



ISSN: 2251 - 0621

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# **MOCPED**

## **INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES**

*Vol. 2 Nos. 1 & 2, 2013*



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**Vol. 2 Nos. 1 & 2**

**2013**

*A Publication of:  
Michael Otedola College of Primary Education  
Noforija Epe Lagos, Nigeria.*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The  
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prac  
thec

The  
edu

Science Education: A Veritable Tool For Combating Global Terrorism and Achieving Global Partnership for Sustainable Development in Nigeria - <b>OGUNKUNLE, Segun J</b> .....	1
Towards An Etiological Perception of Global Terrorism - <b>IBRAHEEM, T. L. (Ph.D), AYODELE, O. T. (Ph.D) OLUDIPE, O. &amp; BALOGUN, S. Adenike</b> .....	6
<i>Language-education: An Indispensable Tool to Combat Terrorism for the Attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) - OJETUNDE, Cecilia Folasade, Ph.D &amp; OSIPEJU, Babasola Samuel</i> .....	12
The Place of Information and Communication Technology in the Attainment of Millennium Development Goals In Education - <b>GBADEBO, Adegbuyi David , ABIMBOLA, Olayemi Grace &amp; KEHINDE, Esther Olabisi</b> .....	18
Gender Violence as Predictor of Female Success in the Society - <b>OSHODI, O.O Ph.D, OYETADE, Eunice M. Ph.D, ADEMIJU, Pauline U. Ph.D, AYODELE, Olufunmilayo T. Ph.D &amp; Adesegun Ola AYANLAJA</b> .....	24
Terrorism and Insecurity in Nigeria: Implications for Small and Medium Scale Enterprises - <b>ADEMOLA, Abiodun Matthew &amp; ADEKOYA, Adenuga Fabian</b> .....	31
Towards Effective Teaching and Learning of Primary Agriculture: Pot Trials to Validate An Alternative Medium For Demonstrating Mixed Cropping Concept - <b>OLUGBEMI Peter, W</b> .....	38
Community Education: A Tool for Rural Development in Nigeria - <b>BELLO, Basiru Folorunso</b> ....	45
Psychological Consequences of Terrorism And Millennium Development Goals: Implication for A Responsive Educational Policy - <b>ASIKHIA, Olubusayo, A. (Ph.D)</b> .....	52
The Culture of Bad Governance In Nigeria: Implications for the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Mdgs) - <b>OMEDE, Adedoyin J. Ph.D, HASSAN, Adijat K. &amp; ADENUGA, Gbeke A.</b> .....	61
Effect of Global Cultural Interaction and Terrorism on Indigenous African Knowledge and the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals - <b>ADESANYA Olusegun Oyeleye (CLN) &amp; IKENUE I. Joy (CLN)</b> .....	67
Effects of Clause Structures in Print Media on Global Terrorism - <b>AGBOYINU, Amos M. &amp; AKINWUMI, Bosede, J</b> .....	77
Terrorism: The Boko Haram Dimension and Consequences for Political Stability and National Development- <b>IGHOROJEH Bright</b> .....	86
Achieving Millennium Development Goals Through the Teaching of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Colleges Of Education - <b>AYANWOLE, A.A</b> .....	94
Terrorism, Anomie and Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria - <b>EZEKIEL, A.I.D., Lawal, R.O. &amp; WILLIAMS-Oladapo, A</b> .....	99
Terrorism: An Obstacle to the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - <b>Professor Olu AKEUSOLA &amp; Kayode ASOGA-ALLEN</b> .....	105

