

## **Socio-economic Determinants of Domestic Violence Suffered by Rural Women Crop Farmers in Imo State**

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### **Abstract**

*The study identified the socio-economic determinants of domestic violence suffered by rural women crop farmers in Orlu agricultural zone of Imo State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 80 rural women crop farmers for the study. Data were collected using structured interview schedule and analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Findings show that out of the forty-two variables used to capture the nature of domestic violence suffered by women in the study area, only eight reached the cutoff point of 2.50. The major causes of domestic violence identified by the study were disagreement over money ( $\bar{x}=3.0$ ), failure to perform domestic chores ( $\bar{x}=2.7$ ), disobedience to husband ( $\bar{x}=2.7$ ) and sharing marital problems with friends ( $\bar{x}=2.7$ ). Respondent's age, duration of marriage, educational status, religion, household size and number of wives were the major determinants of domestic violence. It was recommended that a re-orientation be given to the men in the area to enlighten them more on the negative effects of domestic violence.*

**Key Words:** Socio-economic determinants of women violence, women, domestic violence.

### **Introduction**

The contributions of women to food security in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Despite some exclusion placed on women either by culture or policies, women have

continued to contribute immensely to food production in the country. The report of the women and children affairs (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Ghana, 2012) noted that globally rural women contribute through different livelihood strategies to lift their families and communities out of poverty and hunger but their potential to do so is limited by multiple and diverse constraints due to the systematic and structural gender disparities that prevent them from enjoying their economic and other rights. In an agrarian household economy, women's labor is essential to the survival of the family, which is the primary economic unit of production, (Freeman, 1995). Unfortunately, several women are faced with some forms of domestic violence while performing their roles as the homemaker. This domestic violence constitutes a militating factor against their effective production.

World Health Organization (WHO, 2013), defined domestic violence as the range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by current or former male intimate partners. This often leaves the victim living in constant fear, pains and depression. In severe cases, it can erode a woman's sense of self-worth and can be incredibly harmful to overall mental and physical well-being (Women's' health, 2013). It also lowers the general soundness and fitness of the victim's performance and productivity.

Women make essential contribution to agriculture especially in developing countries, (The role of women in agriculture, 2011). At the same time, the rate of domestic violence against women is also highest in Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, with 37% of women experiencing physical or sexual violence from a partner at some point in their lifetime (WHO, 2013). This goes a long way to showcase the importance of women in the agricultural sector and the unfortunate drawback facing their effectiveness in the sector. Agriculture as a business enterprise requires an individual's initiative and vitality. Often, these women who have been domestically abused by their close ones, lack the energy and enthusiasm required for an effective agricultural production. Generally, domestic violence lowers the overall health of the women (victims) by destabilizing the peaceful co-existence among their family members. The farm family is affected because even the children from such homes

suffer psychologically and may grow to become victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. This domestic violence might be in the form of abuse, insult or injury and may be physical, sexual, verbal/emotional or psychological. Some of the factors that contribute to it include alcoholism, alleged misconducts, cultural norm (some cultures believes that women are men's property and thus, should be meek or else, get penalized) (Prem, 2012).

In Orlu agricultural zone of Imo State, the story is not different from what is happening in other parts of the world in respect of domestic violence. It has been observed that many women suffer varying dimensions of domestic violence especially emotional/psychological violence. Traditionally in the area, it is widely believed that a married woman is a property of the husband and as such could be used by him as he deems fit. Also, women who divorce their husband are treated with less respect in the culture with the belief that they are not responsible enough to maintain their marital homes. This results in many women silently bearing untold violence in the hands of their husband in order to maintain their homes. They prefer to suffer in silence than to divorce and be seen as an irresponsible person who cannot maintain her marital home. This affects many of them in their different activities as their concentration and productivity is affected. It is necessary for the different stakeholders in the zone to study and understand the nature of domestic violence experienced by these women and also identify possible ways of reducing this vice in the area.

Therefore, bearing in mind the importance of the agricultural sector to nation's economy and contributing to the alleviation of domestic violence in the rural communities of the nation, this study identified the socio-economic determinants of domestic violence suffered by rural women crop farmers in Orlu agricultural zone of Imo State. Specifically, it described the socio- economic characteristics of the respondents and examined the nature of domestic violence suffered by the women in the study area.

