



Eziwho Emenike Azunwo

Rivers State University (Nigeria)

A Critique of Domestic Violence in Julie Okoh's Plays: *Our Wife Forever* and *Closed Doors*

ABSTRACT. The situation of women in most countries should have been tackled by the efforts of some female scholars and their male counterparts who have claimed in the past and still claiming to have fought and still fighting for the betterment of the female folks. The expression 'domestic violence' as used in this paper includes violence against women by an intimate partner and by other family members. Violence against women is often a cycle of abuse that manifests itself in many forms throughout their lives. During childhood, violence against girls may include; enforced malnutrition, lack of access to medical care and attention, lack of access to education, incest, female genital mutilation, early marriages and forced prostitution and even bounded labour. This paper reassesses the effects of domestic violence on women using Julie Okoh's plays: *Closed Doors* and *Our Wife Forever* as moral critique of the unwholesome state of affairs in Nigeria and applies Abraham Maslow's theory of Need. It adopts the qualitative research methodology. This paper discovers there are no stringent and effective punishments of culprits who unleash violence on women in Nigeria. And therefore, recommends severe punishment for people adjudged guilty of domestic violence and abuse on women, while encouraging them to speak out against this anomaly.

KEYWORDS: domestic violence, violence, dramatic interventions, women, feminism, *Our Wife Forever*, *Closed Doors*

Introduction

It is no longer news that the president of the federal of Nigeria, President Mohamadu Buhari acerbically responded to his wife's BBC radio interview in such a way that one would want to ask what is the fate of the women folk in a country such as ours, where her president directly or indirectly states in an interview that the women folk belong to "the kitchen, the living room and the other room" alone? (p. 2). The family is often equated with sanctuary—a place where individuals seek love, peace, safety, security, and shelter, etc; however, this false idea is unhurriedly fading out as it has also become a place that breeds some of the most drastic forms of

violence perpetrated against the women. Domestic violence and abuse against the women continue to be a global epidemic that tortures, maims, and even kills: physically, psychologically, sexually, mentally and even economically. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violence, denying women equality, security, dignity, self-worth, and the right to enjoy fundamental freedom. Although violence against women is omnipresent, cutting across all boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity, and age. Domestic violence is the most prevalent; yet, it is relatively hidden and deliberately ignored form of violence against women.

Violence in the domestic sphere in most cases is usually perpetrated by the male folks who are, or who have been in positions of trust, intimacy, and power, such as husbands, boyfriends, fathers, father-in-law, step fathers, brothers, uncles, sons, and even other relatives. Domestic violence may include but not limited to violence against women by an close partner, a sharing partner, and by other family members, whether this violence occurs within or beyond the confines of the home. Violence against women is often a cycle of abuse that manifests itself in many forms throughout their lives. Even at the very beginning of her life, a girl may be the target of sex, selective abortion, or female infanticide especially in cultures where son preferences are prevalent. During childhood, violence against girls may include; enforced malnutrition, lack of access to medical care and attention, lack of access to education, incest, female genital mutilation, early marriages and forced prostitution and even bounded labour. Some go on to suffer throughout their adult lives and old age: battered, bruised and even murdered at the hands of an intimate partner, as well as being inherited by her in-laws. (WHO)

Most women who leave their homes as a result of incessant assault often return. This is because, apart from the stress and suffering arising from the violence itself, many women had also experienced stress and problems in seeking help. Most of those who cry for help from mostly relatives and friends are in most cases disappointed, because of their intention to stay out of the couple's domestic violence, this however destroys the women both psychologically and physically. Many women who are battered loath the battering but find it difficult to leave a terrifying situation. Shame is an important factor according to (Owen, 2016, p. 551) the battered wife feels ashamed to let other people know about her situation as she might be regarded as a woman who cannot manage her home properly. One young woman who married at the age of seventeen against her parent's desire did not tell them of her abuse because "she made her bed and had to lie on it" (Owen, 2016, p. 560). This goes to show that some women feel they are

somehow responsible for or deserves the beating and maltreatment they get for one reason or the other. Others even feel that there is something wrong with them.

Due to the patriarchy system that pervades the society, women are not often guaranteed a place in their family of origin. Even though most societies proscribe violence against women, the reality is that violations against women's rights are often sanctioned under the garb of cultural practices and norms, although misinterpretation of religious tenets abound. When the violation of women's right takes place within the home, as is often the case, the abuse is effectively condoned by the tacit silence and the passivity displayed by the state and law enforcement machineries. Violence or at least the fear of violence has become a part of every woman's life. Each woman knows someone who has been a victim of violence or in herself been involved in one. Domestic violence against women deprives them of their right to participate in societal life as a whole and holds them as prisoners under the "special" conditions set by the immediate social setting such as family, kinship, social norms and values shared by the majority. The major impact domestic violence has on women is therefore hindering their full inclusion and participation in social life.

