

INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE ON WOMEN IN NEW YORK COMMUNITY IN SIERRA LEONE. CASE STUDY: BO CITY

BY:

MR ERIC KOMBA FOYOH MANI, MOHAMED AMADU BERETAY

LECTURERS IN THE SOCIAL WORK AND EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS AT THE EASTERN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF SIERRA LEONE.

ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence involves men and women in whom the female is usually the target, and is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women. Violence is directed specifically against a woman because she is a woman or affects women in every aspect of their lives. It includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, and psychological harm. The most pervasive form of gender-based violence is abuse of a woman by intimate male partners.

Other school of thought view gender-based violence to be battering, intimate partner violence (including marital rape, sexual violence, and dowry/bride price-related violence, feticide, sexual abuse of female children in the household, honor crimes, early marriage, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FBM)/cutting and other traditional practices harmful to women, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in school and elsewhere, commercial sexual exploitation, and trafficking of girls and women.

There proposition captures most of the elements of Gender Based Violence as it applies to the Sierra Leonean context where men still take the dominant role and perpetuate the outlined violence against women and female under their guidance.

In 1995, the U.N. expanded the definition to include: violations of the rights of women in situations of armed conflict, including systematic rape, sexual slavery, and forced pregnancy; forced sterilization, forced abortion, and coerced or forced use of contraceptives; and prenatal sex selection and female infanticide.

It further recognized the particular vulnerabilities of women belonging to minorities: the elderly and the displaced; indigenous, refugee, and migrant communities; women living in impoverished rural or remote areas, or in detention.

'Gender-based violence' and 'violence against women' are terms that are often used interchangeably as most gender-based violence is inflicted by men on women and girls.

However, it is important to retain the 'gender-based' aspect of the concept as this highlights the fact that violence against women is an expression of power inequalities between women and men.

BACKGROUND

Gender-based violence involves men and women, in which the female is usually the target, and is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women. Violence is directed specifically against a woman because she is a woman or affects women in every aspect of their lives. It includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, and psychological harm. The most pervasive form of gender-based violence is abuse of a woman by intimate male partners.

Other school of thought view gender-based violence to be battering, intimate partner violence (including marital rape, sexual violence, and dowry/bride price-related violence, feticide, sexual abuse of female children in the household, honor crimes, early marriage, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FBM)/cutting and other traditional practices harmful to women, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in school and elsewhere, commercial sexual exploitation, and trafficking of girls and women. This proposition captures most of the elements of Gender Based Violence as it applies to the Sierra Leonean context where men still take the dominant role and perpetuate the outlined violence against women and female under their guidance.

In 1995, the U.N. expanded the definition to include: violations of the rights of women in situations of armed conflict, including systematic rape, sexual slavery, and forced pregnancy; forced sterilization, forced abortion, and coerced or forced use of contraceptives; and prenatal sex selection and female infanticide. It further recognized the particular vulnerabilities of women belonging to minorities: the elderly and the displaced; indigenous, refugee, and migrant communities; women living in impoverished rural or remote areas, or in detention.

'Gender-based violence' and 'violence against women' are terms that are often used interchangeably as most gender-based violence is inflicted by men on women and girls.

However, it is important to retain the 'gender-based' aspect of the concept as this highlights the fact that violence against women is an expression of power inequalities between women and men.

Gender based violence means violence against women, men and children. Most people think of gender based violence to mean violence against women alone. Until quite recently children and men have got the realization of the inner meaning. Gender-based violence against women” shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. Violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

The United States of America view gender based violence as a human rights violation, a public health challenge, and a barrier to civic, social, political, and economic participation. It undermines not only the safety, dignity, overall health status, and human rights of the millions of individuals who experience it, but also the public health, economic stability, and security of nations.

Gender-based violence cuts across ethnicity, race, class, religion, and education level, and international borders in the United States of America.

The U.S .A believed that it is vital to promote the rights of all individuals and reduce gender-based violence while mitigating its harmful effects on individuals and communities. Unless women, girls, men, and boys fully enjoy their human rights and are free from violence, progress toward development will fall short.

2. In the Middle East, gender based violence is at its zenith and women continue to suffer in the hands of men under the guise of Islamic religion. Women have suffered in Middle East countries and it was recorded that human rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of women is yet to be implemented and adhere to.

In Africa, women and children are seen as mere properties of their husbands and men continue to subdue women under the guise of traditions. Many violent acts have been recorded in African countries like Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya and equally Sierra Leone.

In Sierra Leone, gender based violence became pronounced during the interregnum and after. New forms of violence were learnt from all factions of the war and this continues to linger in the minds of many women and children.

