

Coverage of Gender-Based Violence in IDP Camps: A critical Analysis of select Nigerian Newspapers

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ABSTRACT

Newspaper Coverage of Gender-Based Violence in IDP Camps investigated how the media reported the continuous increase in the perpetration of gender-based violence against women in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to find the kind of gender-based violence mostly reported in Nigerian newspapers, whether gender-based violence against women in IDP camps are adequately covered in the media and the dominant media frame used in the coverage of gender-based violence against women in IDP camps. The study adopted content analysis research method in achieving the above objectives. The study was anchored on social responsibility, Agenda-setting and framing theories of mass communication. Findings revealed that that the media did not give adequate report to gender-based violence against women in IDP camps. Their contents failed to ridicule the acts in such a way that can expose the implications of the crimes in order to attract public condemnation and application of the law for its control. It was equally observed that sexual violence is the kind of gender based violence mostly reported with defenselessness frame dominating the media frame of reports among the newspapers understudy. The researchers therefore, recommended that while security networks should be improved in IDP camps, the media should brace-up in their coverage of gender-based violence against women in IDP camps to serve as the voice to the voiceless which they are.

KEYWORDS: Gender-based, Violence, IDP, Newspaper, Coverage

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background of study

For sometime now, gender based violence has been a household language in the world following the level of insecurity and subsequent break out of insurgency globally. The term gender-based violence is used to distinguish common violence from violence that targets individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender. Gender-based violence (GBV), primarily against women, is a pervasive, global phenomenon affecting both developed and developing countries. Drawing from the World Health Organization (2013) data, over 35% of the world's female population has experienced gender-based violence at one point or the other in their lives time. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF, 2013), "GBV is a serious public health concern that also impedes the crucial role of women and girls in development." The issue of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has been a major one in academic and social discourse. By way of its meaning and scope, GBV had been defined variously by different authorities.

According to CEDAW Committee (2013) GBV is violence that is directed at a person or group of persons on the basis of their gender or sex. Gender-based violence can be against female as well as male. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. While gender-based violence has a devastating impact on the lives of women and girls who are the majority of victims/survivors, it also hinders the development of men and boys. UNHCR (2003) defines (GBV) from the effect of that interaction that results in physical, sexual or psychological discomfort.

Gender-based violence (GBV) has assumed a serious dimension in public health discourse following the increase in number of internally displaced peoples around the world. It has assumed a certain level of human rights violation with attending negative consequences that impact people's lives, including those of women, girls, boys, the elderly and other demographic groups (Maina, 2015). Perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence are sometimes the very people upon whom survivors depend to assist and protect them. Most cases of sexual and gender-based violence involve a female victim/survivor and a male perpetrator. Most acts of gender-based violence against boys and men are also committed by male perpetrators. The steady increase in the

number of IDPs over the past ten years reflects the changing nature of conflict worldwide. Issues of poverty, increasing inequality and social frustration also form the backdrop to Boko Haram's emergence and expansion in Nigeria. Outbreaks of violence leading to significant situations of internal displacement are frequent in Nigeria, with at least 14,000 people killed and hundreds of thousands displaced since military rule ended in 1999 (IDMC, 2007) Gender based violence encompasses a lot of things including but not limited to acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. It is pertinent to state here that while women, men, boys and girls can be victims of gender-based violence, women and girls are the main victims of gender based violence. Gender based violence can take any of the following forms:

1. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse of children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.
2. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.
3. Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State and institutions, wherever it occurs. Security forces and soldiers, including peacekeepers are often the embodiment of ultimate power. They are usually armed and have been mandated to ensure security in communities. In some settings, soldiers can and do detain and/or arrest people with impunity. Often, soldiers and security forces are in the position of granting or withholding rights and privileges for refugees. Crossing borders, going through checkpoints, and requesting goods and services from armed forces can increase the risk of becoming subjected to sexual and gender-based violence, especially for refugee women.

Among the three categories, the main stay of this study is the third classification of the places through which gender based violence can be perpetrated.

Undoubtedly, the mass media have a significant role to play in controlling this ugly menace in the society. A situation where security agencies turned around to use opportunity of being in-charge of refugees to inflict unwanted injuries on the IDPs is an aberration that deserves negative media attention. The expected role of the media in the matter of increased gender based violence against IPDs was vividly captured in the words of Joseph Pulitzer, the Hungarian-American newspaper publisher who established and endowed the Pulitzer prizes to honour excellence in journalism as cited in Oloyede, (2011, p. 64) who posit that "there is not a crime, there is not a dodge, there is not a trick, there is not a swindle, there is not a vice which does not live by secrecy. Get all these things out in the open, describe them, ridicule them in the press and sooner or later, public opinion will sweep them away".