Literature abounds on the seriousness of this hydra-headed enigma. Even at that, debate regarding the magnitude of the problem is clouded by the fact that domestic violence is a crime that is under-reported and under-recorded. When women are likewise frustrated, as such, when they file reports or pursue treatment, in most cases, they contend with police or health care officials who have not been trained to respond adequately or to keep consistent records. On the other hand, shame, fear of reprisal, lack of information about legal rights, lack of confidence in, or fear of the legal system and the legal costs involved make it very reluctant to report the incidence of violence. Most of the cases reported are mainly done informally, to relatives and friends who do not have formal documentation of the incidence. Therefore, this work is put together to elaborate on this issue of domestic violence against women, using the dramatic piece "Sounds of Silence" to highlight the causes of domestic violence and abuse against women, its effect, and to proffer possible solutions on how best to curb the menace. The idea of this work is on domestic violence and abuse against women and this erupted from the researchers experience on domestic violence on the society and its consequences.

The mystique of the family as a private, peaceful cradle of safety and emotional support has influenced the lack of attention given to the vio-

lence that does occur, especially to women. And in many societies, paddling a wife for misbehaviour by the husband has become the norm. Violence against women in such societies is thus, condoned and has become institutionalized. Battering is viewed as a private family affair, and beating one's wife is considered to be a marital prerogative. A battered woman finds it difficult to take action against her husband. She often finds herself in a financial bind. Living with a violent husband is thus seen as better than trying to make it alone. As a result of abuse, the victims may experience physical disabilities, chronic health problems, mental illness, limited finances, and poor ability to create healthy relationships, post-traumatic stress order, and even death. In recent years, concern for the battered women has mushroomed so that legislation and services have grown to deal with the issue. An international consensus has also been developed but progress has been slow because attitudes are deeply entrenched and, to some extent, because effective strategies to address violence against women are still being defined. Law enforcement and judicial system condone or do not recognize domestic violence as a crime; instead, it is tagged "family matter" which should be settled in the home. The bane of this study therefore is that the appalling toll on this issue will not be eased until families, government, institutions, civic society and organizations address the issue directly. It was Hirsch who volunteered, thus "victims of violence we are; but perhaps continuing to publicly acclaim our indignation will help to ameliorate the injustice perpetrated against one half of the human race women".

1. The Purpose of This Paper

This paper geared towards enlightening women on how they can influence the behaviour of their male spouses and prevent the abuse of women physically and psychologically, thereby curbing violence. In stressing the need for a coordinated and integrated policy response in enhancing partnership among stakeholders, setting up mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating programs and policies, implementing existing legislation, ensuring greater transparency and accountability from government in order to eliminate violence against women. It will show the extent of damage caused by domestic violence, and the role played by women in curbing it. It will equally contribute to the existing literature on Nigerian dramas that addresses the issue of domestic violence and abuse against women,

much as it will raise consciousness and curiosity among Nigerian scholars and researchers on the need to make domestic violence and abuse against women a priority in their research interest. Though it is claimed that much has been done to create awareness in the area of domestic violence, it is baffling to know that the problem is still not solved or curbed. It is hoped that this study will give fresh impetus to the campaign against women's violence in the society, since most of them are illiterate and, or are ill-educated on the rights and protection of women in the constitution of the state. This study is expected be beneficial to members of the society and professionals e.g. housewives, psychologists, gender and counseling experts, social welfare workers, health workers, family planning experts, playwrights, sociologists, critics, feminists, social welfare policy makers, judicial officers, law enforcement agencies, traditional rulers, religious leaders minders, etc. who have come in contact with those assaulted to enable them understand gender based violence, appreciate the trauma of those suffering it and stress on the need for attitude change.

