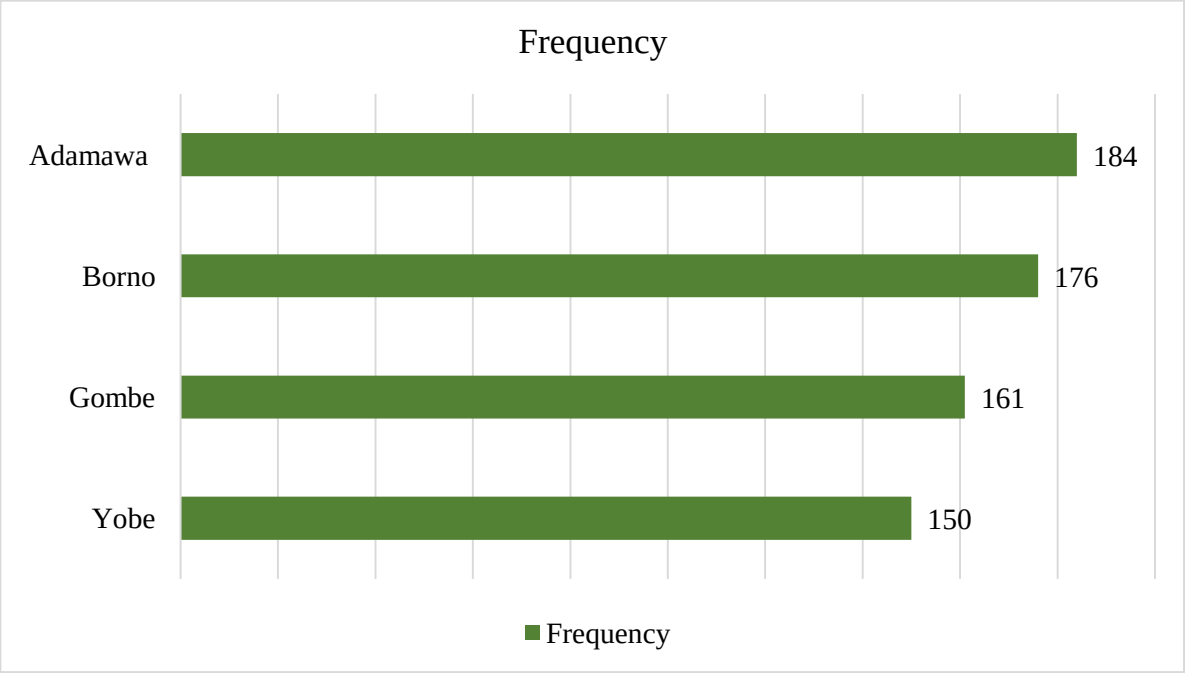


Figure 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by the State of USAID/IITA GBV Campaign Intervention Activities in Northeast Nigeria

The GBV awareness campaign was conducted in all the intervention local government areas (LGAs) in each of the states, with seven LGAs in Adamawa, five LGAs in Borno, and three LGAs each from Gombe and Yobe States providing a total number of eighteen LGAs in the four states of Northeast. As presented in figure 4.1, Adamawa state, having the largest number of interventions LGAs has a total sample of 184, followed by Borno state (176), Gombe state (161) and Yobe state (150).

Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents/Participants

The result (see appendix 1) provides a summary of the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents/participants of USAID/IITA GBV campaign program in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe states. The data show that 410 out 660, representing 62% of the total were female while the remaining 38% are male. This indicates the dominance of women participants in the campaign program and these women formed the most crucial target group considering their vulnerability in the GBV situations. In terms of marital status, almost 80% of the respondents were married while 15% were single. Widowed/widower, divorced and separated constituted just about 5% of the respondents.

The educational status of the respondents indicates that majority of them are educated (35.96% for senior secondary school and 26.71 attended tertiary institutions) representing about 62.67% cumulatively graduated from senior secondary school and tertiary institutions. The age distribution of the respondents also provides a diverse range of age brackets with over 75% cumulatively falling between the age bracket of 18-45 with the average age of 38 years suggesting an active population and a good representation for the GBV campaign. In terms of household size, the respondents had moderate to large family size. The data show that 35.56% have household size between 1-5, while 39.84% have between 6-10 household sizes. Furthermore, 16.35% of the respondents have 11-15 household size while about 8.26% of the respondents have more than 16 household size. These large household sizes mean more family responsibilities in terms of feeding, shelter, education, health care among others. The respondents were distributed across different occupations with 45.83% taking crop farming as the main occupation, 31.71% taking trader/business as the main occupation and livestock farming constitute 17.45% of the respondents while only 5.01% were civil servants who take civil service as the main occupation. The distribution of the respondents by their estimated annual income shows that 64.74% earn between ₦100, 000 and ₦500, 000 while 20% earn between ₦600, 000 and ₦1, 000, 000 per annum. Only a small percentage representing just about 15.26% of the respondents were reported earning above ₦1, 000,000 annually. Compared with the household sizes of the respondents, these earnings may not be adequate to cater for their household responsibilities, suggesting the prevalence of high-level rural poverty in the region.