Considering the height of importance of the media in the societal growth and development, Nwabueze and Ebeze, (2013) argue that the press which are both print and electronic mass media, constitute a major pillar that shapes, nurtures and builds the society. The import of this statement is that the press has the power and the strength to condemn an action through their publication and such publication will command public views and the public will equally see such action as condemned. The authors further state that the traditional roles of the mass media in any society which are to inform, educate and entertain are so crucial that societies can hardly progress meaningfully without these channels of mass communication. In the wake of the increase in gender based violence against women in IDPs, what has the media done to at least make the public know the ugly situation in the Internal Displaced Persons camps in Nigeria? It was in the need to provide an answer to the question above, that this study evaluated Nigerian newspapers' coverage of gender-based violence against women in their IDP camps (in a view to find how they covered the incidence).

Statement of problem

What is not totally and will never be totally absent in any society is crime. The state of insecurity in Nigeria is made obvious by the alarming trend of anti-social acts prevalent in the nation which in the not-so-distant past, were unthinkable and could not be associated with the country (Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013). Acts of terrorism by the Boko Haram Islamic sect, incidents of kidnapping in the Southeast and South-south parts of the country have resulted in different kinds of crimes including perpetration of gender based violence against IDPs which has been on the increase in the country. While citing Historians.Org, (2001), Nwabueze, (2011) sees crime as an anti-social act or a failure/refusal to live up to the standard of conduct deemed binding by the rest of the community. It is not out of tune that the perpetrators of gender-based violence have refused to live up to standard acceptable by the rest of the community. The question is, how far has the media gone in exposing these evils that are done on daily bases as society's watchdog and partners in progress with the responsibility of speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves? For in the end, the gender-based victims and survivors

shall remember not the voice of their enemies, but the silence of their friends. Against this backdrop, this study examined newspaper coverage of the gender-based violence against women in IDP camps around the country.

Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions

1. What is the kind of gender-based violence against women in IDP camps mostly reported in the select Nigerian newspapers?
2. Do the media give adequate coverage to gender-based violence against women in IDP camps?
3. What is the dominant media frame used in the coverage of gender-based violence in IDP camps in selected Nigerian newspapers?

Significance of study

This study will serve as a wake-up call to the media on the need to shine light on the level of moral decadence prevalence in various IDP camps in the country. It will challenge the security personnel in charge of different IDP camps to mind their duty knowing that people are watching what is going on and inhuman acts being perpetrated against innocent refugees in the camp. The study will equally put the government in the know concerning gender-based violence against women in the internally displaced peoples' camps. Finally, this study will serve as a reference material for future studies in the area of media and gender-based violence against women in IDP camps.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study covers only the manifest contents of the selected Nigerian newspapers concerning gender based violence against internal displace persons in the refugee camps. Any other kind of manifest content reported in the selected newspapers that does not take place in the IDP camps is not covered in the study. This study is limited to the fact that the level of record keeping in the Nigerian libraries is nothing to write home about. There are tendencies of not getting all the editions of the newspapers selected for the study or even all the pages may not be intact for thorough examination and analysis. In this sense, the study becomes limited to only the available editions of the selected Nigerian newspapers published within the months of study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Causes of Gender-Based Violence

The root causes of gender-based violence lie in a society's attitudes towards and practices of gender discrimination, which place the feminine gender in a subordinate position in relation to their masculine counterpart. The lack of social and economic value for women and women's work and accepted gender roles perpetuate and reinforce the assumption that men have decision-making power and control over women (UNIFEM, 2000). Through acts of gender-based violence, whether individual or collective, perpetrators seek to maintain privileges, power and control over others. Gender roles and identities are determined by sex, age, socio-economic conditions, ethnicity, nationality and religion. Relationships between male and female, female and female, and male and male individuals are also marked by different levels of authority and power that maintain privileges and subordination among the members of a society. The disregard for or lack of awareness about human rights, gender equity, democracy and non-violent means of resolving problems help perpetuate these inequalities (UNHCR Code of Conduct, 2002). Among the IDP camps in Nigeria where the reports of gender-based violence are reported in the media include Area one IDP camp in Abuja, new Kuchingoro IDP camp, Kuje IDP camp etc.