Prevalent forms of GBV in post-conflict Sierra Leone include domestic violence, sexual assault, including rape of adults and minors, rape in marriage and school-related sexual abuse, as well as harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM). It is difficult to know how many cases of gender violence go unreported, but many in Sierra Leone agree the country faces a serious problem (Park, 2006; Shaw, 2007).

At a national level, a number of legislative and policy frameworks have been developed since the end of the conflict which establishes a supportive and conducive environment for addressing gender based violence, demonstrating a political will to reduce gender based violence. In 2007, the Sierra Leone Government adopted three Gender Acts - the Domestic Violence Act, the Devolution of Estates Act and the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act. In 2012, new, more stringent, Sexual Offenses Act was passed to help end the culture of impunity.

3. However, in a state as desperately under-resourced as Sierra Leone, still struggling with a war-ravaged infrastructure, there are serious limits to what legislation can achieve. Further, in terms of law enforcement to implement this legislation, research shows that household violence is rarely considered a matter for the police.

In some rural regions, in particular where traditional patriarchal power structures remain strong, cases of gender based violence are often mediated by respected relatives and community elders: typically men (Denov and Maclure, 2006).

One important change is the increased and sustained activism of women advocating for peace, democracy and good governance. In the 2000s women's organizations have responded to the disruption of social services and community-based structures by developing networks and alternative coping strategies to

deal with problems such as food scarcity, sexual violence, and shortfalls in health and education provision.

Recently, a number of organizations have also begun working with men and boys to become more active participants in efforts to end the culture of tolerance and impunity surrounding gender based violence in Sierra Leone.

Strategies have included training programs that incorporate sensitization and awareness-raising about the importance of prosecuting perpetrators of sexual violence that target both officials in the legal sector as well as authorities within the communities would help to ameliorate this problem.

As well as strategies that incorporate consultations with community leaders across the country to identify how to address the issue would be useful. However, these organizations have very limited resources and capacity for sustaining the implementation of these projects in the long-term, making government and donor-support critical to their ongoing activities.

4. In the Bo City, commerce and other formal employment activities have attracted thousands of people in the communities and most of them are unmarried men and women. Gender based violence among young men, adults and the others have been reported to the local authorities and the Sierra Leone police but most of which were compromised at the disadvantage of the victims (David, 2010).

If the research by David is to go by, then it has increased or decrease since 2010 but to be certain, this study is geared towards investigating the current gender based violence situation in the New York Section Bo city, Southern Sierra Leone.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

Sierra Leone has been classed as one of the top fifty (50) most peaceful nations in the world, in the latest Global Peace Index report (2014), with Denmark, Austria, Portugal, and New Zealand topping the list, whilst Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Iraq trail at the bottom for obvious reasons (war and civil conflict).

But with the continuing, deepening culture of violence against women, many in Sierra Leone would be perplexed by the report, ranking Sierra Leone as the 5th most peaceful in Africa and 43rd globally out of one hundred and sixty two (162) countries. According to the 2015 population and Housing Census

provisional results, 60% of the population of Sierra Leone are women. Yet, women suffer disproportionately from gender based violence, because of societal values and a general acceptance that violence against women and children is fair game.

Costs due to violence against women and girls beyond the intangible suffering and impacts on quality of life and wellbeing include costs to the survivor and her family in terms of health (mental and physical), employment and finances, and the effects it has on children. It is also argued that cultural issues compound the problem, particularly in rural areas where traditional patriarchal power structures remain strong. Close knit extended family groups and local chiefs frequently dissuade victims from pursuing justice, preferring instead to settle the matter within the community.

The few women who do come forward may face open hostility in court and are stigmatized afterwards. The witness and victim protection clauses under the Sexual Offences Act have yet to be implemented fully in the country. This is because victims are reportedly given evidence in open court and later forced to seek shelter with a Non Governmental Organization. And despite the legislation banning the media from naming victims of gender-based violence, several prominent newspapers identify the victims to public ridicule.

6. Sierra Leone is hugely overstretched. Some provinces do not even have a resident magistrate while some chiefdom only has one police post with one FSU personnel. There are too few lawyers, as well, particularly in the rural provinces.

Some victims tried as hard as possible to remain silent because of the outlined problems and by so doing they are disturbed psychologically, emotionally which lives with them for life. In some situations, the traditional leaders, law enforcing personnel, religious leaders and Organizations are found guilty of gender based violence which they compromised at local level leaving the victim ridicule for the rest of her life.

This study was therefore set to investigate the causes and effects of gender based violence on women in the New York Section Bo city.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to explore the causes and effects of gender based violence on women in New York Section, Bo City .