## **Methodology**

The study was conducted in Orlu Agricultural Zone (OAZ) of Imo State. Imo State is among the South-eastern states in Nigeria. The major occupation of the people of the state is farming. The population of the study comprises of registered rural women-crop farmers in OAZ. To ensure that women from all communities in the zone were represented in the study, multi-stage sampling procedure was used for the study. In the first stage, four extension blocks were randomly selected from 10 blocks in the zone. The second stage involved random selection of two circles from each of the selected blocks giving a total of eight circles. The last stage involved random selection of ten women-crop farmers from each of the selected eight circles giving a total of eighty women crop farmers for the study. However only 76 copies of the interview schedule were used for analysis, four respondents did not properly attend to the questionnaire hence was not valid for analysis.

Data were collected through the use of structured interview schedule. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools namely frequency distribution, mean and percentages. The nature of domestic violence faced by rural women and reasons for domestic violence were captured using a 4point-Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). A midpoint of 2.50 was obtained and based on this, decision rule was that any mean score greater than or equal to 2.50 implies agreement with the nature of domestic violence, and any mean score less than 2.50 implies disagreement.

The socio-economic determinants of domestic violence were identified using an ordinary least square multiple regression analysis.

The Model specification is implicitly stated as follows:

$$Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7, X_8, e)$$

Where Y= pooled index of nature of domestic violence suffered by women crop farmers in the study area measured with a four point Likert-type scale of strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2 and strongly disagree = 1

X<sub>1</sub> = Age (measured in years)

X<sub>2</sub> = Duration of marriage (measured in years)

X<sub>3</sub> = Educational qualification (No of years in school)

X<sub>4</sub> = major occupation (Farming =1, Non-farming = 2)

X<sub>5</sub> = Monthly income (measured in naira)

X<sub>6</sub> = Religion (Christianity = 1, traditional = 2)

X<sub>7</sub> = No of biological children (No of children given birth to by the women)

X<sub>8</sub> = Household size (no of persons per household)

X<sub>9</sub> =use of modern contraceptive (No = 1, Yes = 1)

X<sub>10</sub> = Number of wives (No of wives your spouse married)

e = error term

The relationship between the dependent and each of the independent variables were examined using the four functional forms: linear, semi-log, exponential and double-log. A lead equation was chosen based on the magnitude of multiple determination (R<sup>2</sup>) and statistical significance of variables.

Linear:  $Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + B_5X_5 + B_6X_6 + B_7X_7 + B_8X_8 + B_9X_9 + B_{10}X_{10} + e$

Semi-Log:  $Y = B_0 + B_1 \log X_1 + B_2 \log X_2 + B_3 \log X_3 + B_4 \log X_4 + B_5 \log X_5 + B_6 \log X_6 + B_7 \log X_7 + B_8 \log X_8 + B_9 \log X_9 + B_{10} \log X_{10} + e$

Exponential:  $\log Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + B_5X_5 + B_6X_6 + B_7X_7 + B_8X_8 + B_9X_9 + B_{10}X_{10} + e$

Double Log:  $\log Y = B_0 + B_1 \log X_1 + B_2 \log X_2 + B_3 \log X_3 + B_4 \log X_4 + B_5 \log X_5 + B_6 \log X_6 + B_7 \log X_7 + B_8 \log X_8 + B_9 \log X_9 + B_{10} \log X_{10} + e$

B<sub>0</sub> = intercept

B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>...B<sub>8</sub> =estimated coefficients

## **Results and Discussions**

### **Socio-economic Characteristics**

Results show that 68.5% of the women were 40 years and below. This reveals that the majority of the women used for the study were middle-aged women who could be said to be still in their productive and child bearing age. As such any form of domestic violence experienced may significantly affect their productivity.

Results also show that the majority (81.4%) of the women were legally married while the remaining 18.6% were not legally married.

As regards duration of marriage, it was shown that, 88.7% of the women had spent at least 8 years in their marriage. Approximately, 71% of the women had at most secondary school education while 7.9% had no formal education. This is not surprising as rural inhabitants do not encourage the education of their women, (Taiwo, 2012). They opined that women should be married off to take care of their husbands and children. Only 23.3% of the women earned above N20, 000 on monthly basis. The majority (52.7%) had more than five biological children. This revealed that women in the rural area still indulge in bearing high number of children as against most urban families who bear lesser number of children. The majority (77.6%) of the women maintained a household size of at least 10 persons while 51.3% do not use modern contraceptive. It was also shown that the major occupation of their spouses is non - agricultural activities (58.4%). This revealed that farming activities in most rural areas were spearheaded by women. Most men who indulge in agricultural activities in this area had other major means of income as such use agricultural activities as a supplementary means of income generation. This showcases more the need to improve the production capacity of rural women as they are the major stakeholders in agricultural production in the rural areas. Furthermore, findings show that the majority (85.5%) of the respondents have spouses that are older than them while about 82.9% have age difference of at least 10 years from those of their spouses. It was further shown that the majority (76.3%) of the women were into monogamy, this may not be surprising as the area is dominated by Christians (92.1%) whose religion do not accept polygamy.

**Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents**

Characteristics	Mean	Percentage
<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>37</b>	
<30		23.7
31-40		44.8
41-50		23.7
Above 50		1.3
<b>Marital status</b>		
Not legally married		18.6
Married		81.4
<b>Duration of marriage (years)</b>	<b>10</b>	
< 7		34
8-13		36
14-19		20
Above 20		10
<b>Educational status</b>		
No formal education		7.9
Primary		48.7
Secondary		22.3
Tertiary		21.1
<b>Major occupation</b>		
Farming		69.7
Non-farming		30.3
<b>Monthly income</b>		
< 5,000		3.9
5,000-12,000		45.5
12,001-20,000		27.3
Above 20,000		23.3
<b>No of your biological child</b>	<b>5</b>	
0-2		19.7
3-5		27.6
Above 5		52.7
<b>Household size</b>	<b>7</b>	
1 – 5		38.1
6 – 10		39.5
Above 10		22.4
<b>Use of modern contraceptives</b>		
Yes		48.7
No		51.3
<b>Major Occupation of your spouse</b>		
Agricultural		31.6
Non-Agricultural		68.4
<b>Who is older?</b>		
Myself		14.5
My spouse		85.5
<b>Age difference between you and your spouse</b>	<b>7</b>	
1-5		39.5
6-10		43.4
Above 10		17.1
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity		92.1
Traditional		7.9
<b>How many wives does your husband have?</b>	<b>1</b>	
Only myself		76.3
2		17.1
3		5.3
4		1.3

Source: Field survey, 2013

## **Nature of Domestic Violence faced by Women in Orlu Agricultural Zone of Imo State.**

All (100%) the rural women consented that women suffer varying forms of domestic violence in the hands of their spouses. The nature of domestic violence faced by the rural women in the area was categorized into four namely: physical violence, emotional/psychological violence, financial/economic violence and sexual violence. Out of the 42 variables used to capture nature of domestic violence suffered by women in the study area, only eight reached the cutoff point of 2.50. These include; am threatened with words and shouts (M = 2.5), he humiliates me in front of friends, family and strangers (M = 2.5), he calls me names and uses abusive language (M = 2.7), am often criticized and humiliated (2.5), he uses disproportionate anger or yelling to intimidate me (M = 2.7), he irrationally blames me for everything (2.7), he withholds affection, approval or appreciation as a punishment (M = 2.7) and he threatens me with weapons (2.5). The result showed that though women are physically abused, the most prominent form of abuse experienced by women in the study area fall under emotional/psychological violence. This agrees with the findings of Koenig *et.al.*, (2003), which identified verbal violence as the most form of violence experienced by women in rural Uganda. Men are known to earn higher income than the women in most families in Nigeria, this may account for the low mean values of variable under financial violence as some men may not bother their wives since they earn higher income than them.

**Table 2: Mean distribution of women by the nature of domestic violence faced.**

Nature of domestic violence experienced by women	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Physical Violence</b>		
Hitting, beating, choking, pushing, slapping, kicking, pulling hair, biting, punching, backhanding, arm-twisting, shoving or burning	2.1	0.817
Throwing and hitting me with objects	2.1	0.926
Locks me out of the house	2.0	0.765
I am denied medical help/attention	2.1	0.692
I am denied basic physical needs(eating and sleeping)	2.2	0.801
He shoves and drags me around the house	2.2	0.901
He locks me up/starve me and the kids	2.3	0.954
<b>Emotional/psychological Violence</b>		
He threatens me with words/shouts	2.5*	0.945
He humiliates me in front of friends, family or strangers	2.5*	0.901
He calls me names and uses abusive language	2.7*	0.977
I am often criticized and humiliated	2.5*	0.931
He uses disproportionate anger or yelling to intimidate me	2.7*	0.902
He irrationally blames me for everything	2.7*	0.861
He withholds affection, approval or appreciation as a punishment	2.7*	0.866
I suffer obsessive jealousy and accusation of unfaithfulness	2.3	0.870
He uses intimate knowledge of me to abuse me	2.1	0.943
He threatens to harm himself or commit suicide just to punish me	2.2	0.922
He tells false stories about me	2.1	0.864
He unnecessarily monitors my phone calls, mails or visits	2.2	0.820
He insults, threatens or assaults my friends or family; driving them away	2.2	0.771
<b>Financial/economic violence</b>		
He intimidates and extorts my money	2.1	0.926
He forbids me to work	1.9	0.776
He jeopardizes my employment by negative tactics example; creating conflict with co-workers, supervisors or clients; creating scenes with co-workers; forcing me to miss work through threats	1.9	0.812
He refuses to work yet contributes to expenses	1.9	0.769
He denies me access to shared resources, including bank accounts and common property	2.1	0.786
He forces me to pay for all expenses including rent, food and utilities	2.0	0.879
He steals and sells my properties as a means of affecting my financial situation	2.0	0.816
He destroys my properties as a means of affecting my financial situation	2.0	0.886
He seizes my credit cards, money or Cheque book	2.0	0.915
<b>Sexual violence</b>	2.2	
He makes caricature of my body/appearance	2.1	0.869
He forces sex or sexual actions on me without my consent (marital rape)	2.2	0.988
He refuses to comply with my request for safe sex	2.1	0.984
He forces me to have sex with others	2.0	0.909
He violates our agreements for monogamy by having sex with others	2.3	0.946
He exposes me to sexually transmitted diseases by his reckless sex affairs	2.3	0.839
He treats me as a sex object	2.3	0.822
He criticizes my sexual performance or desirability	2.3	0.901
He withholds sex from me as a punishment	2.2	0.889