Empirical Studies

Universally, studies about GBV have been taken from the angle of the women. To support this, legislative and health measures are taken to protect the interest of women George, 1994, cited in Animasaun & Animasaun, (2013). The argument in support of this is that there are more reports and studies on female victims of gender-based violence than male. This is why literature abounds that domesticates violence as domestic and social phenomenon attributed to patriarchy, and women as victims and men as perpetrators (Dobash and Dobash 1979) in (Alooma 2012). However, there is a group that believes that the paucity of studies of male victims of violence is the more reason there should be serious studies (Animasaun & Animasaun, 2013). Thus, data have been drawn from the media (Alooma 2012), internet source (Naijamovie 2012), police reports (Ibrahim and Mohammed, 2016) medical reports (Asekun-Olarinmoye and Fawole 2010) and counseling agencies. The support that female has got cannot be divorced from the position arrogated to patriarchy by the society, as the men are expected to be in control at all times. This does not mean that the male counterparts are not object of gender based violence in both the family and elsewhere in the globe. It should therefore not be taken for granted that some women beat hell out of their husbands in their household.

Theoretical framework

Social Responsibility Theory

This research is premised on social responsibility theory of the press which states that though the press should have freedom to carry out their duties, such duties should be guided by self-regulation and government regulations where necessary (Nwabueze, 2012). Social responsibility according Ekeli, (2008, p. 338) originated from the moral philosophy that is directed at protecting the small, poor, the helpless and the underprivileged against the ominous power and high handedness of the big, the rich, powerful, and the very privileged. In this respect, the media is expected to be the voice of the voiceless. Reporting gender-based violence in IDP camps will expose the public to the evil actions being perpetrated against women in the camps. This is information and education to the public who are not aware of such bad development. The media therefore, should not shy away from this role because it is humanitarian in nature. Relating this theory to this study, it is pertinent to note that the people in the IDP camps are helpless and voiceless. So it is the media that can serve as their voice linking their respective problems to both government and non-governmental organizations for help to be granted. Until the crimes of the bad ones are exposed, they will continue to thrive in our society. These crimes are supposed to be exposed by the media for public opinion to take its real course. Even governance itself is a communication-based activity and therefore cannot thrive in the absence of communication. This view makes the social responsibility theory relevant to the study.

The agenda setting theory

The agenda setting theory was employed as the theoretical base of this research work. This theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in the year 1972. The theory posits that the media lead the public in assigning relative importance to various public issues (Miller, 2002). Thus, the media agenda influences the public agenda by giving more space and time as well as more prominence to some issues where others are left uncovered. That is, if the media highlight an issue, the issue is likely to be seen as important item on the public agenda (Miller, 2002). However, if the media decide to ignore an issue, no matter how crucial it is to the development of the society, the issue may not be the subject of public debate (McCombs, 2003). In this same vein, if the media kept silent on the gender-based violence against IPDs, the issue will never command public attention not to talk of reaction from either the government or none governmental organizations in where in the world. Folarin (2005) outline the elements that are involved in agenda setting as follows:

- The quality of frequency of reporting
- Prominence given to the reports through headlines, pictures, display etc.
- The degree of conflict generated in the reports and
- Cumulative media-specific effects over time.

This theory is relevant to this study because the agenda setting role of the media is very vital in raising awareness about the problems of the society and finding solutions that will enhance a positive development and peaceful co-existence.

The Framing Theory of Mass Communication

Drawing from Scheufele & Iyengar (2010) the mass media promote a particular definition of an issue through selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. The onus here is how did the selected media framed this gender-based violence against women in the country. It should be on record that committing gender-based violence is gradually evolving as a culture in Nigeria. Little press attention been given to analyzing the reason for continued gender-based violence. This is because, the style used in telling a given story or narrating a given episode subtly prepares the minds of its audience towards a predetermined direction personally controlled by the personal desires of the story tellers who are the media (Agudosy, Ikegbunam and Obiakor, 2018).

Framing is one of the media effects theories, largely used in analyzing how the mass-media filters information and, thus, influences the public's reactions to a whole range of external stimuli (De Vreese, 2007). Through media portrayal of issues, public attitudes can be shape towards the direction the media wanted (Azlan, 2012). At this point what the people knew and what their attitudes are, play significance roles in determining the adoption of media frames about gender-based violence reports in a country that left greater percent of women in IDP camps in sad mood all the time.

Frames influence the perception of the news by readers, listeners and viewers (Adeniran, Hassan, Mikaila & Kayode, 2015). The import of the above statement is that frames are the ways in which the media and media gate-keepers organize and present events and issues they cover, and the way the audience interprets what they are provided. In other words, since the media frame influences audience interpretation of messages, it is imperative to note that negative media framing of any issue will attract negative perception and interpretation of such issue by the audience (Agudosy, Ikegbunam and Obiakor, 2018). This is the base of our argument here. If

the media should do the needful by making the general public to understand that the gender-based violence is a crime against humanity, the people will see the act in that way.

