

Psycho- Social Impact of Domestic Violence on House-Workers and its Emotional Effect in Residence of AMAC FCT, Abuja, Nigeria

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Article DOI: 10.48028/ijprds/ijargpgm.v6.i1.08

Abstract

Psycho -social impacts on violence remains a pervasive global challenge with devastating consequences for victims, families, and communities. In Nigeria, house-workers drawn from rural areas often lacking education, financial resources, and social support are particularly vulnerable to abuse. This study investigates the impact of domestic violence on house-workers in Abuja, Nigeria, focusing on its nature, causes, and the role of government interventions. Findings reveal that house-workers frequently experience physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuses, compounded by cultural norms, patriarchal structures, and inadequate enforcement of protective laws. Despite existing legal frameworks in Nigeria such as the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) and the Child's Rights Act, implementation challenges persist, leaving many victims without justice or protection. The study underscores the urgent need for stronger institutional responses, improved awareness, and empowerment initiatives to safeguard house-helpers against domestic violence and promote their well-being in Nigerian society.

Keywords: *Domestic, Violence, Psycho-social, House worker, Impact*

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Background to the Study

Psycho- social impact on the domestic violence is a physical, sexual, emotional, economic, and or psychological abuse against an intimate partner, child, or other relative including men, women, and children (World Health Organization, 2013; United Nations, 2020). It has devastating physical, emotional, financial and social effects on the victims, families and communities (United Nations, 2025). The victims are overwhelmingly female who face many challenges in accessing justice and protection. In many societies, persistent gender inequality and a culture of male domination socialize women to accept, tolerate and even rationalize domestic violence and to remain silent about such experience.

Recent legislation across Africa to address domestic violence sends a clear message that domestic violence is not to be tolerated and should no longer be seen as a “private matter”. In Nigeria for instance, various government agencies and mass organizations have played several roles in ensuring a comprehensive, coordinated and scientific response to domestic violence but the menace is much still present and expanding across major cities in the country (Abba, 2025). The law enforcement and justice sectors are key sectors as they have been mobilized to become more effective tools in protecting the victims, ending impunity, providing access to justice and redress, and responding to the special needs and vulnerabilities experienced by house workers victims within the justice system but enforcement remain a challenge because financing such broad goal is difficulty for non-state actors in Nigeria.

However other justice sector officials, including prosecutors, judges, court administrative staff, and judicial officers who are engaged in the prevention, investigation, prosecution and adjudication of domestic violence cases are rather handicapped in fighting domestic violence against house workers because the cases are barely reported and where the victim does, evidence are difficult to be obtain because of privacy concerned (Abba, 2025). Consequently, the United Nations Children (UNICEF) (2000) stressed that domestic violence against domestic house workers sometimes results in physical, sexual, psychological, and social harm to the victims. The suffering of violence against domestic house workers includes the threat of such acts as arbitrary deprivation of liberty, which occurs in their public or private life in society. The degree of domestic violence against houseworkers globally is attributed to a lack of adequate information and an inability to reach the victim to gather legal evidence to support prosecutions, it is against the background of the foregoing that this study will examine the impact of domestic violence on houseworkers in Abuja.

Statement of the Research Problem

Domestic violence is a global challenge that is widely spread around the globe. The phenomenon is prevalent among people from all walks of life, across difference races and religious groups from the developing nations in African through the economically advanced nations in Europe, Asia and America. Domestic violence is a pervasive problem in all regions of the world, occurring in every culture and social group. In recent years, house workers in Abuja are being subjected to undue economic abuse and isolation. The victims usually have very little money, influence and support to seek help in most cases where abuse is taking place, especially in highly metropolis areas of Abuja. This is partly because the lifestyle of house

workers is usually individualistic and coupled with the fact that most of the house workers in Abuja are often drawn from remote areas across the country.

More worrisome is the fact that majority of the house-workers are people who cannot read or write to officially express themselves. Hence, many house-workers have experienced sexual molestation, physical and psychological assault, religious discrimination and right denial from their employers. This has been shown to be one of the greatest obstacles facing victims of domestic violence, and the strongest challenge is that usually discourage house workers from leaving their perpetrators. In addition to lacking financial resources, victims of domestic violence often lack specialized skills, education, and training that are necessary to find gainful employment, and in most cases, the victimized house worker may have several children to support further worsening the situation. Consequently, domestic violence victimization induces psychological/mental health issues and chronic physical health problems among house workers in Abuja, and this has raised serious health and security concern in Abuja. In spite numerous efforts by some government agencies, civil society organizations and spirited individuals, the situation has remained unchanged, there is paucity of empirical studies investigating the impact of domestic violence against house workers in Abuja, it is in view of the foregoing that this study will examine the impact of domestic violence against house workers in Abuja.

Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of domestic violence on house-workers in Abuja, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Determine the nature of domestic violence on house workers in Abuja
- ii. Ascertain the major causes of domestic violence on house workers in Abuja
- iii. Examine the role of government in curbing domestic violence against house-workers in Abuja

Methodology

This paper explores qualitative data from extant literature on the subject matter. Literature was reviewed thematically in line with the study objectives,

Conceptual Clarification

Violence

The World Health Organization (2013) conceived violence as “any harmful acts directed at an individual based on their race, religion, gender orientations, or creed,” which encompasses physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence which could occur in public or private sphere. This definition highlights the multifaceted nature of Gender Based Violence (GBV), emphasizing its manifestation in both public and private spheres. According to the United Nations (2020), violence is not only a violation of human rights but also a significant public health issue, impacting individuals' physical and mental well-being, particularly among women, girls and vulnerable men. In nutshell, violence is conceived in this study as the violation of an individual right against his/her will in each place and time.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence and it is also referred to as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). It is a pattern of abusive behaviors by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family or cohabitation (Akindele, 2021). Domestic violence, so defined, has many forms, including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering; intimidation; stalking; passive/covert abuse otherwise known as neglect; and economic deprivation (Akpan, & Usoroh, 2018). Domestic violence and abuse are not limited to obvious physical violence. It can mean endangerment, criminal coercion, kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, trespassing, harassment and stalking (Heise, 2011).

House Worker

A house worker can be interchangeably referred to as a housemaid, house boy or girl. A house worker according to International Labour Organization (ILO), (2011) is any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship. The Domestic Assessment Policy (2001) conceptualized a house worker as a servant who works in the house doing the cleaning and other jobs in individuals' homes to earn a living. Similarly, Osoki *et al.* (2018) consider domestic house workers to be those girls and women who are employed by private households to work in their houses. In most cases, house workers are either a woman or a girl. Perhaps, most of the conceptualization of house workers was focused on the home without including but does not specify whether such person is paid or not.

Empirical Review

Nature of Domestic Violence meted on House Workers in Nigeria

Cases of domestic violence globally are often against women in Nigeria. There have been reports of cases of husbands killing and maiming their wives in the media. The statistics presented by This Day (2011) newspaper are daunting. About 50% of women have been battered by their husbands. Shockingly, more educated women (65%) are in this terrible situation as compared with their lowincome counterparts (55%). Most endure, believing they have nowhere to go and in any case, believing, for good reason, that the law will not protect them. Staggering 97.2% of them are not prepared to report to the Nigeria Police. Only four states of the Federation (Lagos is one of them) have passed laws against the insidious crime, whilst several Bills against it languish in our male dominated National Assembly. Of the states that have passed it, the law is yet to be fully tested. Only recently in Lagos State, Titilayo Arowolo, a 27-year-old mother of one, was gruesomely murdered by her husband. Arowolo was allegedly axed to death by her husband, Kolade, in them Isolo home in Lagos. Before that, the scandalous story of wife battering by one Nigerian Ambassador and a traditional ruler who engaged his wife in a public brawl made the rounds, thus bringing the issue of spousal abuse once again to the front burner.

There is an official acceptance of violence between 'Consenting' adults and people perceive domestic violence as a private affair. The American National Commission on the Causes and

Prevention of Crime or violence found in large representative samples that between one-fourth and one-fifth of those questioned, felt that it was acceptable for spouse to hit each other under certain circumstance (Kabir, 2022). Victims of wife battery are reported to suffer from physical and psychological pain. Domestic violence against women constitutes a great problem to the family and the society at large. It occurs at home, in public places like streets, parks, familiar places like homes of friends and relatives, offices, involving highly placed executives; and, in churches and mosques. Domestic violence that occurs in private within the family, including wife battery, rape, acid attack, and sexual abuse affect the physical and psychological wellbeing of women; and as such, they seem to erode the position of women, both at home and in the society at large. Domestic violence against women therefore deserves to be studied to provide possible solution.