- Agree Source: Field survey, 2013

### Reasons for Domestic Violence

Table 3 shows that disagreement over money ( $x=3.0$ ) was the major reasons and cause of domestic violence. This is not surprising in a country where the economy is poor putting low income earners under undue stress and pressure. In the olden days, women from this area were not allowed to engage in other jobs outside family chores but now women engage in all kinds of work outside family chores in order to support their husbands in taking care of family needs. Despite this effort by women, the financial stress on the family is still much and most time brings quarrel between them and their spouses.

Other reasons for domestic violence among women in the study area include failure to perform domestic duties ( $\bar{x} = 2.7$ ), disobedience to husband ( $\bar{x} = 2.7$ ), sharing marital problems with friends ( $\bar{x} = 2.7$ ). It was gathered from the women during the interview schedule that engaging in other jobs puts much stress on them and affects the level of commitment to family chores. Some of them said their jobs were even more tasking than their husbands own yet the man comes home and refuses to lend a helping hand in doing the family chores. According to the women, even in the farm work, the bulk of the work is done by them which weaken them. They also emphasize that their husbands were too secretive even to their own detriment. In times of family crisis, they would rather prefer to die in silence than to seek counseling from more matured couple, when they try to do it on their own for the betterment of the family, the end product is always severe beating from the husband. Refusal to have sex ( $\bar{x} = 2.6$ ), disobedience to husbands elderly relations ( $\bar{x} = 2.6$ ), doing things without his consent ( $\bar{x} = 2.6$ ), unnecessary extravagance with money ( $\bar{x} = 2.5$ ), disagreement over number of children to have ( $\bar{x} = 2.5$ ), disagreement over choice of friends ( $\bar{x} = 2.5$ ), revealing the husband secret ( $\bar{x} = 2.5$ ) and comparing my husband with more successful mates ( $\bar{x} = 2.6$ ) were also some of the reasons for domestic violence in the study area.

It is a common belief in the study area and even in some African countries in general that a man alone does not marry his wife. Implying that the women owe every member of the husband's family due respect. According to the women in the study area, some husbands can condone disrespect from their wives but cannot overlook disrespect shown to the elderly member of their family by their wife. Also, refusal to have sex is one of the major causes of domestic violence in the study area. The women complained that their husbands do not take cognizance of their state; whether they are weak or not, they only want to satisfy their sex urge. Some of them who use natural way of family planning said that even when they are not in their safe period their husbands insist on having sex leading to unwanted pregnancy which the husband will insist on abortion. Failure to carry out the abortion always results in severe beating and further rejection from their husbands.

**Table 3: Mean distribution on reasons for domestic violence**

Reasons for domestic violence	Mean	Standard deviation
Disagreements over money	3.0	0.825*
Failure to perform domestic chores	2.7	0.746*
Refusal to have sex	2.6	0.934*
Use of contraception without his permission	2.4	0.938
Disobedience to husbands` elderly relations	2.6	0.761*
Disobedience to husband	2.7	0.917*
Being suspected of infidelity	2.4	0.985
Insistence on the use of contraceptives/condom	2.1	0.888
Suspected of being HIV positive	2.1	0.903
Sharing marital problems with friends	2.7	0.836*
Doing things without his consent	2.6	0.936*
Unnecessary extravagance with money	2.5	0.917*
Childlessness	2.2	0.994
Inability to have male children	2.2	0.950
Disagreement over number of children to have	2.5	0.986*
Disagreement over choice of friends	2.5	0.756*
Revealing the man`s secret discussion with me	2.5	0.791*
Rudely comparing my husband with more successful mates	2.6	0.875*
Not treating the man`s family well	2.3	0.780
Over catering for members of her fathers` family	2.3	0.817