Further, Maher, (2003) affirmed that framing implies relationship among elements in a message because those elements have been organized by the communicator rather than the reader. It is very clear that immoralities are growing geometrically in Nigeria unabated with minimal or no punishment for the perpetrators of such immoralities. In a situation like this, the media is expected to paint a picture of gross inhumanity on the part of the perpetrators of gender-based violence. If this gender-based violence and its related side-effects on the individual and the society receive negative media framing, the audience will perceive it from the negative sense and this will in turn make the people to know that such acts are immoral, inhuman and uncalled for. It will equally force the government to try and do something to safeguard the women in IDP camps the more.

III. METHODOLOGY

Content analysis was adopted as a research method in this study as media reportage of IDPs in camps constituted the major source of primary data for this study. The population of the study comprises of all editions of *Daily Trust*, *This-Day* and *The Nation* newspapers from January to March, 2020. The total population of the studied editions was 273 papers from *Daily Trust*, *This-Day* and *The Nation* newspapers. Total of 205 stories on gender-base violence against women in IDP camps were reported by the three papers. The three newspapers were selected based on accessibility, their location or base and wide circulation in the country.

The sample size for the study was determined via census approach as Asemah, Gujbowu, Ekhareafu, and Okphanachi, (2012) assert that census is attractive for small populations. And hence the population of the study is 273 papers, census was considered appropriate given that the number is manageable. The units of analysis for this study were pictures, feature stories and straight news stories and the content categories were prominence, frequency and frames. The coding sheet however was used as instrument to content analyze reports on IDPs by *Daily Trust*, *This-Day* and *The Nation* newspapers.

Data Presentation and Analysis

From 273 publications of the three newspapers, a total of 205 stories were published on gender-based violence against women in IDP camps.

Table 1: Showing the types of gender-based violence mostly covered in IDP camps

Type of gender-based violence in IDPs camps	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>This-Day</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	Freq	%
Sexual violence	35	27	33	95	46.3%
Physical violence	19	13	19	51	24.8%
Harmful traditional practices	7	5	4	7	3.4%
Socio-economic violence	5	7	4	16	7.8%
Emotional & psychological violence	10	9	8	27	13.1%
TOTAL	76(38)	61(29)	68(33)	205	100

Source: researcher's content analysis, 2020

From the table 1, sexual violence came first with a total of 95 items or 46.3% of the population followed by physical violence with a total of 51 items or 24.8% of the total items observed. This was followed by Emotional & psychological violence with a total of 27 items or 13.1%. Socio-economic violence has only 16 items or 7.8% where as harmful traditional practices came last in the table with a total of 7 items or 3.4% t of the total items observed and analyzed. The import of the above data is that the type of gender-based violence mostly reported in the media is sexual violence against the victims. This calls for sober reflection and proper review of the security networks guarding the various IDP camps in the country.

Table 2: Do the media gave adequate coverage to gender-based violence against women in IDP camps

Variables	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>This-Day</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	Freq	%
January	8	4	9	21	10.2
February	56	41	45	142	69.2
March	12	16	14	42	20.4
Total	76(38)	61(29)	68(33)	205	100

Source: Researcher's contents analysis, 2020

From the data in this table, it can be seen that the newspapers under investigation did not report gender-based violence frequently within the period understudy. There are total of 91 days within the period, yet the total number of stories published in three newspapers was 205. This implies that as gender-based violence against women in IDP camps grows inside the various camps in Nigeria, the media reports on the incidences decreases by the day. A normal news report that can serve as a better reflection of gender-based violence against women in IDP camps would have had a higher number of stories if it were be adequate enough to attract the attention of the government and sway public opinion against the act. This shows that the newspapers did not live up to expectations in their coverage of gender-based violence in IDP camps

Table 3: Showing the media frames used in the coverage of gender based violence in IDP camps

Variable	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>This-Day</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	Freq	%
Pity frame	21	14	17	52	25.3
Defenselessness frame	36	31	37	104	50.7
Heartlessness frame	19	16	14	49	23.9
Total	76(37)	61(30)	68(33)	205	100