OBJECTIVES

Specifically the objectives of the study were:

- i. To investigate the causes of gender based violence in New York Section Bo city.
- ii. To explore the effects of Gender based violence on women in the study communities
- iii. To come up with suggestions so as to mitigate the problem

7.JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Impunity surrounding gender-based crimes is a major contributing factor tormenting gender related peace in the country. The end product of this study is therefore relevant to the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs in that it would bring out the causes of gender based violence in the study communities so that the Ministry officials would be better prepared to handle similar cases as they are reported. The end product of this study would be relevant to the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone Police as it would unearth the causes and its impacts on women in rural communities so that they may use it as a guide to replicate in other communities.

The end product of this study would also be relevant to the law enforcing bodies in that they would be able to know the struggles and psychological effects on the health of victims and stigmatization so that they may always stand to give justice to the victims as the issues are presented in courts. It is also believed that the end product of this study would be of relevance to local community power structures in their dealings with offences of gender based violence as reported as this document would outline their lapses and suggest way forward.

The end result of this work is also believed to be relevant to the Victims in that it would guide them on how and why they should report gender based violence offences in their localities for prompt actions. Alternative reporting systems would also be identified for formal reports should those duty bearers failed to take actions in their localities.

The finished product of this study is also relevant to perpetrators of gender based violence as it outlined the dangers they would be putting the victims and the possible consequences on them should they be caught and prosecuted. This would instill some fear in them so that gender based offences would be minimized.

8.It would also be relevant to colleagues in the field of research who may see it necessary to use as reference material or a guide for further studies.

9. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents review of related literature based on the objectives. A critical review of theoretical evidences forms the basis of this study.

CAUSES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

David (2010) critically examined the causes of gender based violence in the following context:Gender based violence in the family which is often referred to as family Violence: David regarded it as the most widespread type of violence against women. The causes are mostly traditional, religious and internal ego justification on the part of men and include any abuse that occurs within the family context where the perpetrator is known to the girl or woman.

Common examples are spousal beatings; marital rape; forced marriage; sexual abuse of a girl by a father, uncle, or stepfather; and verbal abuse and trauma related to “dowry” and “not giving birth to a son”. Such actions are familiar in some homes in the study communities and the causes are not unconnected with those opined by David.Community Violenceis also causedby youths and the uncontrolled drug intakes and addiction. This includes violence at the hands of a perpetrator unknown or unrelated to the woman and often comes in the form of rape, sexual harassment, forced prostitution or trafficking, and public humiliation (ibid).

State Violence on the other hand is caused by political rivalries, in fighting and corruption. This includes violations that are condoned and committed by individuals associated with the government.This is often seen in the form of violence at the hands of police, prison guards, refugee camp guards, border officials, and even peacekeeping troops. In conflict regions of the world, systematic rape and sexual violence is often used as a tool of war (ibid).

10.Violence against women and girls is rooted in gender-based discrimination and social norms and gender stereotypes that perpetuate such violence. Given the devastating effect violence has on women, efforts have mainly focused on responses and services for survivors. However, the best

way to end violence against women and girls is to prevent it from happening in the first place by addressing its root and structural causes.

The trial of Sierra Leone's former Deputy Education Minister Mahmoud Tarawally on rape charges made headlines and highlighted the prevalence of sexual violence in the country. More than 6,500 incidents of domestic- and gender-based violence were reported in Sierra Leone in the first eight months of 2013, almost as many as in the whole of 2012.

That was an alarming figure with all the acts and law enforcement framework designed to minimized gender based violence, it is still on the increase in most communities in Sierra Leone. It appears that the acts are not implemented or the law enforcers are compromising gender based violence offences reported to them.

Authorities in Sierra Leone say the upward trend is likely due to more people deciding to report cases of sexual abuse. Tarawally, who has since been sacked, was charged after a report was filed by the alleged victim, a 24-year-old university student.

Although it is unclear how many cases go unreported, many in Sierra Leone agree that the country faces a serious problem with gender-based violence.

Vandi (2013), Director of gender affairs at the Ministry of Social Welfare, said the high level of sexual violence has its roots in Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war. "Women and girls were used as sex slaves," he told IRIN. "They were tortured, they were abused.

"The social structures broke down during the civil war - the respect for human life, the respect for rule of law... We thought that the end of the war was going to arrest some of those negative social vices, but actually it's continuing," he explained

11.The report, by the Institute for Economics and Peace think-tank, warned that the global economic impact of violence totaled \$13.6 trillion in 2016.

"The 2016 Global Peace Index (GPI) shows the world became less peaceful in the last year, reinforcing the underlying trend of declining peace over the last decade. Results also show a growing global

inequality in peace, with the most peaceful countries continuing to improve while the least peaceful are falling into greater violence and conflict,” according to the report.

The report found that between 2015 and 2016, while 81 countries’ peace improved, some 79 others deteriorated. These outweighed the gains, meaning that global peace declined at a faster rate than in the previous year.