Effect of USAID/IITA Gender Equality and GBV Awareness Campaign

The study analyses the distribution of the respondents/participants by their perceptions about the effect of USAID/IITA gender equality and GBV awareness campaign on their understanding of GBV. The data (see result in appendix 2) provide an insight into the understanding of theparticipantsof their rights regarding GBV and how the GBV awareness campaign affected the incidence of GBV in their communities and by extension Northeast Nigeria. The result shows that 95.32 constituting 632 out of 663 respondents indicate that the campaign program helped them understand their rights on issues related to GBV. These statistics demonstrate a significant achievement and success regarding the overall objective of the GBV awareness campaign by the USAID/IITA. Majority of the respondents, representing 57.22% rate the understanding of their rights regarding GBV as good and very good while 40.51% rate their understanding as average. Because of the awareness campaign, majority of the participants/respondents representing 93.82% have been empowered to speak against and report incidence of GBV in their communities with over 90% rating their courage and confidence to speak out against the GBV from average to very good. Moreover, over 80% of the participants/respondents believe that USAID/IITA awareness campaign has led to reduction in incidences of GBV in their communities.

Incidence of Gender Based Violence in Northeast Nigeria

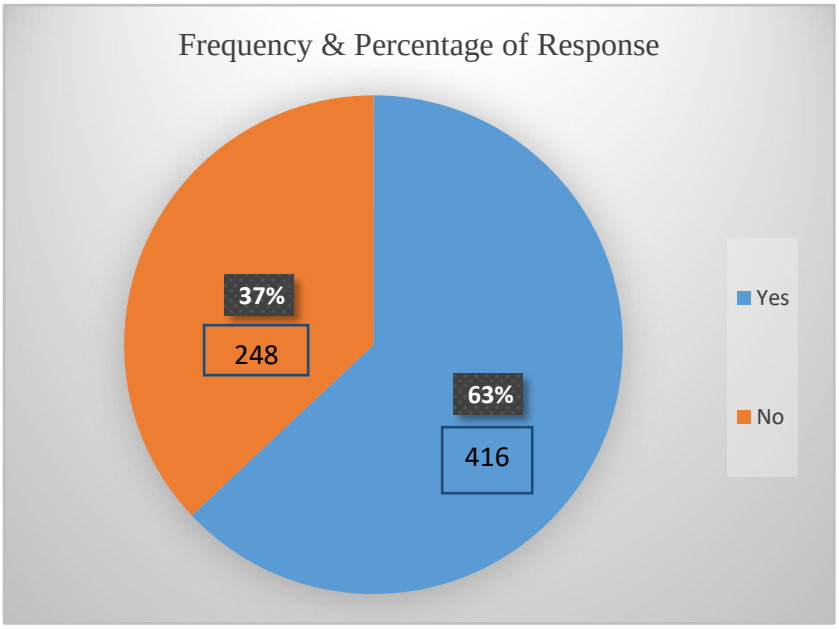


Figure 4.2: Incidence of gender-based violence in a household or neighbourhood of Respondent

Figure 4.2 provides an analysis of the perceptions of the participants of USAID/IITA GBV campaign program regarding the occurrence of GBV in either their households or neighbourhoods. The result of the survey shows that 63 percent of the respondents (416 out of 664 respondents who answered this question) confirm the incidence of GBV around them (household or neighbourhood) as indicated by 'Yes'. However, 37 percent indicates GBV does not occur in their community. The fact that majority of the respondents affirm to the GBV incidence in their community indicates the increased awareness as well as the need for further intervention to curtail the menace.

Common Types of Gender-Based Violence in Northeast Nigeria

The common types ofgender-based violence have been identified by asking respondents about the most commonly experienced GBV in their communities. The result of the findings is shown in figure 4.3.