Securing the Rights of Early School Children in A Terrorized Society: Implications for World Best Educational Practices - <b>DAGUNDURO, Olayinka Morenike &amp; USMAN-ABDULQADRI, T.</b> .....	111
The Effect of Globalization on International Terrorism - <b>MUSE, Sulaimon Adigun &amp; SANNI, Mufutau Olayiwola</b> .....	121
Informing the Uninformed: Drama As a Tool for Combating Conflict in the Society - <b>APENA, Jamal-Caleb Adepoju</b> .....	127
Panacea for National Insecurity Debacle: Imperatives for Peace and Security Education Concepts in Junior Secondary Social Studies Programme - <b>OLADIMEJI, Taibat. O.A</b> .....	135
The Role of Teachers in the Attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Education - <b>OYEDEMI, O. C., ODUPE, T. A. A. &amp; GBADEBO, Adegbuyi David</b> .....	141
The Effect of Polya's Problem Solving Techniques on Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement in Mathematics: Implication for Secondary Mathematic Education - <b>ALONGE, Shafi , OYEDEMI, O. C. &amp; ODUPE, T.A.A</b> .....	147
Terrorism, Ethics and African Patriarchy: A Thematic Exploration of Buchi Emecheta's Novels - <b>UNOROH, Solomon Oghenechuko &amp; AKPORHERHE, Friday</b> .....	153
Global Terrorism and the Millennium Development Goals on Entrepreneurship Development: The Nigerian Experience - <b>ONAMADE, Sulaiman A. &amp; ADEDAYO, Temitayo G</b> .....	158
Security Challenges in Nigera: The Counsellor's View Point - <b>OLAGUNJU, M. K. O. &amp; ADEYEMI, S. D. V., Ph.D</b> .....	165
Millennium Development Goal for Peace And Security Through Literature Education - <b>IDOWU, Steven Oluwafemi, YEDE, Francis Sotonji &amp; OGUNNORIN, Saheed Adeniyi</b> .	
Global Terrorism, Education And Millennium Development Goals: The Religious Perspectives <b>OKEBUKOLA, Alexander Olufemi .A</b> .....	176
Poverty Reduction Through Business Education: An Effective Tool in Reducing Women Involvement in Terrorism - <b>EJIKEME, E. &amp; ABUBAKAR, W</b> .....	181
Constraints and Solutions to the Inclusion Of The Excluded in Achieving the Millenium Development Goals - <b>ARANMOLATE, Temitope Rasheedat</b> .....	185
Boko Haram Crisis: Spiraling Effects on the Agricultural Productivity, Food Chain and Unemployment In Nigeria <b>YUSUF, Modupe O., OLADIMEJI, Moruff. S &amp; OYEWOLE, Oluwaseun</b> .....	193
Youth Empowerment Through Entrepreneurship Education: An Effective Strategy for Reducing Terrorism In Nigeria- <b>JASPER, Chidi E</b> .....	200
The Role of Education in Curbing Violence and Terrorism in Nigeria - <b>ABUBAKAR, Bala Ph.D; ABDULMALIK, I. Ph.D &amp; KASIMU, Lolo Ph.D</b> .....	205
Economic Security Through Entrepreneurial Development in Nigeria: Business Education Students' Assessment - <b>SANUSI, Catherine Oluyemi &amp; Oluwo, Amos O.</b> .....	210
Improving Farm Mechanisation In Nigeria Towards the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) - <b>SALAKO, Y. A., OLA, E. O. &amp; ODULATE, L.O.</b> .....	216



Enhancing Indigenous Arts and Crafts Education As A Means of Reducing Terrorism in Nigeria - SHIDI, Yusuf Adisa.....	221
Entrepreneurship Education As A Tool for Combating Terrorism and Achieving the Millennium Development Goals - OLUWO, Oluwabunmi Amos.....	225
Needs Assessment of Vocational Education as A Tool for Achieving Millennium Development Goals (Mdgs) in Ogun State, Nigeria - ONASOGA, O. T. & AKINLABI, D.A.....	230
Peace and National Development As Engendered by the Testamentary Address of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) - YUSUF, T.O., BALOGUN, K. Y. & SHITTU, M. A.....	237
Agricultural Development: Basis for Achieving Millennium Development Goals - OLUDIPE, B.O. & ISHOLA, T.A. ....	245
An Overview of Islamic Education, Terrorism and Millennium Development Goals - AGBABIKA - MUSTAPHA, M. A.....	250
Approaches to Effective Teaching of Entrepreneurship in Home Economics - OLADUNJOYE, G. O. ....	255
Terrorists' Negative Use of ICT and The Effects on Education In Nigeria - LASISI, S.O & OKUNTADE, J.O.....	259
Political Perspective of Terrorism As A Threat to Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) - AFOLABI, Bayonle Akinloye & ADEGBOLA, Adetunji A.....	265
Cultural Studies: A Panacea to Terrorism in Nigeria - ADEGBOLA, A. A. & SEBIOMO, Bola .....	269
La Langue : Instrument Pour Combattre La Crise - AJAYI, Peter Taiwo.....	275
The Need for Information and Communication Technology in Technical and Vocational Education in Nigerian Polytechnics - ADETUNJI, S. O.....	279
Overweight and Obesity as Risk Factors in Students of Agriculture in Selected Tertiary Institutions in Lagos State - ISHOLA, T. A., EMMANUEL, A. A. & Asunmo, M. R.....	286
Language Laboratory: An Indispensable Tool in the Teaching and Learning of English As a Second Language - ELUSAKIN, Kayode Titus.....	293
Terrorism And Education: The Connections, Threats and Implications on the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria - OSHODI, Odunola O Ph. D & OLALEYE, Emmanuel Olumuyiwa Ph.D.....	298
Psychological Implications of Global Terrorism to Sport Performance in Nigeria - SASEYI, O.O.; ADESANYA, A. J, OMOLADE, A. O. & OSIFEKO, O. R. ....	306
Terrorism: Universal Basic Education, Millennium Development Goals and the Challenges - ILLO, Charles O. & LOKO, Shadrach T.....	313
Managing Stenches of Terrorism and the Accomplishment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) - JEGEDE, A. Adebowale.....	320
Terrorism: Impediment to the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals - SALAU Jelil Olawale, ADENUGA Gbeke Adebowale & OLADEPO, Kazeem Adebowale.....	324