Uji (2021) observed that domestic violence could happen to anyone irrespective of gender; those who abuse can be of any gender, as can their victims; their relationships are varied, and not limited to just intimate partners. However, it is generally thought that the relationship should be a close one, based on a domestic or intimate connection. Domestic violence can be used to refer to abusive relationships between anyone in a domestic environment, it most often is used synonymously with intimate partner violence (Uji, 2021). Also, while domestic violence can occur in same-sex relationships, or with women perpetrators against male victims, it is most often thought of in the context of male violence against a current or former female intimate partner (Flood, 2016). Both Uji (2021) and Flood (2016) have seen domestic violence as coming from a man to a woman. However, domestic violence against house workers may involve a wife or children against their house workers.

Perceived causes of Domestic Violence among House-Workers

Factors that influence various forms of violence against house workers are complex and numerous, ranging from minor offences to major offences (Uji, 2021). Factors such as financial problems, bad social habits, religious issues, culture and in-laws were identified in a study by Shamu, Abrahams, Temmerman, Musekiwa, and Zarowsky (2011) as some of the major causes of violence against women. This extends to domestic against house workers because the general culture and other socioeconomic factors are reported as factors influencing such violence against house workers (Dogo, 2016; Kazeem, Olasupo, Hussain, Akande, & Salaudeen, 2018).

According to National Population Commission (NPC) and International Classification of Functioning Disability & Health [ICF International] (2019), marital control, husband's alcohol consumption and women's violence against their husband are some of the causes of violence against women, especially among those who are currently married or ever married. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2018 considers marital control as a way for a husband to try to control or monitor his wife's activities which can be a warning sign of the potential for violence in a relationship. Marital control is expressed in the form of the following behaviors husbands against wife: jealous or angry if she talks to other men, frequently accusing her of being unfaithful, not permitting her to meet her female friends, trying to limit her contact with her family, and insists on knowing where she is at all times

(NPC & ICF International, 2019).

In a 2018 NDHS report among ever-married women aged 15-49, concerning the five specified controlling behaviors, ever-married women most often reported that their husband/partner is jealous or angry if they talk to other men (44%). An additional 41% of women reported that their husband insists on knowing where they are always, and 16% reported that their husband does not permit them to meet their female friends. Approximately 1 in 10 women said that their husband frequently accuses them of being unfaithful or tries to limit their contact with their family. Overall, 18% of women reported that their husband displays at least three of the specified marital control behaviours, and 42% said that their husband does not display any of the behaviours (NPC & ICF International, 2019). The report further indicated that husbands' alcohol consumption is highly correlated with women's likelihood of experiencing any form of violence. Overall, 83% of women whose husbands are often drunk have ever experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence, as compared with 30% of women whose husbands do not drink alcohol.

However, Women's initiation of violence against their husbands is also highly correlated with their own experience of spousal violence. For instance, eleven percent of women who have ever experienced spousal physical violence and 14% who have experienced spousal physical violence in the past 12 months have initiated violence against their husband, as compared with less than 1% of women who have never experienced spousal physical violence (NPC & ICF International, 2019). Therefore, alcoholism and marital control tendencies among men foster violence against women. Although these studies did not capture causes of violence against female house workers, they are helpful to provide a general view of the factors or drivers of such violence across different segments of society.

Furthermore, patriarchy is another significant source of violence against women in African societies. Ahmad, Riaz, Barata, and Stewart (2009) refer to the concept of “patriarchy” as an ideology that fosters a set of beliefs that justify male domination over women in society. Patriarchal societies are more likely to have sharply delineated sex roles and while patriarchal beliefs exist in all societies to some degree, patriarchal beliefs are less likely to be found in western societies due to the increased autonomy of women and increased access to education and employment. However, as Ahmad *et al.* (2009) have noted, women from patriarchal societies may themselves accept and adhere to patriarchal norms and values. They observed that South Asian women who adhered to more patriarchal values were less likely to judge spousal physical abuse as domestic violence compared with those women who disagreed with patriarchal social norms. Because of the above, it should be expected that women who accept patriarchal norms and values are less likely to define behaviours as violence against women, less likely to judge such behaviours as serious, less likely to report such behaviour to others, and indeed less likely to define themselves as victims. This is like what is obtainable against female house workers, hence, male dominance overflows. As such, female house workers are likely to be violated since they are considered inferior to their male counterparts within the family.