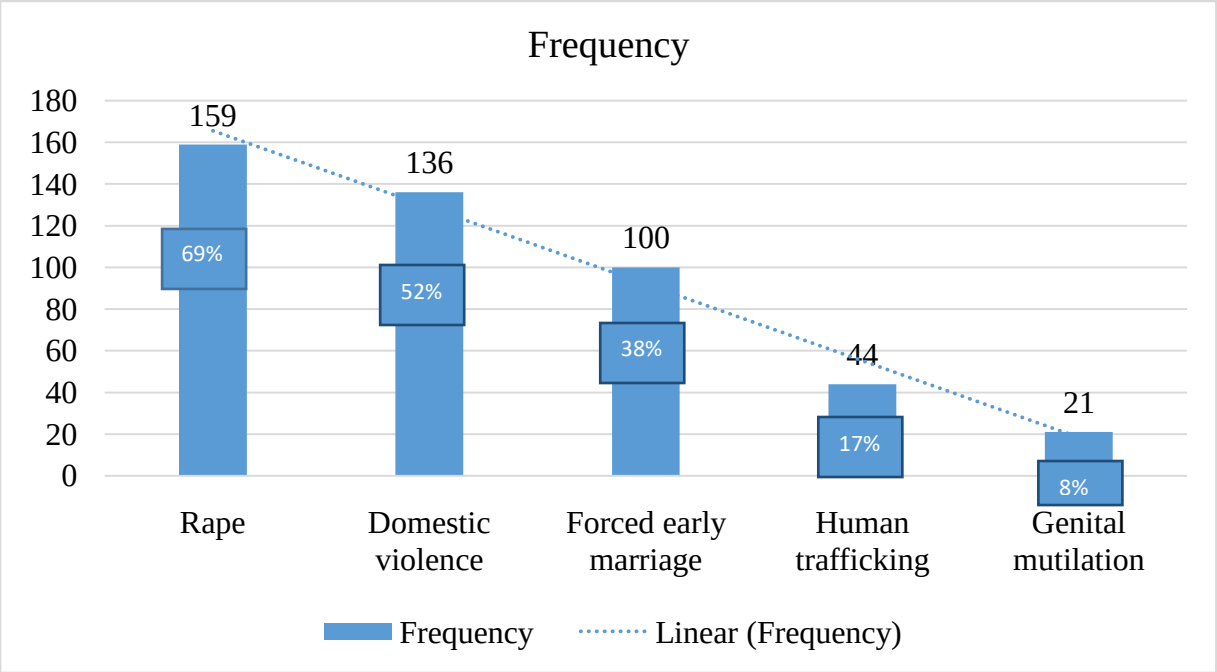


Figure 4.3: Common Types of Gender-Based Violence in Northeast Nigeria

The respondents were asked to indicate the most common types of GBV incidence in their communities and the responses are shown in figure 4.3 above. As can be seen, 69% of respondents mentioned rape as the number one and most occurring type of GBV in their communities. Domestic violence is the second prevalent type of GBV followed by forced early marriage. The result of this survey is consistent with many previous findings regarding the most common types of GBV especially in developing African nations. The result also shows that 17% of the respondents indicated human trafficking as another type of GBV found in their communities. Furthermore, 8% of the respondents indicated genital mutilation as the GBV found in their communities and this may be connected to cultural norms which need to be taken into account when addressing the issue of GBV in the study locations.