# GENDER VIOLENCE AS PREDICTOR OF FEMALE SUCCESS IN THE SOCIETY

By

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## Abstract

*Gender-based violence is a psycho-social issue deep rooted in the world: developed, developing or third-world countries. It is a worldwide malaise, eating deep into the fabric of society. Unfortunately, women bear the brunt of a lot of violence in our society and silently cover them up so as to avoid stigmatization or protect their families. This study investigated the extent of female subjection to physical, sexual, educational and psychological violence in Lagos. The study adopted ex-post facto descriptive research design using a sample of 280 respondents and a self-designed instrument with reliability coefficient of 0.67 using Cronbach alpha. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple frequency counts, as well as regression analysis. Findings revealed that females are subjected to violence and that the variables in the study had combined effect on respondents' perception of violence against female gender. It is therefore recommended among others that Government should embark on campaign against acts of violence against women.*

**Keywords:** Gender, violence, female, predictor, success, society

## Introduction

The peace and war times continue to suffer one form of violence or the other at the hands of the state, community, or their own family, (Cleen Foundation, 2006). The Foundation is of the opinion that gender discrimination is any pattern of preferential treatment of males in education, employment, and leadership roles.

On this note, the United Nations defines gender-based violence as harm or suffering to women. Violence against women and gender-based violence are interchanged (Cleen Foundation, 2006). Violence against women, according to United Nations (1994) is any gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts as coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Such violence may occur in the family or within the general community, and may be perpetrated or condoned by the state.

Violence against women or gender-based is a psycho-social issue deep-rooted in the world society: developed, developing or third world countries. It is a worldwide malaise, eating deep into the fabric of society. It has become common to see women violated in different aspects of life by their male counterparts, be it their fathers, brothers, husbands or for that matter total strangers. Unfortunately women bear the brunt of a lot of violence in our society and silently cover them up so as to avoid stigmatization or protect their families. In recent times in Nigeria, there have been several cases of violence against women and, most of these cases are kept silent despite their pervasiveness. Issues like sexual harassment, trafficking in women and girls, sex selection, early marriage, female genital mutilation etc are fast becoming epidemics plaguing Nigeria as it is the case globally (Nnadi, 2012). Violence against women is a common act, and this is primarily carried out by the parents, husband and other male employer, government, community due to socio-cultural factors where the female originates, resides, works or carries out business.

The persistence of violence against women could be attributed to certain factors, such as, history of colonialism, and post-colonial domination, nation building initiatives, armed conflict, displacement and migration, economic status, race, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, religion and culture (UN General Assembly, 2006). Other contributing factors by Heise,(1998), Heise (2006) are male attitudes,



dominance, economic and decision-making dominance in the family are predictors of violence against women. Ujiro (2009) stated that the social context of violence against women in Nigeria is related to traditional African patriarchal society, which defines the gender power structure. For example, upon marriage, a woman surrenders to her husband exclusive sexual rights and obedience. His invariably gives her husband the liberty to violate and batter her if he feels that she has not adequately fulfilled her obligations or for any other reasons.