2. The Thoughts of Feminism: an Overview

The current downgraded situation of women in most countries, especially in Africa should have been tackled by the efforts of some female scholars and their likes who have claimed in the past and still claiming to have fought and still fighting for the betterment of the female folks. Feminism is one of the self-claimed processes. Feminism therefore is an ideology or theory, backed up by social movement that women should be equal politically, economically, and socially with the men. Sometimes, this definition is also referred to as "core feminism" or "core feminist theory". Though this theory does not subscribe to differences or similarities between men and women, nor does it refer to excluding men or only furthering women's causes. A feminist however, is one who believes that men and women should be equal politically, socially and economically. Feminism means different things to different people depending on race, culture and historical experience. In Nigeria for example, many people understand feminism to simply mean women's struggle to gain equality with men, or to obtain access to positions of power. Feminism is more than that. It is first and foremost a collective term for systems of belief and theories that pay special attention to women's right and women's position in culture and society. On personal level, it is a state of mind, a way of thinking, and

an alternative perspective for which to understand the world. It means a woman becoming aware of a distortion in her social status as a woman. Seeking to correct this distortion, the woman moves in a new direction in search of autonomy, self-assertion and empowerment (Okoh, 2007, p. 7) Barbara submits that:

It is freedom (for a woman) to decide her own destiny: freedom from sex determined role; freedom from society's oppressive restrictions; freedom to express her thoughts fully and to convert them freely into action. Feminism demands the acceptance of woman's right to individual conscience and judgment. It postulates that women's essential worth stems from their common humanity and does not depend on the relationships of her life (1984).

However, African feminists do recognize the fact that Africa has produced great women, women that have done great things for their communities. But they emphasize that those women with recognized laudable achievements are just too few compared to the huge population of women in, for example, Nigeria. Those women achievers may have been the few exceptional women referred to by Toril Moi in *Sexual/Textual Politics* when she submits that:

Throughout history a few exceptional women have indeed managed to resist the full pressure of patriarchal ideology, becoming conscious of their own oppression and voicing their opposition to male power (Moi, 1986, p. 26).

Moreover, the fact that these few women succeeded in distinguishing themselves does not preclude the fact that gender discrimination existed and still exists in Africa, including Nigeria. For example, in Nigeria, women seemed to have had more rights and power in traditional Yoruba society than they had in Igbo society. Moreover, women in Yoruba land can inherit land and properties from their families but this is contrary to what is obtainable in most other parts of the country. In Hausa/Fulani culture, men's ideal of a woman has been and continues to be as it was in ancient Greeks and Roman societies. The woman is expected to be docile, faithful, and subservient wife, whereas the man is rarely faithful. Anderson and Zinsser (1990) explain that in the spirit of revolution and bringing all these to an end, De Gouges summoned all women to overturn unjust traditions.

Woman, wake up, the tocsin of reason is being heard throughout the whole universe, discover your rights. The powerful empire of nature is no longer

surrounded by prejudice, fanaticism, superstition, and lies. The flame of truth has dispersed all the folly and usurpation (Anderson & Zinsser, 1990, p. 351).

3. Feminist Theories and Conceptual Framework

Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical, fictional or philosophical discourse and it aims to understand the nature of gender inequality. Abraham Maslow's theory of Need is apt at expanding our horizon.

Abraham Maslow's theory hovers around human motivation, Maslow attempts to portray a total picture of human behaviour, Maslow's theory holds that we all have a need hierarchy, in which our inborn needs are arranged in a sequence of stages from most "primitive to most human" (William, 2007, p. 307).

He identified the following needs:

- a. Physiological need: this include need to satisfy hunger, sex, sleep oxygen and maintain the internal state of the body.
- b. Safety needs: The need to feel secured and safe, to avoid problems and seek for pleasure.
- c. Love and belonging needs: The need for belonging is affectionate with others to be accepted, give and receive attention.
- d. Self Esteem needs: This is a need for self-esteem, to activate, to excel.
- e. Self-actualization: This is a need for self-fulfillment the need to attain one's goal in life.
- f. Cognitive needs: This is the need to acquire more knowledge.
- g. Aesthetic needs: this is love for beauty.
- h. Transcendence needs: Desire to help people in need. From the above theory, it can be deduced that human beings have needs within them.

4. Application of Abraham's Theory to This Paper

4.1. Safety Needs

According to Abraham Maslow's theory, human needs to feel secured and safe. Every human especially women are entitled to some level of security in their homes and families domestic violence cause emotional in-

security to its victims. Therefore, there is need for domestic violence to be stopped so that safety and security needs in the family can be restored.

4.2. Love and Belonging Needs

One of the most important needs of life according to this theory is love and the feeling of sense of belongings. Women love to be cared for, they love affections, acceptance by significant other in a relationship and they love to be given attention. Domestic violence takes away this feeling of love and belonging from its victims, it is therefore necessary that individual who are were victims of domestic violence to receive more love, attention, acceptance and respect from family members and health workers.