Common Causes of GBV in Northeast Nigeria

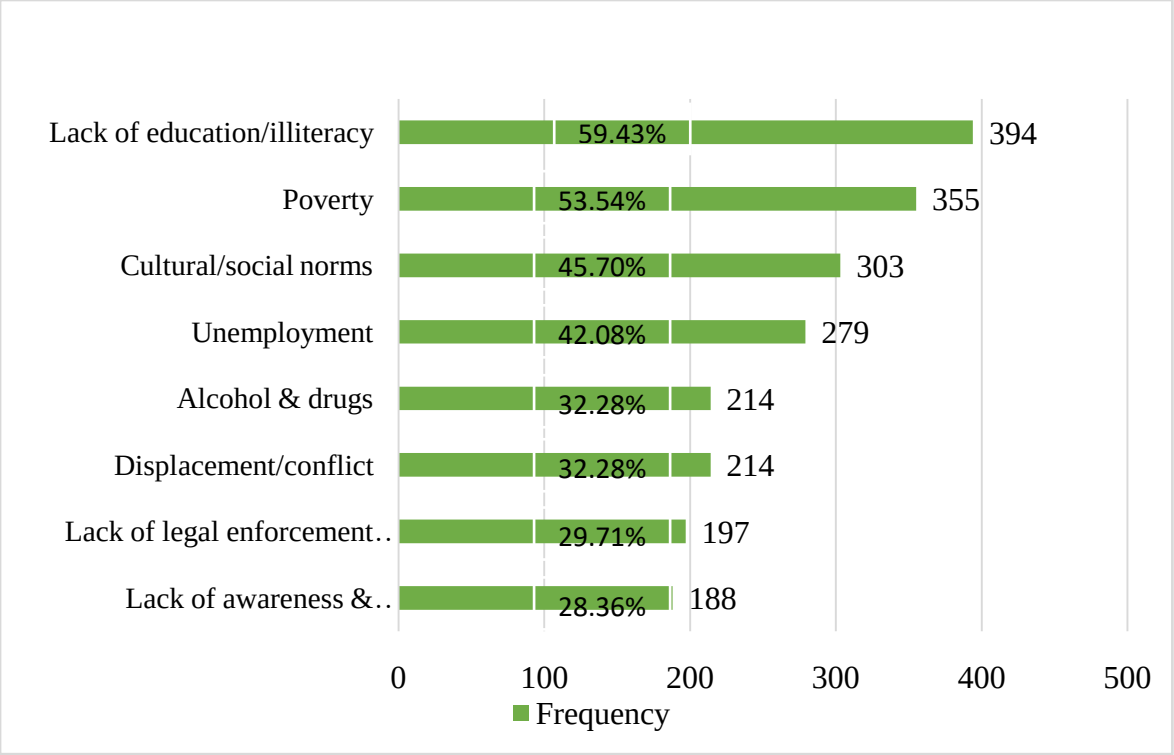


Figure 4.4: Percentage & Frequency of Responses on the Perceived Causes of GBV in Northeast Nigeria

The study identifies the common causes of GBV in northeast Nigeria resulting from their knowledge and experience during the USAID/IITA GBV campaign in the intervention states. Majority of the participantsrespondents (representing 59.43% of those who responded to this question) have identified lack of education/illiteracy as the top factor responsible for GBV in their communities. The second most prominent cause of GBV as identified by 53.54% of the respondents is poverty. This second factor is also very critical especially in the region devastated by insurgency where the means of livelihoods is mostly and severely affected. Cultural/social norms appear as the third prominent factor causing GBV in the study locations as shown by 45.70% of respondents. In the region, society assigns certain gender roles and/ or stereotypes to women and men which create disequilibrium within the household, predisposing some members, particularly female members to GBV arising from perceived inadequacies.

Unemployment is another factor identified by 42.08% of the respondents. This factor is also a common determinant of social vices in most communities across the developing countries with substantial implications for GBV in the conflict affected northeast region of Nigeria where significant percentage of youth are not economically engaged. Closely following this factor is alcohol and drugs which about 32.28% of respondents have identified as one of the factors causing GBV in their communities. The respondents also identified conflict and displacement as factors responsible for GBV. The insurgency-induced conflict in northeast Nigeria has led to the displacement of millions of individuals and households over the years and the victims have been faced with different kinds of GBV in different settings such as in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps among others. Similarly, 29.71% of the respondents have identified and expressed worries that lack of legal enforcement and protection is also a factor causing GBV in their communities. They expressed disappointment

that some victims of the GBV were not adequately protected, and the perpetrators usually do not get the right legal punishment for their offences. This encourages the perpetration of GBV in the society. The last but also important factor is lack of awareness and education about the GBV among community members as identified by 28.36% of the respondents. This is very crucial because adequate awareness and education about GBV is a good step towards addressing the issue. This informs the USAID/IITA awareness campaign program on gender equality and GBV in the intervention states in Northeast Nigeria to create awareness among the communities as an effort towards addressing the GBV problem.