Source: Researcher’s content analysis, 2020

From table 3, it was found that of the 205 items observed as published in the selected newspapers, a whole of 104 items or 50.7% presents the victims as defenseless in the camp while 52 items or 25.3% arouses pity for them. The remaining 49 items or 23.9% of the items shows that the perpetrators of these atrocious acts are heartless. This demonstrated the dominant media frame used in the coverage is the defenseless frame. The implication of this finding is that the people in the IDP camps needs better security to defend them from the possible inversion from any enemy that would try to take advantage of their conditions and violate them.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Looking at the most reported gender-based violence among select newspapers, it was observed that the most reported gender based-violence against women in IDP camps is sexual violence. This finding corroborates earlier statement in Nwabueze and Oduah, (2013) when they affirmed that rape cases are rampant in Nigeria. This finding confirms that of Bazza, (2010) which found that the most common kind of gender based violence against women is sexual harassment. At the same time, the study disagrees with the views held by earlier media scholars that the sexual violence are hardly reported in the media because of the attending shame that accompanies it (Nwabueze and Oduah, 2013).

The field data from the second research question seeking to verify whether the media did well by issuing frequent report of gender-based violence against women in IDP camps, the researcher found that the media failed to report more on gender-based violence against women in IDP camps within the period understudy. This finding corroborates earlier finding by earlier media scholars that domestic violence is usually under-reported (Daniel, Aniekeme and Nnamdie, 2019). It is a fall out of the media on the agenda setting and social responsibility theory which sees the press as the voice of the voiceless in the society (Ekeli, 2008, p. 338; Agudoso, Ikegbunam and Obiakor, 2018). By virtue of the level of vulnerability, the women and girl children in IDP camps are susceptible to different kinds of gender-based violence especially in IDP camps like this case.

On the third research question posed to ascertain the dominant media frame used in the coverage of gender-based violence in IDP camps, it was found that the dominant media frame used among select media is defenselessness frame (see table 3). This finding is in tandem with those of Owusu-Addo, Owusu-Addo, Antoh, Sarpong, Obeng-Okrah and Annan (2018) who found that the media framed the women as helpless victims. It is obvious from the reports that the victims of all these gender-based violence are defenseless in all ramification, hence the perpetration of the crimes against them, often times without anybody to ask questions about the crimes. In discussing gender-based violence, the mass media are placed on the side of responsibility to deliver the needed views in order to ensure that the lives and health of women in IDP camps are free from gender-based violence of any kind. This is because of the media power to shape and manipulate the public opinions and discussions in matters that affects the larger society. This was captured more clearly in Carll (2003) when he argues that the mass media features are seen as the most vibrant priority area in primary prevention of gender-based violence because it have the potential influence to guide and shape public understanding of violence against women. Moreover, it is pertinent to state that since the media report have portrayed the victims of gender-based violence as defenceless, people will begin to see them like that drawing from the position of framing theory.

Considering the why and how of media influence on its audience believe system, Eastael, Holland, & Judd, (2015) vehemently argued that unquestionably, the way information is structured can increase public understanding of gender based violence against women and, more importantly, challenge its place in society. Actually, this study is not in total support of the passive nature of the media audience but admits the view held

in Flood and Pease, (2009) where it was affirmed that who or what is selected to appear in the news and how those individuals and events are portrayed in the media can have a profound influence on people's attitudes, beliefs and behaviours towards the event or individual reported. This is the framing effect of the media handlers whose choice of events and words influence the public thinking of an event under media report. Drawing from the above information in table 3, it is the view of the researcher in the study that the victims of gender-based violence are defenseless in the hands of their abusers.

V. CONCLUSION

From the findings, the researcher concludes that the newspapers did not live up to expectations in their coverage of gender-based violence against women in Internally Displaced Persons camps in Nigeria. The finding equally revealed that the most kind of violence against women in IDP camps is sexually related ones while the defenseless frame dominated the media frame of reports on gender-based violence among newspapers. Paying attention to the provision of adequate protections to those in IDP camps, exposing the perpetrators, ridiculing and condemning the criminal acts against women generally eluded the newspapers under study. Poor security network and lack of consciousness among the assigned security outfits was found to be the major loophole that exposes the women in IDP camps to dangers of gender-based violence in Nigeria.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the research findings and conclusion, the researcher recommended as follows:

1. That the newspapers should brace up in their reports on gender-based violence in IDP camps in order to remain the voice to the voiceless as requested by the social responsibility theory of communication.
2. That the newspapers should set nice agenda in the report of gender-based violence in IDP camps by frequently exposing and ridiculing the acts before the public.
3. That the government should design appropriate sanction and punishment for any man or group of men who perpetrate(s) any type of gender-based violence in IDP camps to ensure that miscreants are handled appropriately.
4. Security networks of all IDP camps should be tightened and personnel carefully screened to ensure that the women in IDP camps are well secured.

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