The Middle East and Africa was the least peaceful region in the world in last year’s report, and dropped even further in 2016, suffering as regional conflicts intensified is vast, and the consequences for individuals, families, communities, and countries are devastating. Inequalities and the forms of violence connected to them are intersectional. They are the result of interplay between multiple power structures that produce and reproduce hierarchical distinctions, for example regarding race, disability, age, social class, and gender. This means that while all women face discrimination based on gender, some women experience multiple forms of discrimination, of which gender is only one component.

According to the EU-wide Survey on Violence against Women conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 22% of women have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence by a current or previous partner. Direct violence against women must be understood through the lens of unequal power relations between women and men. Violence against women is often normalized and perpetuated due to these structural inequalities.

Hence, the historical and contemporary subordination of women in economic, social and political life must be acknowledged when attempting to explain the prevalence of direct violence against women in our societies.

12. This means shifting the focus from an actor-oriented perspective which examines individual motivations for acts of violence, to a structure oriented perspective which looks at the structural gender inequalities that support and justify gender based violence against women. The structural dimension of violence against women can also be described as direct violence.

The relationship between the victim and the perpetrator of acts of violence against women is also of great relevance. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most widespread forms of direct violence against women, and includes a range of sexual, psychological and physical coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by a current or former intimate partner.

According to Goldsmith (2013) domestic violence also known as domestic abuse, intimate partner violence or abuse may start when one partner feels the need to control and dominate the other. Abusers may feel this need to control their partner because of low self-esteem, extreme jealousy, difficulties in regulating anger and other strong emotions, or when they feel inferior to the other partner in education and socio-economic background.

He further pointed out that some people with strong traditional beliefs may think they have the right to control their partner, and that women aren't equal to men. Others may have an undiagnosed personality disorder or psychological disorder. Still others may have learned this behavior from growing up in a household where domestic violence was accepted as a normal part of being raised in their family.

A partner's domination may take the form of emotional, physical or sexual abuse. Studies suggest that violent behavior often is caused by an interaction of situational and individual factors. That means that abusers learn violent behavior from their family, people in their community and other cultural influences as they grow up. They may have seen violence often or they may have been victims themselves. Some abusers acknowledge growing up having been abused as a child (ibid). Children who witness or are the victims of violence may learn to believe that violence is a reasonable way to resolve conflict between people. Boys who learn that women are not to be valued or respected and who see violence directed against women are more likely to abuse women when they grow up. Girls who witness domestic violence in their families of origin are more likely to be victimized by their own husbands. Although women are most often the victim of domestic violence, the gender roles can and are reversed sometimes (Clara, 2014).

Alcohol and drugs may contribute to violent behavior. A drunk or high person will be less likely to control his or her violent impulses toward their partner, so keeping such drinking or drug use episodes to a minimum may be valuable for a person living in a domestic violence situation (Toby, 2013). No cause of domestic violence, however, justifies the actions of the abuser, nor should it be used as a rationale for their behavior. These possible causes are only to better understand why an abuser believes it is acceptable to abuse their partner physically, sexually, psychologically or emotionally. Ultimately an abuser needs to get help for their unhealthy and destructive behavior, or find them living a solitary and lonely life (ibid).

A 2002 study reports that 29% of women and 22% of men report having experienced physical, sexual, or psychological intimate partner violence during their lifetime. Nearly 5.3 million incidents of domestic violence occur annually among US women aged 18 years and older, with 3.2 million occurring among men. Of these incidents, most are relatively minor, such as pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, and hitting. Serious consequences certainly do, however, result. Every year approximately 1.5 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults are perpetrated against women, and approximately 800,000 are committed against men (Burnett, 2009).

Domestic abuse often escalates from threats and verbal abuse to violence. And while physical injury may be the most obvious danger, the emotional and psychological consequences of domestic abuse are also severe. It will lead to undermine the victim's self-worth or self-esteem, or controls the victim's freedom. Domestic abuse can lead to anxiety and depression, and make abuser to feel helpless and alone.

14. It occurs in traditional heterosexual marriages, as well as in same-sex partnerships. The abuse may occur during a relationship, while the couple is breaking up, or after the relationship has ended. In 2001, domestic violence was causal in 20% of nonfatal violence directed against women and in 3% directed toward men.

EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

According to Jefferson (2009), the effects of domestic violence depend upon the type of domestic violence. It could be physical, emotional, sexual and economic. First, in physical abuse the abuser will use Witnessed physical force against the victim in a way to injures or endangers his or her or causes feeling of pain.

He further classified the types and effects of each of the abuse or violence as follows: Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, punching, choking, pushing, and other types of contact that result in physical injury to the victim. Physical abuse can also include behaviors such as denying the victim of medical care when needed, depriving the victim of sleep or other functions necessary to live.