Experience and Reporting of GBV by the Respondents

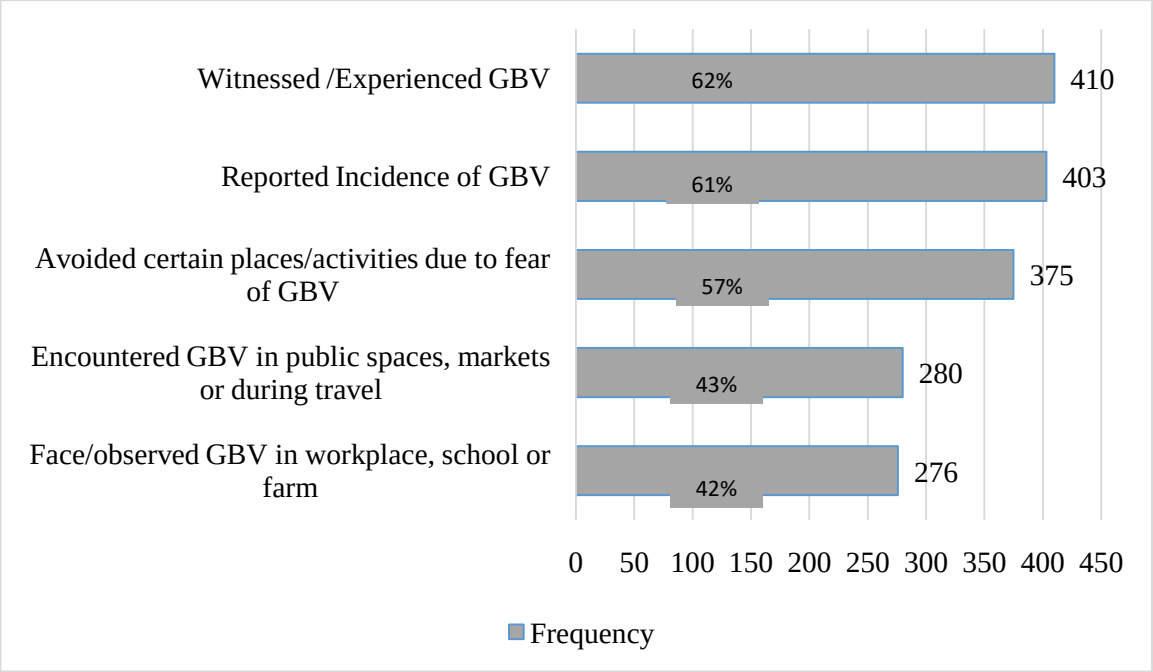


Figure 4.5: Frequency & Percentage respondents' Experience and Reporting of GBV

Figure 4.5 shows the distribution of respondents/participantswho have either witnessed or experienced the incidence of GBV. It provides an insight into the perceptions of the effect of GBV on the respondents or the communities. As could be observed, the figure shows that 410 out of 662 respondents, representing 62% of the total either witnessed or experienced the incidence of GBV in their communities. The good news is that 61% of the total respondents indicated to have reported the incidence of GBV whenever it is witnessed or experienced. This underscores the understanding of their rights and how GBV issue can adequately be addressed. The perceived effect of the GBV as reported by the respondents is so much that 57% of them indicated that they avoid certain places or activities because of fear of GBV. Furthermore, 43% showed that they encounter GBV in public spaces, markets, or during travel while 42% indicated that they face or observe GBV in workplace, school or farm. These statistics provide a worrisome situation regarding GBV in northeast Nigeria signifying the need for immediate and substantial intervention in order to further mitigate the issues surrounding the phenomenon.