Below are types of feminism as they apply to Okoh's plays.

4.3. Cultural Feminism

This theory holds that there are fundamental personality differences between men and women, and that women's difference are special and should be celebrated. This theory of feminism supports the notion that there are biological differences between men and women. For example, "women are kinder and gentler than men," leading to the mentality that if women ruled the world, there would be no wars. Cultural feminism is the theory that wants to overcome sexism by celebrating women's special qualities, women's ways, and women's experiences, often believing that the "woman's way" is the better way.

4.4. Eco Feminism

Eco feminism is the theory that rests on the basic principle that patriarchal philosophies are harmful to women, children and other living things. Parallels are drawn between society's treatment of the environment, animals or resources and its treatment of women. In resisting patriarchal culture, eco-feminists believe that they are also resisting plundering and destroying of the earth. They feel that the patriarchal philosophy emphasizes the need to dominate and control unruly and the unruly wilderness. Eco-feminism views patriarchal societies to be a structure which has developed over last 5,000 years, while considering matriarchal societies (A society in which females are centre of the societal roles and structures, to be the original hierarchy. Eco-feminism draws from and links together both the women's movement and the environmental movement. However,

Nigerian feminist critics have in one way or the other identified with each of the feminist movement consciously and unconsciously. Among these critics especially in Africa includes, Ama Ata Aidoo, Nawal El Saadawi, Flora Nwapa, Lauretta Ngcobo, Buchi Emecheta, Carole Boyce Davies, Obioma Nnaemeka, Uzo Esonwanne, Zulu Sofolá, Tess Onueme, Irene Salami, Julie Okoh, Barclays Ayakoroma, and Tracy Utoh amongst others.

5. Domestic Violence/Human Abuse: An Expository Avowal

Domestic violence also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, intimate partner violence, battery or family violence is a pattern of behavior which involves violence or other abuse by one person in a domestic context against another such as in marriage or cohabitation. Intimate partner violence is violence by a spouse or partner in an intimate relationship against the other. Domestic violence can take place in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. Domestic violence can take a number of forms including physical, emotional, verbal, economic and sexual abuse, which can range from subtle, coercive forms to marital rape and to violent physical abuse that result in disfigurement or death. Globally, a wife or female partner is more commonly the victim of domestic violence, though the victim can also be the male partner, or both partners may engage in abusive or violent behavior, or the victim may act in self-defense or retaliation. Whereas women in developed world who experience domestic violence are openly encouraged to report it to the authorities, it has been argued that domestic violence against men is most often unreported because of social stigma regarding their perceived lack of machismo and other denigrations of their masculinity.

Domestic violence often occurs because the abuser believes that abuse is justified and acceptable and may produce intergenerational cycle of abuse that condones violence. Awareness, perception, definition and documentation of domestic violence differ widely from country to country. There may be a cycle of abuse during which tension rise and an act of violence is committed, followed by a period of reconciliation and calm. Victims of domestic violence may be trapped in domestic violent situations through isolation, power and control, insufficient financial resources, and poor ability to create healthy relations. Victims may experience post-traumatic stress disorder, children who live in a household of violence show deregulated aggression from an early age and stage that may later con-

tribute to continuing the legacy of abuse when they reach adulthood. Fear, shame or desire to protect the children can also be one of the causes of domestic violence. As a result of abuse, victims may experience physical disabilities, chronic health problems, mental illness, limited finances, poor ability to create healthy relationships.

The term intimate partner violence (IPV) is often used synonymously with domestic violence or abuse, but it usually refers to abuse occurring within a couple relationship (marriage, cohabitation, though they do not have to live together for it to be considered domestic abuse).

The World Health Organization defined intimate partner violence as: "Any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship." To these forms of abuse, WHO adds controlling behaviours as a form of abuse. Traditionally, domestic violence (DV) was mostly associated with physical activity i.e. violence. For instance, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* definition, domestic violence is: "the inflicting of physical injury by one family or household member on another."

6. Review on Domestic Violence

Traditionally, domestic violence (DV) was mostly associated with physical activity i.e. violence. For example, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary definition, domestic violence is "The inflicting of physical injury by one family or household member on another", also a repeated/habitual pattern of such behavior, domestic violence is now more broadly defined often but not always including all acts of physical, sexual psychological or economic violence that maybe committed by a person who is a family member or a person who has been an intimate partner or spouse, irrespective of whether they live together.

In 1993, the United Nations declaration on the elimination of violence against women identified domestic violence as one of the three contexts in which violence against women occurs, describing it as:

Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other conditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation (United Nations International Children Emergency Fund, 1999, p. 48).