Second, emotional abuse is defined as any behavior that threatens, intimidates, undermines the victim's self-worth or self-esteem, or controls the victim's freedom. This can include threatening

the victim with injury or harm, telling the victim that they will be killed if they ever leave the relationship, and public humiliation.

Constant criticism, name-calling, and making statements that damage the victim's self-esteem are also common forms of emotional abuse. Often perpetrators will use children to engage in emotional abuse by teaching them to harshly criticize the victim as well. Emotional abuse includes conflicting actions or statements which are designed to confuse and create insecurity in the victim. These behaviors also lead the victim to question themselves, causing them to believe that they are making up the abuse or that the abuse is their fault.

15. Emotional abuse includes forceful efforts to isolate the victim, keeping them from contacting friends or family. This is intended to eliminate those who might try to help the victim leave the relationship and to create a lack of resources for them to rely on if they were to leave. Isolation results in damaging the victim's sense of internal strength, leaving them feeling helpless and unable to escape from the situation. People who are being emotionally abused often feel as if they do not own themselves; rather, they may feel that their significant other has nearly total control over them. Women or men undergoing emotional abuse often suffer from depression, which puts them at increased risk for suicide, eating disorders, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Hopkins, (1999) reported that abused women are at higher risk of miscarriages, stillbirths, and infant deaths and more likely to give birth to low birth weight children. Sexual abuse is any situation in which force is used to obtain participation in unwanted sexual activity. Forced sex, even by a spouse or intimate partner with whom consensual sex has occurred, is an act of aggression and violence. sexual abuse includes use of physical force to compel a person to engage in a sexual act against his or her will, whether or not the act is completed; attempted or completed sex act involving a person who is unable to understand the nature or condition of the act, unable to decline participation, or unable to Communicate unwillingness to engage in the sexual act (ibid).

Economic abuse is when the abuser has control over the victim's money and other economic resources. In its extreme (and usual) form, this involves putting the victim on a strict "allowance", withholding money at will and forcing the victim to beg for the money until the abuser gives them some money. It is common for the victim to receive less money as the abuse continues.

16. Costs due to violence against women and girls beyond the intangible suffering and impacts on quality of life and well-being include costs to the survivor and her family in terms of health (mental and physical), employment and finances, and the effects it has on children. Out of ten selected causes and risk factors for disability and death among women between the ages of 15 and 44, rape and domestic violence rated higher than cancer, motor vehicle accidents, war and malaria (World Bank, 1994).

Some of the consequences and costs according to World Bank (1994) include:

- immediate injuries such as fractures and hemorrhaging, and long-term physical conditions (e.g. gastrointestinal, central nervous system disorders, chronic pain);
- mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, attempted suicide;
- sexual and reproductive health problems, such as sexually transmitted infections (including HIV), and other chronic conditions; sexual dysfunction; unintended/unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion; risks to maternal and fetal health (especially in cases of abuse during pregnancy);
- substance abuse (including alcohol);
- poor social functioning skills and social isolation and marginalization;
- death for both women and their children (from neglect, injury, pregnancy-related-risks, homicide, suicide and/or HIV and AIDS-related);
- lost workdays, lower productivity and lower income;
- overall reduced or lost educational, employment, social, or political participation opportunities; and,
- Expenditures (at the level of individual, family and public sector budgets) on medical, protection, judicial and social services.

Beyond the direct and short-term consequences, child witnesses of violence are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems, perform poorly in school and be at risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence in the future.

17. Businesses and employers can incur financial losses on account of absences due to the health consequences inhibiting the survivor from working; incarceration of the perpetrator; and expenses related to additional security measures that might be needed in the workplace (UN General Assembly, 2006).

Violence against women can have a myriad of devastating consequences on women's short and long-term health and wellbeing. Along with the immediate physical and emotional impacts of violence, women's overall quality of life can be adversely affected over an entire lifetime, which can, in turn, impact their participation and engagement in various aspects of life and society (Johnson et, al.2008). These consequences to the individual women, along with the violent act itself, can have ripple effects on society as a whole (World Health Organization, 2011). For instance, employers may experience lost productivity and output from their employees, while women's informal support networks, such as families and friends, may need to alter their daily activities to provide assistance to victims (Beauchamp, 2007).

This is in addition to the broader societal costs associated with delivering and maintaining health care, social and justice-related services to victims of violent crime, as well as the costs related to the criminal justice response to accused persons (Johnson and Dawson, 2011). In summary, gender based violence has been a concern and continue to be a concern to governments, stakeholders and researchers as it is evidence in the theoretical citations above.