The Need for Further Intervention on GBV in Northeast Nigeria

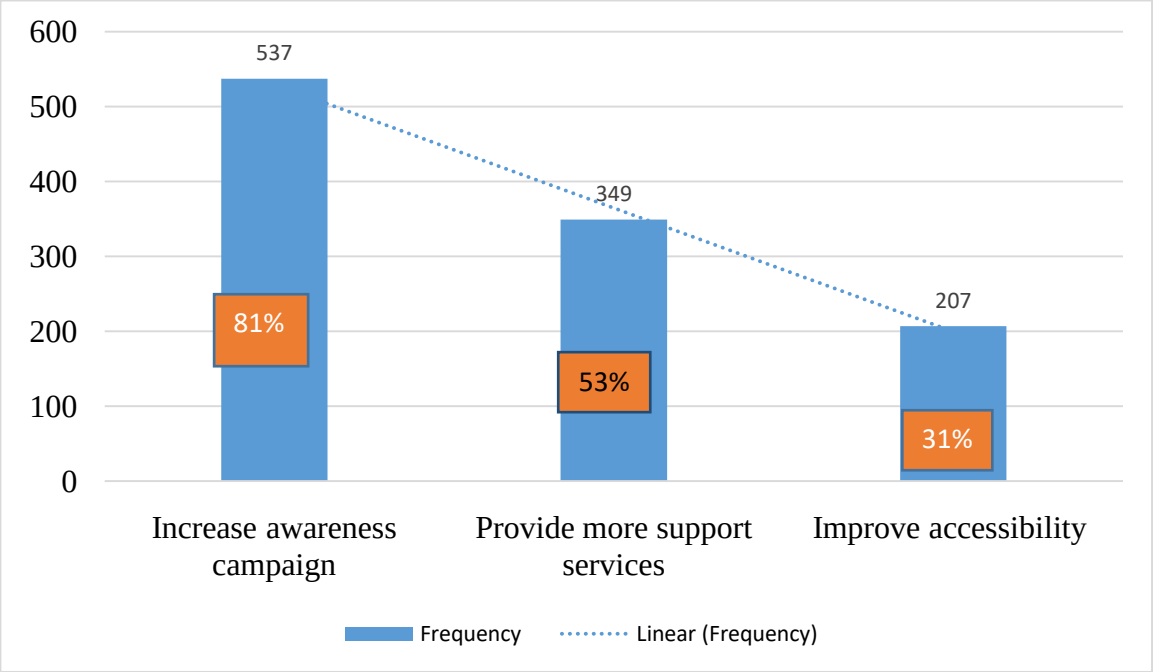


Figure 4.6: Suggestions by the Participants/Respondents of USAID/IITA GBV Campaign for future Intervention

The result in figure 4.6 provides the summary of suggestions by the respondents for further intervention programs relating to GBV. Majority of the respondents, representing 81% suggest that there is still a need for increased awareness campaign aboutGBV because educating the community members about GBV is an essential step towards enhanced understanding of the issues involved and community collaboration towards eradicating or reducing the menace. Moreover, 53% of the respondents suggest that more support services be provided for community members especially victims of GBV. Lastly, 31% of the respondents suggest improving accessibility especially with respect to access to support services, reporting mechanisms, logistics such as hotlines as some respondents have mentioned the need for hotlines to facilitate a quick reporting of GBV incidence.

RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The regression analysis examines the socioeconomic factors influencing GBV in Northeast Nigeria based on the data collected fromparticipantsof the USAID/IITA GBV campaign program. These factors include the age, household size, annual income, marital status and educational level of the respondents as presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Result of the Socioeconomic Factors Influencing GBV in Northeast Nigeria

Dependent variable: GBV incidence (1 = if the respondent experienced or witnessed incidence of GBV in their household or neighbourhood, 0 = if otherwise)

Independent variables	Coefficient	Standard error	t-value	p-value
Average Age	-0.007 (0.994)	0.009	-0.750	0.451
Average Household Size	0.070*** (0.935)	0.018	3.960	0.000
Average annual income	-71.566*** (1.000)	27.163	-2.630	0.008
Gender	0.287 (1.371)	0.197	1.460	0.145
Marital Status	0.273 (1.312)	0.145	1.880	0.060
Educational Level	-0.003 (0.992)	0.062	-0.040	0.964
Constant	6.110***	2.174	2.810	0.005
Mean dependent var	0.599	SD dependent var		0.490
Pseudo r-squared	0.370	Number of obs		584
Chi-square	27.155	Prob > chi2		0.000
Akaike crit. (AIC)	771.672	Bayesian crit. (BIC)		802.262

**** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1. Note: Robust Logit regression method was used for the estimation. Values in parenthesis are the odds ratios.*

As shown in table 4.3, the average age of the respondents has a negative influence on GBV in the study area as indicated by the coefficient -0.007 and the odds ratio of 0.994 suggesting that as an individual (woman or man) becomes older, the likelihood of them experiencing or witnessing GBV incidence reduces by about 0.994 times though the coefficient of the age is found to be statistically insignificant. This is consistent with the findings of Chime et al., (2022) who revealed that young individuals of about 19 years of age were 23 times more likely to experience GBV than older individuals of 40 to 59 years. Furthermore, household size tends to increase the likelihood of GBV incidence in the household or neighbourhood as shown by the positive coefficient (0.070) and this is statistically significant (t-value = -3.960 and p-value = 0.000) at 1% level of significance. This explains that as indicated by the odds ratio of 0.935, as the family size becomes bigger, the likelihood of GBV increases by 0.935 times. This further means that larger family size associated with low income and high poverty is 0.935 more likely to increase the GBV incidences in the study area. In the same vein, average annual income of the respondents has a negative influence on the likelihood of GBV occurring in the study locations based on the coefficient (-71.566) and the odds ratio of 1.000 which is also statistically significant (t-value = -2.630 and p-value = 0.008) at 1% level of significance. This indicates that increase in income is associated with decrease in the incidence of GBV in northeast Nigeria. Meaning poverty reduction intervention programs could be a useful antidote to the prevalence of GBV in the study area. This finding corroborates the survey statistics presented in figure 4.4 which provides evidence that poverty is one of the top key factors that cause GBV in the households. The educational level of the respondents also has a negative influence on the likelihood of GBV incidence in the study locations. The result shows that as individuals move from one level of education (from non-formal to primary, from primary to junior secondary, and so on), the likelihood of GBV incidence in the household or neighbourhood decreases by 0.992 times, though the coefficient is not statistically significant. However, gender (male =1 and female =0) of the respondent has a positive but statistically insignificant influence on the likelihood of GBV incidence. This result suggests that males are likely to increase GBV by 1.371 times compared to