7. Abuses

Domestic violence can take any forms, including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects, battery) or threats thereof; sexual abuse, controlling or domineering, intimidation, stalking passive/covert abuse (e.g. Neglect) and economic deprivation. It can also mean endangerment, criminal coercion, kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, trespassing and harassment.

8. Forms of Abuse

Physical Abuse: This is abuse involving contact intended to cause pain, injury, or other physical suffering or body harm. It includes hitting, slapping, punching and choking etc.

Sexual Abuse: Percentages of women who say they have been subjected to sexual assault or attempted sexual assault by an intimate partner has greatly increased.

Sexual abuse by WHO is defined as any sexual act, attempting to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim. It also includes obligatory inspections for virginity and female genital mutilation.

The WHO includes the customary forms of sexual violence, such as forced marriage or cohabitation and wife inheritance within its definition of sexual violence as well as forced pregnancy.

Verbal Abuse: this is a form of emotionally abusive behavior involving the use of the language, which can involve threat, name calling, blaming, ridicule, disrespect and criticism.

Economic Abuse: is a form of abuse when one partner (intimate) has control over the other partner's access to economic resource. Economic abuse involves preventing a spouse from resource acquisition, limiting the amount of resource to be used by the victim, or by exploiting economic resource of the victim.

9. Domestic Violence and Pregnancy

During pregnancy a woman begin to be abused or long-standing abuse may change in severity, which has negative health effects on the baby and

the mother. The risk of domestic violence for women who have been pregnant is greatest immediately after child birth.

10. Predisposing Factors to Domestic Violence

Social views: the social views on domestic violence vary from person to person, and from region to region but in many places outside, the west, the concept is very poorly understood. This is because in most of these countries, the relationship between the husband and the wife must submit herself to the husband. This is codified in the laws of some countries for example, in Yemen, marriage regulations states that a wife must obey her husband and must not leave home without his permission.

10.1. Religion

There is controversy regarding the influence of religion on domestic violence. According to domestic violence cross cultural perspective no religion sanctions violence against women, but there are some religious scriptures that have been taken out of contexts to support discrimination against women within a community e.g. Judaism and Islam have traditionally supported male dominant household and socially sanctioned violence against women has been persistent since ancient times. Even Christianity sanctions misquote the bible—that the wife should be submissive does not mean she should become a slave to you.

10.2. Customs and Tradition

Local customs and tradition are often responsible for maintaining certain foods and also certain forms of domestic violence. Such customs and tradition; include son preferences (the desire of a family to have a boy and not a girl), which can lead to abuse and neglect of girl children by disappointed family members; child and forced marriages, dowry, the hierarchic castes. And the untouchables, leading to discrimination and restricted opportunity of female and thus making them more vulnerable to abuse, taboos about menstruation leading to female being isolated and shunned during the time of menstruation, female genital mutilation and so many others. In the Northern part of Nigeria, forced marriages is predominant.

10.3. In Relation to HIV/AIDS

The world health organization (WHO) has stated that women in abusive relations are not significantly higher risk of HIV/AIDS. WHO states that women in violent relations have difficulty negotiating safer sex with their partners, they are often forced to have sex, and find it difficult to ask for appropriate testing when they think they may be infected with HIV.

10.4. Legislation

Lack of adequate legislation which criminalizes domestic violence or alternatively legislation which prohibits consensual behaviors may hinder the progress in regard to reducing the incidence of domestic violence. According to WHO one of the most common forms of violence against women is that by a husband or male partner. The WHO notes that such violence is often ignored because often legal systems and cultural norms do not treat it as a crime, but rather as a private family matter or normal part of life.

10.5. Ability to Leave an Abusive Relation

The ability of victims of domestic violence to leave the violent relation is crucial for preventing further abuse. In traditional communities, divorced women often feel rejected and ostracized. In order to avoid this stigma, many women prefer to remain in the marriage and endure abuse. Discriminatory marriages and divorce laws can also play a role in the proliferation of domestic violence.

According to Rashia Manjoo, special reporter on violence against women; in many countries, a woman's access to property hinges on her relationship to a man when she separates from her husband or when he dies, she risks losing her home, land, household goods and property. Failure to ensure equal property rights upon separation or divorce discourages women from leaving violent marriages, as women will be forced to choose violent at home or destitution in the street.