More so, violence against women focuses on the belief system prevalent in relationships

between men and women, where the male believes that he is entitled to be superior to the woman. Thus, he is willing to control and coerce the female by a variety of means, including violence, to maintain that authority. Hampton, Jenkins, and Gullota (2010) maintain that gender-based analysis holds men accountable for stopping their violent behaviors. Moreover, it recognizes how women are undervalued and have been conditioned via the female role belief system to believe in their inferiority in relationship to men. Heise (2011) sees gender violence as a reflection of the societal view of violence and a natural phenomenon that is based on a biological and determinist model in which the “strong” dominate the “weak”. In a patriarchal society like ours, women are regarded as the “weaker sex” and their main role is to “reproduce”. According to Guerra (2008), the issue of violence against women will always be a problem if society accepts the overvaluation of the masculine gender and tolerates violence. They went further to state that according to the Covenant on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) among other harmful practices against women violates the rights of the child and is associated with poverty, illiteracy, and low status of women. A constraint that presents itself in the pursuit of the goal of eliminating all forms of violence against women is the influence of culture. Experience has shown that culture has a role to play when talking about violence against women but one important thing we must understand is that culture is not static but dynamic. The influence of our culture has affected women's responses to violence against them. Even when they feel aggrieved at having been dehumanized, they choose to live with the situation rather than opting not to tolerate it.

Similarly, Heise (2011) contends that culturally sanctioned beliefs about the rights and privileges of husbands have historically legitimized a man's domination over his wife, children and other house members and warranted his use of violence to control them including house workers. Men in general, are more accepting of men abusing women, and the most culturally traditional men are the most accepting. Adams (2007) believes that barterers often excuse their violence by pointing to their wives' “unwisely” behavior as their justification. Besides, the culture of acceptance of wife-beating and the consideration of intimate partner violence as a private issue by society have encouraged violence of various kinds against women especially, sexual violence like marital rape. Despite the high prevalence and negative consequences of wife-beating, emotional and economic abuse, and marital rape, many Nigerians consider domestic violence to be a private issue about which the community should not intervene (World Bank, 2019). As a result, The Lancet Global Health (2015) noted that tolerant attitudes represent the highest correlated risk factor contributing to the incidence of intimate partner violence. Using recent data from a demographic and health survey that included domestic violence history and attitudes toward wife beating, one World Bank study (Klugman,

Hanmer, Twigg, Hasan, McCleary-Sills, & Santa, 2014) quantifies and categorizes 21 countries, ranking Nigeria especially high for major risk factors, including: Acceptance of wife-beating: One in three surveyed women agree that a man is justified in beating his wife in some cases, including if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses to have sexual intercourse with him (NPC & ICF International, 2014); polygamous marriage: thirty-three percent of women report that their husbands have more than one wife (NPC & ICF International, 2019).; early forced marriage:

forty-three percent of girls in Nigeria are married before the age of 18 (UNICEF 2016). Also, physical disabilities among girls and women exposed them to violence. Women and girls with disabilities are more likely to experience violence and less able to escape, less likely to speak up, less likely to be believed, and less likely to find services they can access (World Bank, 2019). They can experience verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse from caregivers, family members, colleagues, security agents, classmates, and friends. Globally, women with disabilities are twice as likely to experience domestic violence and other forms of violence and up to three times more likely to experience rape by a stranger or acquaintance than women without disabilities (Ortoleva & Lewis, 2012). A study in Nigeria found that social myths surrounding women with disabilities, such that having sex with them brings wealth, status, and power, make them more vulnerable to sexual violence (Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme - NSRP, 2015). A woman with a disability is also at a disadvantage in terms of escaping potentially violent situations. For example, a physical disability can create mobility issues that might prevent her from quickly escaping danger; or a hearing disability could prevent her from noticing danger approaching. For instance, a deaf or crippled girl or woman can be raped while walking on a lonely path since she cannot hear or run away when the perpetrators are approaching. Women with visual impairments reported experiencing infringements on their privacy, for example when taking baths (World Bank, 2019).

In another qualitative study in Edo State, focus group participants boys and girls of secondary school age frequently mentioned the exchange of sex for goods as a common practice (Barnett, *et al.*, 2011). This is not far from what is obtainable in Abuja, among the security agencies. An ActionAid study reported that male school staff seek out opportunities to obtain sexual favours, exploiting the poverty of students who struggle to pay their fees and who lack uniforms and books. Female students and their parents have complained to authorities about this occurring but appeared powerless to stop it (ActionAid, 2011). This means that transactional sex exposes women and girls to a lot of violence and exploitation which are most times not reported due to the stigma surrounding relationships.