females, but the difference is not statistically significant. On a similar note, marital status has a positive influence and statistically significant (at 10% level with p-value = 0.060) on the likelihood of GBV incidence as indicated by the coefficient 0.273 and the odds ratio of 1.312. This suggests that as individuals move from single to married, the likelihood of GBV incidence increases by 1.312 times, meaning that the bigger the family size the more likely GBV incidences will be, holding other factors constant. This indicates that GBV is more prevalent among married people in the study area, and this is consistent with the findings of Oladepo et al., (2011) who revealed that married female respondents were 1.7 times more likely to experience GBV compared to singles. It is also in line with the findings of Adinma et al., (2019) who showed that marital quarrel was the common cause of GBV in Southeastern Nigeria.

The chi-square of 27.155 with the p-value of 0.000 indicates that these socioeconomic factors are jointly significant at influencing the likelihood of GBV incidence in northeast Nigeria. Moreover, the pseudo-R-squared of 0.370 suggests that about 37% of GBV incidences in the study area is explained by the independent variables included in the regression analysis.

Effect of USAID/IITA GBV Campaign on GBV Incidence in Northeast Nigeria

The study estimates the effect of USAID/IITA GBV campaign on the likelihood of occurrence of GBV in northeast Nigeria as shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Ordered Logit regression Result of the Effect of USAID/IITA GBV Campaign on GBV Incidence in Northeast Nigeria

Dependent variable: Frequency of GBV incidence in the intervention locations (1=never, 2= rarely, 3=sometimes 4= often, 5=very often)

Independent variables	Coefficient	Standard error	t-value	p-value
Marital Status	0.076	0.113	0.680	0.499
Gender	0.021	0.156	0.130	0.893
Income	-0.459***	0.144	-3.190	0.001
USAID/IITA improve understanding of participants' rights regarding GBV	-1.039***	0.305	-3.410	0.001
USAID/IITA GBV campaign Empowered participants to speak out against GBV	-1.303***	0.336	-3.880	0.000
USAID/IITA campaign helps reduce GBV	-0.787***	0.222	-3.550	0.000
cut1	-10.022	1.939		
cut2	-8.892	1.926		
cut3	-7.646	1.914		
cut4	-6.018	1.889		

Mean dependent var	2.458	SD dependent var	1.228
Pseudo r-squared	0.410	Number of obs	598
Chi-square	86.018	Prob > chi2	0.000
Akaike crit. (AIC)	1753.479	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	1797.415

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1*

The results in table 4.4 provide the estimates of the perceptions of the respondents/participantsabout the effect of the GBV campaign program on GBV incidence in their communities. Three variables are of utmost importance. Firstly, the perception that USAID/IITA improves the understanding of participants' rights regarding GBV has a

negative influence on the likelihood of GBV incidence in the study locations. This is indicated by the coefficient (-1.039) which is statistically significant at 1% level of significance (t-value = -3.410 and p-value = 0.001) suggesting that gender mainstreaming/GBV campaign increases the understanding of GBV among the participants and their rights which account for reduction in the frequency of occurrence of GBV. Secondly, the coefficient on the perception that the GBV campaign has empowered the participants to speak out against GBV is negative (-1.303) and statistically significant (t-value = -.3.880 and p-value = 0.000) suggesting that empowering individuals to speak against GBV reduces the incidence of GBV in the community. Thirdly, the perception that USAID/IITA campaign helps in reducing the incidence of GBV has a negative (-0.787) and statistically significant (t-value = -3.550 and p-value =0.000) coefficient suggesting that the GBV campaign leads to decrease in GBV cases in the host communities, holding other factors constant.