10.6. Individual versus Family Rights

The way the individual rights of a family member versus the rights of the family as a whole or unit are balanced significantly in different societies. This may influence the degree to which a government may be willing to investigate family incidents. In some cultures, individual members of

the family are expected to sacrifice almost completely their own interest in favor of the interest of the family as a whole, what is view as an undue expression of personal autonomy is condemned as unacceptable. In these cultures, the predominant over the individual, and where this interacts with cultures of honor, individualistic choice that may damage the family reputation in the community may result in extreme punishment such as honor killings.

10.7. Intergenerational Cycle of Violence

A common aspect among abuses is that they witnessed abuse in their childhood, in other words they were participants in a chain of intergenerational cycle of domestic violence. That does not mean, conversely, that if a child witnessed or is a subject to violence that they will become abusers, people who observe their parents abusing each other, or who were themselves abused may incorporate abuse into their behavior within relationship that they establish as adults. Understanding and breaking the intergenerational abuse patterns may do more to reduce domestic violence than other remedies of managing the abuse.

10.8. Biological and Psychological

The factors include genetics and brain dysfunction and are studied by neurosciences. Psychological theories focus on personality traits and mental characteristics of the offender. Personality traits include sudden burst of anger, poor impulse controls and poor self-esteem. Various theories suggest that psychology and other personality disorder are factors and that abuse experienced as a child leads some people to be more violent as an adult. Correlation has been found between Juvenile delinquency and domestic violence in adulthood. Studies have found high incidence of psychopath among abusers. Psychiatric disorders are sometimes associated with domestic violence such as borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, drug abuse and alcoholism. It is estimated that at least one-third of all abusers have some type of mental illness. Many causes of domestic violence arises from the jealousy felt by one partner that they suspect their partner of being unfaithful or is planning to leave the relationship. Besides, the jealousy, the other partner may feel insulted by the rejection, which impacts on their self-esteem.

11. Causes of Domestic Violence

The causes of domestic violence are not made clear through research, but there are several factors that can result in violence. One of the most important is a belief that abuse, whether physical or verbal is acceptable related to that, growing up in a violent home or living within a culture that accepts domestic violence are factors. Other factors are substance abuse, unemployment, psychological problems, poor coping skills, isolation and excessive dependence.

12. Effects of Domestic Violence

12.1. Physical Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Children who are victims of domestic violence suffer the following:

- malnutrition;
- infection;
- bruises;
- head injuries;
- broken bones;
- starvation.

12.2. On Mothers

- chronic miscarriage;
- arthritis;
- pelvic pain;
- ulcer;
- internal bleeding;
- head injuries etc.

12.3. Psychological Effect on Children

- aggressiveness;
- anxiety;
- withdrawal;
- suppression;
- emotional insecurity;
- mental health disorder;

- shyness;
- irritability;
- guilt.

12.4. On Mothers

- stress;
- fear;
- anxiety;
- depression;
- suicidal tendency;
- long term anxiety and panic;
- post-traumatic stress disorder (e.g., flash backs, intrusive images, exaggerated stifle response, night mares, avoidance of triggers that are associated with the abuse).

12.5. Health Consequences

Intimate partner and sexual violence have serious short- and long-term physical mental, sexual and reproductive health problems for the survivors and for their children and lead to high social and economic costs. Intimate partner violence in pregnancy also increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth weight babies.

- These forms of violence can lead to depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, sleep difficulties, eating disorder and emotional distress and suicide attempts. The same study found that women who have experienced intimate partner violence were almost twice as likely to experience non partner sexual violence.
- Health effects can also include headaches, back pain, abdominal pain, fibromyalgia, gastrointestinal disorder, limited mobility and poor overall health.
- Sexual violence particularly during childhood can lead to increased smoking drug and alcohol misuse and risky sexual behavior in later life. It is also associated with perpetration of violence (for males) and being a victim of violence (for females).

12.6. Impact on Children

- Children who grew up in families where there is violence may suffer a range of behavioral and emotional disturbances. These can also be associated with perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life.

- Intimate partner violence has also been associated with higher rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity (e.g. diarrhea, disease, malnutrition).

12.7. Social and Economic Costs

The social and economic costs of intimate partner and sexual violence are enormous and have ripple effects throughout society. Women may suffer isolation, inability to work, loss of wages, lack of participation in regular activities and limited ability to care for themselves and their children.