Explaining further, the United Nations (2005) attributes gender violence to the structural inequality between men and women in the family as well as in society. According to this report, studies from both developed and developing countries show violence against women to be a by-product of the social structure in which men make decisions, and women are expected to obey. Violence against women is a function of the belief fostered in all countries that men are superior and that the women they live with are their possessions and chattels which they may treat as they wish and as they consider appropriate (UN, 2005). Thus, the belief in male superiority increases the tendency for violence against women, in many communities, the male is perceived as the superior sex. This view is tied to his role as the breadwinner and the patriarch who makes all decisions. Some people use religious and cultural arguments to justify the man's superiority and the woman's subservience. Some men say that wife-beating and marital rape is justified if the wife refuses sex, does not dress modestly, or is disrespectful to her husband. However, many women also support the idea that abuse is sometimes just because they share the basic belief that men are superior to women. In many cases, when men cannot establish financial supremacy over their wives due to a lack of

economic opportunities, they resort to violence to exert control and power in another way.

Mechanism designed by Government to checkmate the prevalence of Domestic Violence against House-Workers

It has been established that domestic violence and abuse in all its facets is an intentional and persistent abuse of anyone in the home in a way that causes pain, distress or injury. It can also be seen as a situation where a particular person is subjected to an act of force in the home that causes pain either physically, emotionally, or psychologically and infringes on the person's rights (LawPadi, 2019). Thus, there is a need to control the occurrence and prevalence of domestic violence to deal with the accompanying implications.

Besides Millenium Development Goals – MDGs now known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' and the legal frameworks against domestic violence of any kind in Nigeria, Uzuegbunam O. (2013) suggested ways of addressing this problem including enhancing women's education, adhering to the rule of law, women empowerment in politics and employment opportunities, and addressing the negative traditional and cultural practices obtainable in the country. Oluremi (2015) added that comprehensive and extensive premarital counselling and the need for the government to establish and fund counselling centers at the community, and Local Government levels while employing professional counsellors to support victims and perpetrators of domestic violence will go a long way to reducing domestic violence against any victim regardless of their sex, age and marital status.

From the forgoing thus, apart from general laws that exist against violence like the Criminal Code and Penal Code which apply to all citizens and a myriad of relationships, Nigeria has created some specific laws that deal with violence and abuse within the context of the home and outside the home. Among these laws that prevent domestic violence include the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) which was passed in 2015 and includes issues of sexual abuse and rape, domestic violence, and other related crimes. It was passed as a law only applicable in the FCT Abuja. However, many States such as Kaduna, Oyo, Enugu, Bauchi and Ekiti have ratified and domesticated (LawPadi, 2019). Under this law, the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has been mandated to administer the provision of the Act. Another law is the Protection Against Domestic Violence Law (PADVL) which was passed in 2007 and domiciled in Lagos. The law specifies different types of domestic violence including things like sexual abuse exploitation, starvation, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, economic abuse and intimidation (LawPadi, 2019). In addition, in case of domestic violence against child workers below 15 years, section 28 of the Child's Rights Act adopted in Nigeria in 2003 prohibits the exploitative labour of children (Kabir, 2022).

This means that “no child shall be – (a) subjected to any forced or exploitative labour; or (b) employed to work in any capacity except where he is employed by a member of his family on light work of an agricultural, horticultural or domestic character; or (c) required, in any case, to lift, carry or move anything so heavy as to be likely to adversely affect his physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development; or (d) employed as a domestic help outside his own home or family environment” (Kabir, 2022). Furthermore, in a situation where these laws are

flouted by a corporate body, any person who at the time of the commission of the offence was a proprietor, director, general manager or another similar officer, servant or agent of the corporate body shall be deemed to have jointly and severally committed the offence and may be liable on conviction to a fine of two hundred and fifty thousand naira's" (Kabir, 2022).

Despite these legal provisions, domestic abuse has continued to persist within Nigerian society because of implementation issues. For example, a concern with the law is that the police usually exercise their discretion in handling violent offences in the home (Black, 1971). It was observed that the police are more likely to waive arrests of husbands for various abusive offences, and the judicial responses usually neglect the same pattern in treatment and sanctions which are usually mild like fines and probation (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Osisiogu, 2016). The main argument is that prosecution and arrests may destroy the marriage coupled with the fact that most women do not usually press charges and testify in court. For Smith (1989), a vigorous arrest policy would demonstrate social disapproval and might act as a deterrent to further violence.