18. **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter data collection methods and techniques were used with instruments to collect data from the field. The sample population was randomly selected in the study communities and data collected were analyzed by qualitative technique.

STUDY SETTING

Bo city is found in the Southern district of Sierra Leone. It is the second largest city of the country with all urban facilities and structures. It has a population of 149,957 people according to the 2004 Population and Housing Census and 173,905 people according to 2015 population and Housing Census.

In the area of education there are numerous primary schools across the city with out standing secondary schools in the city itself. But commercial activities have deterred effective learning and a few of the children drop out of school for livelihoods and or early marriage.

Commercial activities are still carried out in the study communities but bulk of the business transactions are focused on the Central Business District of the city.

Although the city is known for the commercial and administrative potentials, agriculture still holds the central position of the indigenes livelihoods fending. Some of the people have become farmers growing different food crops both for the family and for commercial purposes. Women and children are the workers on these farms.

There were two (2) Police Stations and Police Posts in the study communities stationed across the city. There were good number of police personnel charged with various responsibilities and functions. Even at that the city has grown t considerable size that was difficult to be controlled by the present police personnel in the city. That shows that they can not cover the whole city in curbing gender based violence at once. There were a few Family Support Unit Officers who are incapacitated in dealing with complaints brought forward by victims of gender based violence.

19.This study was therefore undertaking in the New York Community because it had all the variables of gender based violence that needs to be understood particularly its causes and effects on women.

POPULATION SAMPLING:

The population of this study encompasses all the people who have resided and still resides in the study communities for ten (10) years and above. They include women, children and men in all the households in New York Section.The frame of the study includes all the women and children in the study communities and the size of the study encompasses all women in the communities. Five major streets were randomly selected within the study communities and seventy (70) women were randomly selected. They form the respondents of this study.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION:

For the purpose of this study, the following data collection methods were used:

QUESTIONING:

This was developed and it contains questions that were open and close ended. The open ended questions were used to give the respondents free will to respond to questions as they were as at the time of study. On the other hand, close questions were used to limit the respondents to specific issues as they occur in their communities. All questions were based on the objectives of the study.

DISCUSSION

A focus group discussion was held with head of women (women leader) in the chiefdom and seven (7) victims of gender based violence as reported in the records of the police. Two police officers (FSU) and one local authority were involved in the discussion. They were selected because they were aware of all the gender based violence acts that occurred in their communities and also those not reported.

20. INSTRUMENTATION

Two sets of instrument were used.

QUESTIONNAIRE

It was developed based on the objectives of the study and it was divided into two sections. The questions were asked under each objective and the first draft of the questionnaire was pre-tested to ascertain the difficulty level of the items. Some questions with problems were adjusted, reframe and printed for final distribution. The final copies were distributed to the respondents which were collected within a week.

DISCUSSION GUIDE:

A discussion guide was developed and it was based on the set objectives. The discussion was held in the evening hours when they have returned from their daily chores. The FSU personnel were targeted separately and also the chief because it was decided to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. Later, the victims and other women including women leader were targeted and a lengthy discussions held. Responses were collated for analysis.

SOURCE OF DATA:

Two sets of data source were consulted. Primary sources and secondary resources were equally consulted. Primary sources consulted include information collected from the field for the first time. Secondary sources other hand include related internet materials, textbooks, Journals and magazines.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

Data collected were analyzed by qualitative techniques that are in a form of description of the situation as they were as at time of study. To give more meaning to the result simple frequency tables were used to present data.

21.PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, data collected were presented in tables, analyzed and discussed based on the objectives. Each presentation and analysis was done under the study’s objectives.

CAUSES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN NEW YORK SECTION, BO CITY

This objective explores the causes of gender based violence in the study community. Questions were asked and the responses from the respondents were presented in tables, analyzed and discussed.

TABLE ONE: LENGTH OF YEARS RESPONDENTS HAS TAKING IN THE STUDY COMMUNITY.

LENGTH OF TIME IN YEARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(S)
1-10	20	29
11-20	35	50
21-30	15	21
Total	70	100

SOURCE: Survey Data, 2018

According to the table above, 50% of the respondents stated that they had stayed in the study community for 11-20 years while 29% indicated that they had stayed there for 1-10 years.

However, 21% of the respondents registered that they had stayed in the study community for 21-30 years. This shows that they were equipped enough to give present situation in the study communities on gender base violence. They had witnessed and heard many reported cases and those that were compromised in different localities in the chieftdom.

Bulks of the respondents were married while others were not. But some claimed to be in a consensual union which was agreed by both parents. In such situation they must have experienced gender base violence or witness it in their localities.

22.TABLE TWO: KNOWLEGDE OF GENDER BASE VIOLENCE

KNOWLEDGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(S)
Yes	55	79
Don't know	5	7
Undecided	10	14
Total	70	100

SOURCE: Survey Data, 2018.