13. Signs of Domestic Violence

1. Destructive criticism and verbal abuse: Shouting, mocking, accusing name calling, verbal threatening.
2. Pressure tactics: sulking, threatening to withhold money, lying to your friends about you, take the children away.
3. Disrespect: persistently putting you down in front of other people, not listening or responding when you talk.
4. Breaking trust: lying to you, withholding information from you, being jealous, having other relationships, breaking promises and shared agreement.
5. Isolation: monitoring or blocking your telephone calls, telling you where you are.
6. Harassment: following you, embarrassing you in the public.
7. Threat: making angry gestures, using physical size to intimidate, shouting you down, destroying your possessions, breaking things, punching walls, wielding a knife or gun, threatening to kill or harm you and the children.
8. Sexual Violence: Using force, threats or intimidations to make you perform sexual acts, having sex with you when you do not want to have sex, any degrading treatment based on your sexual orientation.
9. Physical violence: punching, slapping, hitting, pinching, kicking and pulling your hair.
10. Denial: saying the abuse doesn't happen, saying you caused the abusive behavior, being publicly gentle and patient, crying and begging for forgiveness, saying it will never happen again.

14. Management

Management of domestic violence may take place through:

- Medical services: participants in domestic violence may require medical treatment, such as examination by a family physician, other primary care provider or emergency room physicians.
- Law enforcement: This may be called in response to intimate partner violence.
- Counseling and other forms of prevention and intervention: This is another means of managing the effects of domestic violence. For the victim of abuse, counseling may include an assessment of the presented, extent and types of abuse.

15. Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women

The present work deals with preventive measure which should be taken to combat male violence against women in intimate relationship and any form of male violence against female. The purpose of this is to provide information but also to offer practical advice on how to implement proved preventive strategies effectively.

15.1. Prevention

There exist several strategies that are being used to attempt to prevent or reduce domestic violence. It is better to assess the effectiveness of a service that is being implemented.

15.2. Reforming Legislation

Reforming the legislation in order to ensure that domestic violence falls under the scope of law is important. This may imply repealing existing laws which discriminating against women: According to WHO, when the law allows husbands to physically discipline wives, implementing a program to prevent intimate partner violence may have little impact. Marriage laws are also important, “they (women) should also be able to enter freely into a marriage or to leave it, to obtain financial credit, and to own and administer property.

Abolishing or restricting the offering of and receiving of dowry and bride price and scrutinizing the impact of these transactions on the legis-

lative decisions regarding domestic violence is also important. UN women has stated that the legislation should ensure that “a perpetrator of domestic violence including marital rape cannot use the fact that he paid bride price as a defense to a domestic violence charge”.

15.3. Changing Gender Norms

Gender norms that promote the inferiority of women may lead to the abuse of women by intimate partners the WHO writes that dismantling hierarchical construction of masculinity and femininity predicated on the control of women and eliminating the structural factors that supports inequalities are likely to make a significant contribution to prevent intimate partner and sexual violence.

16. The Issue of Women's Human Rights Abuse in Nigerian Drama

The patriarchal structure of traditional society enables men to dominate women. Through the patriarchal system, Nigerian women are socialized in to a culture of female subordination. A Nigerian woman is born into a culture of male supremacy in which there is a general preference for a “male child” while girls leave home at the time of marriage to become their husband's property.

17. Julie Okoh's *Closed Doors*

The play is about a group of girls; Belema, Bola, Amina, Tracy, and Eki who are all in one way or another victim of abuse and violence by the men in their lives or around them. Bola was constrained to having sex with her boss all in a bid to secure her job, which she still lost because she got pregnant for him. Belema also gave in to her school teacher on account on his love promises to her but once she got pregnant; she became piece of garbage to him since he had many other girl students in the school to frolics with.

Belema: How do I take care of both of us? I have not yet finished my schooling. But here I am in a strange land, far away from home, friends and relatives. And this hard chair is biting into my flesh as hunger is biting into my stomach. Poor

baby! You deserve more than this. But the person who put us in this condition is out there enjoying life.

Bola: What stops you from enjoying life with him?

Belema: How can? He told me he loved me. Foolish me, I believed him completely. It was only when I got pregnant that I discovered that he had played the same game on many other girls in the school (Okoh, 2007, p. 25).