Maye and Timms (1970) observed that the orientation of staff or members of a welfare association can determine which cases they think are serious and worth pursuing since they usually lack sufficient resources for their activities. It is not unusual to find a 'conspiracy of silence' existing between doctor and patient (Osisiogu, 2016). Citing examples from the "Laws of Northern Nigeria, Criminal Code Act (1990), Cap 77" Eze-Anaba (2007) noted that some provisions of the law, rather than protecting women from domestic violence, could encourage offenders by giving them opportunities to escape sanctions. For instance, in Sec. 55 (1)d of the Penal Code, a man is empowered to correct children, pupils, servants or wives. Eze-Anaba (2007) added that with no effective law against domestic violence in Nigeria, victims must rely on the provisions of the Criminal Code on common assault which considers assaulting a woman as a misdemeanor while the assault on a man as a felony (Osisiogu, 2016).

In the same vein, the impediments to legal redress on domestic violence by most victims especially female house workers in Nigeria include lack of access to justice; lack of awareness of rights; a male-dominated judicial system, which also reflects the prejudices and stereotypes of the wider society; illiteracy; exorbitant formal legal system; poor law enforcement riddled with corruption; and the tripartite legal system involving statutory (from the constitution), religious and customary (depends on the culture of a group concerned) laws, which has inconsistencies and gives room for biased interpretations as they are enforced by formal courts, customary courts in southern Nigeria and Sharia courts in northern Nigeria (Eze-Anaba, 2007). Laws concerning domestic violence differ between countries. For example, in Russia, there is no law specifying domestic violence as a crime, even though physical violence is illegal, and in the United Arab Emirates in 2010 a Supreme Court ruled that a man has the right to physically discipline his wife and children as long as he doesn't leave physical marks (UK, 2012; Osisiogu, 2016).

Therefore, since domestic violence presents a major impediment and threat to women and girls' social and economic development, the adoption of the agenda of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets may afford many options for addressing violence against women in general. Examples of some of the goals and their objectives include: The eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (empowered, women, can earn income to maintain themselves and their families, and avenues for spousal abuse will be reduced or eliminated); Promoting gender equality would address impediments associated with culture and religion; Reducing child mortality and improving maternal health would address the well-being of women and could eliminate emotional and financial frustrations associated with the provision of health care; and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases highlights the fact that violence against women undermines HIV prevention and care efforts (Abama & Kwaja, 2009; Osiou, 2016; FGN, 2017).

Social Dominance Theory

Social Dominance Theory formulated by Sidanius and Protto (1999) (cited in Oloko, 2005) is designed to explain the origin and consequences of social hierarchies and oppression in society. Social dominance theory attempts to explain why society seems to be underpinned by a hierarchy of groups ranging from dominant to subordinate. According to this theory, many myths, policies and practices in society have an unfair advantage over the dominant group (Osoki *et al.*, 2018). These myths and ideologies maintain and amplify the existing hierarchy as well as represent a consequence of these inequalities (Tanko 2002; Domestic Assessment Policy 2001). This theory explains the social relationship between house workers and their employers' families. Where the employer (including their family members) takes advantage of oppressing their employees by paying low wages, sexually and physically abusing them and making them work without resting in their houses. The social dominance theory was able to explain the situation of female house workers in society. However, the theory generalizes its position without considering individual differences and character in society (Osoki *et al.*, 2018). Regardless of this weakness, the theory is adopted for the study as it better addresses power relations between employers and employees within the family or household settings.

Conclusion

Violence perpetrated on house-workers has adverse effect on the victims, individuals within the family, and society in general. If unchecked, the goal of having a healthy and balanced society is deeply threatened. Violence against people, be it physical, psychological, sexual, or economic has a range of tangible and intangible health, social, economic, and psychological consequences. Tangible consequences include both immediate and longer-term physical problems. Injuries can be fatal or involve bruises, broken bones, hearing and sight loss, burns, unpaid wages, torture, inhumane treatment, and death (Osiou, 2016; IOM, 2017; OHCHR, 2018; WHS, 2019). The degree of domestic violence occurrence against house workers in general varies across tribes and tongues. Its' severity and frequency range from low to mild to high, while its impact has been very severe (World Health Organization, 2014). Longer-term harms include a heightened risk of other health problems, including chronic pain, physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse, and posttraumatic stress syndrome (UNICEF 2000; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2014; WHS, 2019). Economically, violence against house-worker imposes costs on the wider society in terms of lower worker productivity and income, erosion of human capital and capabilities, and the

perpetuation of the intergenerational cycle of violence. Hence, the denial of human rights, freedoms, and liberties, the social and economic costs of violence undermine a country's development, accomplishments and agendas.

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