From the table above, 79% of the respondents stated that they had knowledge of Gender Based Violence, 14% indicated that they were undecided on the matter while 7% claimed that they know nothing of Gender Based Violence.

Bulk of the respondents were had knowledge of GBV and were involved in perpetrating it within the study communities. What was more glaring was the fact that the very people who had knowledge of its and its implications were always incriminated in the offences as disclosed by the Family Support Unit Boss attached to the police station at Eastern police in the city.

Those who had no knowledge or were undecided on the issue were among the traditionalist who held the view that, their culture does not does not have place for that. It was a common practice of the study communities and therefore hey saw nothing wrong with it.

TABLE THREE: AWARENESS OF GENDER BASD VIOLENCE IN THE STUDY COMMUNITIES:

AWARENESS LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(S)
Aware	59	84
Not aware	5	7
Not concern	6	9
Total	70	100

SOURCE: Survey Data, 2018.

23.From the table above, 84% of the respondents stated that they were aware of Gender Based Violence in the study communities, 9% said it did not concern them while 7% claimed that they were not aware.Discussion held with FSU officials and senior community members revealed that all the respondents were aware of Gender Based violence in their localities and often people have been prosecuted amongst them. They indicated that they were aware because of them; their children or close relatives have been victims and have been punished by law.

The study communities were mining environments and therefore crimes surrounding GBV was uncommon amongst the people. Local authorities indicated that most of the offenders were youths and government employees working in the localities.The law officers on the other hand accused local authorities and male adults of perpetrating the offence in the study communities but rather compromise such matters before it gets to the hearings of the law enforcement bodies in the chieftdom. In some instances chiefs and mature adults of the community were implicated. As culture demands, they were aware but pretends not because of it shameful nature and shame it brought to the individuals, their families and by extension the community.

TABLE FOUR: CAUSES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN THE STUDY COMMUNITIES:

CAUSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(S)
Religion	12	17
Education	8	11
Ingrained myth about domestic abuse/violence	20	29

Social and Political idealization	15	22
Patriarchal societal structure	10	14
Custom and tradition	5	7
Total	70	100

SOURCE: Survey Data, 2018.

24. According to the table above, 29% of the respondents stated that ingrained myth about domestic violence/abuse is a major cause of GBV in the study communities, 22% indicated social and political idealization, 17% religion and 14% patriarchal societal structure of the study communities as another cause of GBV.

However, 11% claimed that education was a major cause of GBV in the study communities and 7% indicated customs and traditions of the people in the study communities.

Religion has been placed as a major root cause of GBV. Most religion has placed women below men, reinforcing patriarchy. Many religions like Islam has used the name of God or their deity they worship to subdue suppress and discriminate against women.

Culture is the way in which people live. It is the way a group of people do things or believes things should be done in their way. In a typical Mende culture like those of New York Section in Bo city, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is still practiced illegally. Such cultural customs encourage masochism and GBV. The tradition of the Mendes was still maintained and part of it was fear of exposing or betraying another Mende man regardless the level of crime committed.

Education plays a major role in causing GBV. In rural Sierra Leone, women were forced or asked to stay at home to clean or cook, while the men or boy child were sent to school. This even becomes predominant after marriage or childbirth furthering inequality. These women end up being dependent on these men who take authority over all aspects of their personal life. The same was evident along Thomas street which is one of the major street in New York city.

Also GBV was highly perpetrated due to deeply ingrained myths about domestic abuse (also known as domestic violence) held as sacred in the study communities. There were many myths which trivialized the severity and extent of Domestic violence in the study communities.

Moreover, GBV was caused by social and political idealizations that certain roles or jobs were for men. Such ideas discriminate women in family, community or even workplace marriage as the patriarchal society thinks headships or certain jobs are performed best by man.

25.EFFECTS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE ON WOMEN IN THE STDY COMMUNITIES:

This objective investigates the effects of GBV on respondents in the study communities. It was divided into two: positive and negative effects. Each was examined and presented in tables, analyzed and discussed.

TABLE FIVE: RESPONDENTS' PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH GBV IN THE NEW YORK SECTION BO CITY:

EXPERIENCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(S)
Have been a victim	65	93
Have seen the victim	2	3
Not been a victim	3	4
Total	70	100

SOURCE: Survey Data, 2018.

From the table above, 93% of the respondents stated that they have been victims of GBV in the study communities, 4% claimed that they have never been victims and 3% said they have seen victims of GBV in the study communities.

Discussions revealed that almost all the women in the study communities have experienced GBV at least once in their life time. Those who claimed not victimized in any way were illiterates and see GBV as part of their normal life.