From the above dialogue, it is obvious that the man who impregnated Belema did not give a hoot about her, rather his concern was the pleasure he was going to derive from sleeping with her. This also applied to every other girl he slept with. Eki was a young girl and first child of eight children who went to secure a cleaning job in a hotel to cater for her family since her mother couldn't cope anymore. But then, in order for the men to help her, they had to sleep with her first and on a particular occasion where she was arrested, she was raped severely by different policemen on duty, place where at least she would have escaped the harsh reality of other men. Amina, a young girl of thirteen was raped by a priest in her community and she had to run away when she conceived because she will be severely punished for getting pregnant and the priest will be found innocent. While on the run, other mallams had to sleep with her before giving her food. Then Tracy was jilted by the love of her life and fell into the hands of a deadly politician who deceived her that he was single and that he loved her. But once she told him that she was pregnant, the story changed and his evil part was revealed as he had to send men to assassinate her just to protect his political career. But then, the silence of Tracy made it difficult for anyone to help her and this was affecting her psychologically. This is seen in Bola's statement of her.

Bola: She is certainly passing through a very, very difficult time. If only she would open out a little to diffuse some of the tension! But, she has locked up everything inside her and its affecting her psyche badly (Okoh, 2007, p. 22).

And what about the nursing home that these girls are living in? "Abortion or adoption?" It is then very obvious that there is nowhere for women to be safe. Not at home, in the church, mosque, court, or even in a police station. Violence is meted upon them anywhere they go, the best thing therefore is for these women not to give up and to overcome their self-esteem and fight for their rights.

18. Julie Okoh's *Our Wife Forever*

At the death of Victoria's husband, Victoria is subjected to ill kinds of barbaric maltreatment all in a bid to exonerate herself from being her husband's killer; she was made to shave her hair, not take her bath for several months and was asked to drink the water used in washing Hector's body. Thomas the brother in-law lays claim on Victoria as his inheritance from his late brother, Hector. Many attempts by Victoria to refute the inordinate advances of Thomas towards her led to a lot of chaos as Thomas threatens to deal with her decisively and bars her from receiving male visitors because Felix the family friend comes to console her over her loss. This can be seen in the dialogue between Victoria and Thomas.

Thomas: alright. Be warned. The next time I see him in this house, he will regret ever knowing you...

Victoria: what gave you the privilege to have control over me?

Thomas: as long as you continue to answer Imodu, you are our wife.

Victoria: if it will make you feel better, I'll change to my maiden name.

Thomas: will you also pay back the bride price paid on you? Don't forget to include the interest and inflation variations. You were married for about twelve years. If that money was invested in some business, it would have accrued to millions of naira by now. Besides, in case you have forgotten, let me remind you. According to our custom, when a widow decides to remarry, she forfeits every entitlement to her late husband's property (Okoh, 2007, p. 36–37).

This shows that in our society, a woman's marriage is like taking away all her rights and what makes her a woman and giving it to her husband and his people. Thomas relegates Victoria to a mere property and also backs his actions with the traditional custom and norms. However, it takes the goodly intervention of Felix Tanka, a friend of the family to put Thomas in his rightful place with accusations and counter accusations. Felix Tanka stood his ground to call a spade a spade and finally won the heart of Victoria.

The question from these cases treated above clearly demands an answer. Why should girls not wear masquerade, why should it be the woman that will shave and drink the water of a dead person when the husband dies, why do men not perform the same act when they lose their wives? Why punish girls for being raped and pregnant and spare the men who put them in that condition? Why shouldn't women climb palm trees? Why is it an abomination for women to do some of the exact thing men do? Why?

Why? Why? Is tradition and custom the only answer to these questions? Who made these traditions if not men themselves? Only when these question and other questions bothering on women violence are answered can the society be a better place. But until then, women just have to learn how to survive and fight to be significant.

However, since 1960s and 1970s, the status of women has greatly improved. People's concept also has changed dramatically. The meaning of women's role is a part of function assumed in life.

Conclusion

Family is the first point of contact to the society, therefore when the home front is not stable; it definitely affects the society at large as every individual that makes up a society comes from the family. A successful marriage contributes to both the growth of the society and God's kingdom. God created the institution of marriage which makes His relationship with man marital; therefore, couples should learn to consult the originator and the Head for solutions in the family. In all, the researcher admonishes couples and couples to be to take up their responsibilities and make their marriages work, play your part and leave the rest for God. Violence can only disorientate the children. Help them by making the right choices and soliciting for help when you might have made the wrong choice. But then, women can only emancipate themselves from the clutches of violence and patriarchy when they learn to pull themselves out of the circle of inferiority which subjugates them by appreciating the totality of humanity as declared by human rights article that proclaims that all human being are created equal with the same alienable rights to life and, property and occupation. It is therefore not enough to write plays that celebrates women freedom but for readers or viewers as the case may be to put into practice the views of the playwrights because a lot can be achieved by arousing the consciousness of not just women but Nigerian men who have become 'windmills of custodian of patriarchy to exploit women at will.

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