- Agree **Source: Field survey 2013**

### **Socio-economic Determinants of Domestic Violence Among Rural Women.**

Table 4 reveals that 39.1% of the variation in domestic violence experienced by women in the study area could be explained by their socio-economic characteristics in the equation.

The result indicated that two (household size and no of wives) of the ten independent variables correlated positively and significantly with nature of domestic violence experienced by women in the area while four (age, duration of marriage, religion and educational status) correlated negatively and significantly with the nature of domestic violence. The coefficient of determination for age and duration of marriage correlated negatively with the nature of domestic violence experienced by women in the study area with a t-value of -6.144 and -7.003, respectively which was significant at both 0.01 and 0.05 level of probability. This could imply that as the couple advance in both their chronological age and duration of marriage they tend to understand and

tolerate themselves better thereby reducing the level of domestic violence. Educational status also correlated negatively and significantly with the nature of domestic violence with a t-value of -6.377 which was significant at both 0.01 and 0.05 level of probability. This could imply that the more educated couple experience less domestic violence as education exposes them to more meaningful ways of managing conflicts in their homes. Also, religion was found to correlate negatively and significantly with the nature of domestic violence with a t-value of -3.167 which was significant at 0.05 probability level. The socio-economic characteristics show that approximately 92% of the women used for this study were Christians. Christianity upholds peaceful co-existence of couple in marriage and helps her members through teachings and admonishments to maintain peaceful homes. This may be the reason why the level of domestic violence reduces as the women increase their religious inclinations. Household size and number of wives were found to correlate positively and significantly with the nature of domestic violence with t-values of 5.859 and 4.845, respectively. Increase in these two factors will increase responsibility as the man will have more people to feed and cater for. Also there will be personalities in the house to understand and tolerate. The probability of experiencing domestic violence may also increase.

**Table 4: Socio-economic determinants of domestic violence among women**

Variable	Functional form			
	Linear	Semi- log	Double Log	Exponential
Constant	21.487 (5.188)**	48.403 (3.165)**	.254 (8.912)**	.113 (18.338)**
Age	-.394 (-6.144)**	-.040 (-4.264)**	-.040 (-4.111)**	.024 (.160)
Duration of marriage	-.167 (-7.003)**	-.081 (-5.515)**	-.076 (-3.485)**	-.163 (-2.976)**
Educational status	-.178 (-6.377)**	-.189 (-1.529)	-.190 (6.538)**	-.180 (-5.394)**
Major occupation	0.045 (.391)	.056 (.486)	.060 (.520)	.051 (.441)
Monthly income	-.217 (-1.638)	-.154 (1.225)	-.133 (-1.055)	-.198 (-1.494)
Religion	-.132 (-3.167)*	.110 (2.974)**	.099 (.876)	.120 (4.058)**
No of biological children	.085 (.716)	-.124 (-1.063)	-.164 (-1.407)	-1.052 (.297)
Household size	.206 (5.859)**	-.216 (-1.931)	.209 (2.873)**	-2.00 (-1.798)
Use of modern contraceptive	.193 (1.729)	.200 (1.772)	.171 (1.520)	.167 (1.494)
Number of wives	.205 (4.845)**	.187 (3.644)**	.209 (5.841)**	.224 (2.013)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.391	0.328	0.232	0.231
F-Stat	10.895	10.561	7.230	7.507
Prob (F-Stat)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001

Figures in the first row are regression Coefficients

t-ratios are in parentheses. \*P≤0.05; \*\*P≤ 0.01

**Source: Field data, 2013**

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings of the study indicated that duration of marriage, educational status, religion, household size, religion, number of wives and age are the socio-economic determinants of domestic violence in the study area. Also, emotional/psychological violence was found to be the most prominent type of domestic violence suffered by women in the study area. Religious bodies should be encouraged to educate their members on effective ways of handling marital problem as well as the detrimental effects of domestic violence. This could be done through marriage workshops, seminars and marriage classes normally held for intending couples. Also, government and NGOs through television and radio programme, workshops and seminars should sensitize the men on the detrimental effects of marrying many

wives and maintaining large household size as these increase the occurrence of domestic violence.

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