Unfortunately, there was no positive impact GBV as revealed by respondents. Meaning the chieftdom has not experienced any positive effects of GBV and therefore all claims made were negative. This shows that the negative effects of GBV was glaring and infringing pains on the women or girls folk in the study communities.

26. TABLE SIX: NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN THE STUDY COMMUNITIES:

NEGATIVE EFFECTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(S)
Affects women’s health	20	
Hampers poverty reduction	18	
Deprives girls education	15	
Force abortion/unwanted pregnancy	7	
Fuel sexually transmitted diseases/infection	10	
Total	70	100

SOURCE: Survey Data, 2018.

From the table above, 20% of the respondents stated that one major effects of GBV in the study communities was that it affects women’s health, 18% indicated hampering poverty reduction among females and 15% claimed that it deprives girl’s education.

However, 10% of the respondents claimed that, it fuel sexually transmitted diseases/infection among women and girls and 7% indicated force abortion/unwanted pregnancies. Women and girls are half of the human capital available to reduce poverty in New York section particularly Pessima lane and achieve development. Yet gender-based violence undermines human rights, social stability and security, public health, women’s educational and employment opportunities, and the well-being and development prospects of children and communities as in the case of Conteh Street.

Gender-based violence severely restricts women’s ability to exercise their reproductive rights, with grave consequences for sexual and reproductive health. As many as 1 in 4 women experience physical or sexual violence during pregnancy in the study communities as reported by the FSU Officer. This increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth and abortion, as well as premature labor and low birth weight.

27. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RCOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY:

It is widely understood that GBV; be it in the form of isolated acts or systematic patterns of violence is not caused by any single factor. Rather, it is a combination of several factors that increase the risk of a man committing violence and the risk of a woman experiencing violence. In the New York section, there have been several reports made to the Sierra Leone Police (FSU) and local authorities. But most of the GBV cases were not reported and women and girls continue to suffer the perils to their graves.

It was against this background that this study was undertaken to investigate the causes and effects of GBV in the study communities. The aim of this study was to investigate the causes and effects of GBV in the New York section and the objectives include; examining the causes of GBV and effects of GBV in the selected communities. Related literatures were reviewed and based on the incidences of GBV in the study communities; it was selected as the study community. Seventy respondents were randomly selected from the sampled communities.

Data collection methods and instruments were used to collect data from the field. Data collected from the field was analyzed by qualitative technique as it was mere description of the situation as it was as at time of study.

However, findings revealed that the respondents have stayed in the study communities for considerable number of years and therefore were better informed to give detailed information the present status of GBV.

28. They all had knowledge of GBV in the study communities but pretended to be ignorant of the situation. Bulk of the respondents was aware of GBV but because of their customs and traditions they ignored the impact on their lives, children and the communities. The causes of GBV in the study communities range from ingrained myth of GBV to strictly adherence to culture and traditional practices of the communities. The negative effects included poverty, impact of women's health, social, political and economic injustice, patriarchy society etc.

The whole study was summarized and conclusions drawn. Recommendations were proffer for practical action to mitigate the situation.

CONCLUSION

From the findings above the following conclusions were drawn:

That GBV was prevalent in the study communities and bulk of the respondents were affected. The situation was serious in the study communities and therefore it was difficult for the FSU and other partners to curb. That children particularly girls were involved in GBV along with their female counterparts. Men continue to take dominant role in all developmental and moral issues in the chiefdom. There was no positive effect of GBV recorded in the chiefdom.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the conclusions the following recommendations were provided for practical actions:

- That the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs work in close collaboration with the Sierra Leone and other partners in making sure that GBV is minimized in the study communities and by extension the country at large.

29.

- That the Sierra Leone Police through the Family Support Unit be vigilant in prosecuting cases of GBV brought before them so that its occurrence will be minimized in the study communities.
- That awareness raising programmes be made available to community people and more especially the rural power structure so that the dangers of GBV will not be downplayed at the disadvantage of victims.
- That cases compromised be prosecuted and perpetrators and those involved face the full force of the law
- That commitment is made to the implementation of the Acts and policies to help save the rural women from the fangs of GBV perpetrated by men.
- That culture and traditions be modified so that the dangerous elements be adjusted and the good ones maintained.

30 REFERENCES

1. Alison, I.J (2011). The crucibles of rural poverty and vulnerability to Gender Based Violence in Rural Majengo, Kenya.
2. Causes and effects of gender based violence. Unpublished paper presented by college student, Ibadan University.
3. Heise, (1998) Ecological Framework for Understanding Violence against Women
4. Understanding violence against women in the Niger Delta. (WHO/LSHTM 2010).
5. Sierra Leone Police Annual Report on cases of Gender Based Violence For Kono District 2012-16 (SLP, Annual Reports