We also control for marital status, gender and annual income of the respondents/participants as shown in table 4.4. Like in the previous findings in table 4.3, marital status and gender increase the likelihood of occurrence of GBV incidence in the study area, though they are not statistically significant. Annual income on the other hand has a negative and statistically significant influence on GBV incidence, meaning that as annual income of the individuals decreases by one unit, the likelihood of occurrence of GBV incidence increases by 0.459 percent in the host communities, holding other factors constant.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Gender equality and gender-based violence is a serious global and local concern, especially in areas devastated by conflicts such as the Northeast Nigeria. To help minimize this problem IITA under the USAID funded Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity, mainstreamed gender equality and GBV awareness campaign into its intervention activities in Northeast Nigeria from 2019 to 2024. This study was mainly focused on examining the perceptions, prevalence and the socioeconomic implications of GBV in the intervention states in Northeast Nigeria. The study has established that there is indeed the prevalence of GBV in communities and households in the study area. The USAID/IITA gender equality and GBV awareness campaign has enhanced the understanding of host community members about gender stereotypes and has empowered them to speak out against GBV. The most common type of GBV is rape and the main cause is lack of education/illiteracy reinforced by high level rural poverty. It was revealed that age, education level, annual income and USAID/IITA awareness campaign reduce the incidence of GBV while household size, marital status and male gender increase GBV in the study area. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been offered.

1. There is a need for more GBV awareness campaign in Northeast Nigeria as the respondents explained that the awareness is effective in minimizing the incidence of GBV and demanded for increased campaign especially among the youth and married couples. This can be provided or sponsored by development agencies, donors, not-for-profit organizations, the organized private sector, government, and/orprivate individuals.
2. Education and economic empowerment should be made a priority by government and development intervention organizations. This is because illiteracy and poverty appeared as the top drivers of GBV in Northeast Nigeria. There is a need for a more sustainable income generating intervention support and activities that will enhance the income of individuals, reduce poverty and vulnerability. Provision of free and

compulsory basic education is also very essential as a long-term strategy for eliminating the GBV incidence in the study area.

3. There should be easy access to medical, psychosocial, financial, material, and legal support services for victims of GBV; coupled with easy reporting mechanism at the community level such as hot lines for calls and call-back services. These will ensure immediate and easy transmission of GBV cases thereby providing on-the spot assistance for the victims and immediate apprehension for of perpetrators.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents/Participants

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	410	62.12
Male	250	37.88
Total	660	100.00
Marital Status		
Single	99	15.02
Married	524	79.51
Separated	6	0.91
Divorced	10	1.52
Widowed/widower	20	3.03
Total	659	100.00
Educational Level		
Non-formal education	131	19.88
Primary Education	82	12.44
Junior Secondary School	33	5.01
Senior Secondary School	237	35.96
Tertiary Education	176	26.71
Total	659	100.00
Age		
18-25	111	16.82
26-35	196	29.70
36-45	190	28.79
46-55	110	16.67
56-65	46	6.97
66 and above	7	1.06
Total	660	100.00
Average Age	38	
Standard deviation	12	
Household Size		
1-5	224	35.56
6-10	251	39.84
11-15	103	16.35
16-20	34	5.40
21 and above	18	2.86
Total	630	100.00
Average household size	8	
Standard deviation	5	
Main Occupation		
Crop farming	302	45.83
Trader/business	209	31.71
Livestock farming	115	17.45
Civil Servant	33	5.01
Total	659	100.00
Estimated Annual Income		
100,000 - 500,000	393	64.74
600,000 -1,000,000	127	20.92
1,100,000 - 1,500,000	52	8.57
1,600,000 - 2,000,000	19	3.13

2,100,000 - 2,500,000	14	2.31
2,600,000 - 3,000,000	2	0.33
Total	607	100.00
Average annual income	591598.02	
Standard deviation	486428.27	

Appendix 2: Perceptions on the effect of the USAID/IITA GBV Awareness Campaign Program

Has the awareness campaign by the USAID/IITA helped you to understand your right as a woman/man on issues related to Gender-Based Violence (GBV)?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	632	95.32
No	31	4.68
Total	663	100.00
How would you rate the intervention with respect to your understanding of your rights reading GBV?		
Very poor	3	0.45
Poor	12	1.81
Average	269	40.51
Good	239	35.99
Very good	141	21.23
Total	664	100.00
Do you feel more empowered to speak out against and report Gender-Based Violence		
Yes	622	93.82
No	41	6.18
Total	663	100.00
How would you rate your courage and confidence to speak out against Gender-Based Violence	Freq.	Percent
a. Very poor	8	1.20
b. Poor	24	3.61
c. Average	270	40.60
d. Good	208	31.28
e. Very good	155	23.31
Total	665	100.00
On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think the USAID/IITA FTF has helped in reducing GBV in your community?		
1 = Not well at all	7	1.06
2 = Slightly well	67	10.12
3 = Moderately well	353	53.32
4 = Very well	162	24.47
5 = Extremely well	73	11.03
Total	662	100.00