Violence against women, according to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, (2009) takes different forms, manifested in a continuum of multiple, interrelated and sometimes recurring forms. It can include physical, sexual and psychological/emotional violence and economic abuse and exploitation, experienced in a range of settings, from private to public and in today's globalized world, transcending national boundaries. Jalal, (2008:2) further stated that the act of violence against women could be; intimate partner violence, marital rape, sexual violence, dowry-related violence, female infanticide, sexual abuse of female children, female genital mutilation/cutting and other traditional practices harmful to women, early marriage, forced marriage, non-spousal violence, and violence perpetuated against domestic workers, and other forms of exploitation and trafficking. The most prevailing violence experienced by women globally is intimate partner violence, and this is often perpetuated by a male partner against a female partner. 95% of domestic assaults reported in the Pacific region, the husband was the perpetrator. One of the most pervasive violations of human rights in all societies exists on a continuum from violence perpetrated by an intimate partner to violence as a weapon of war (Grown, 2005:231).

Violence against women is a major threat to social and economic development. It is a violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality and it also undermines and constrains the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including those set for poverty, education, child health, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS and overall sustainable development. (UN General Assembly 2006). Commonwealth of Australia (2008) and Council of Europe (2006) equally stated that violence against women severely constrains development, obstructing women's participation in political, social and economic life, escalating costs in health care, social services and policing and increased strain on the justice system, lowering the overall educational attainment of victims/survivors, their children and even the perpetrators of such violence. WHO (2002) reported that violence places women at higher risk for poor physical and reproductive health, mental health and social functioning. Women subjected to violence are more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs and to report sexual dysfunction, suicide attempts, post-traumatic stress and central nervous system disorders. Flood (2011) reported that violence against women in which men express and maintain their powers over women fuels women's distrust and fear of men, and hurts the women whom many men love and this is the price they pay for their actions.

Considering the consequences of violence against women, the United Nations Secretary-General made the following statement on the international women's day (2009):

*Violence against women stands in direct contradiction to the promise of the United Nations Charter to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. The consequences go beyond the visible and immediate. Death, injury, medical costs and lost employment are but the tip of an iceberg. The impact on women and girls, their families, their communities and their societies in terms of shattered lives and livelihoods is beyond calculation. Far too often, crimes go unpunished, and perpetrators walk free. No country, no culture, no woman, young or old, is immune. — Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2009)*

The effects of violence against women were recognized in the Millennium Declaration of September, 2000, therefore, the General Assembly of the United Nations resolved "to combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women (United Nations, 2005:12). The millennium resolutions as laid down by the United Nations concern



not only individuals but also the whole global community. The resolutions which are still alive are concerned with freeing all men, women and children in our world from the conditions that tie them to unhealthy situations.

The eight MDGs were set by the United Nations as: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, Achieve universal primary education, Promote gender equality and empower women, Reduce child mortality, Improve maternal health, Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases, Ensure environmental sustainability and Development of a global partnership.

Violence against women violates the following Millennium Development Goals; eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, improve maternal health.

This study therefore investigated the extent of female subjection to physical, sexual, educational and psychological violence in Lagos-Nigeria.

### Research Questions

1. To what extent are female subjected to physical violence?
2. To what extent are female subjected to sexual violence?
3. To what extent are female subjected to educational violence?
4. To what extent are female subjected to psychological violence?
5. What are the individual and combined effects of age, gender, religion, literacy and occupation on respondents' perception of violence against female gender?

### Methodology

The research design used for the study was ex-post facto descriptive research. Simple random sampling was used to select the two hundred and eighty (280) respondents for the study. The research instrument was a questionnaire of two sections, Section A was on demographic data while section B comprised modified likert scale of strongly agreed (SA) Agreed (A), disagreed (D) and strongly disagreed (SD) to measure the extent of the physical, psychological, social and economic growth and development. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.67 (using Cronbach alpha formula). The instrument was administered with the assistance of Research Assistants. Data collected from the eighty respondents were analysed with frequency count and simple percentages as well as regression analysis. This was used to answer the six research questions raised in the study.

### Results

#### Research Question One: To what extent are females subjected to physical violence?

Table 1: Frequency count and percentage of respondents' perception of female subjection to physical violence

ITEM	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	Females are usually beaten by men	96 (34.28)	122 (43.57)	32 (11.43)	30 (10.71)
2	Females are sometimes victim of hitting	60 (21.43)	140 (50.00)	52 (18.57)	28 (10.00)
3	Sometimes, females are exposed to injury resulting from objects (missile)	20 (7.14)	110 (39.29)	42 (15.00)	28 (10.00)
4	Female are usually accused of being the abuse of rape	82 (29.29)	148 (52.86)	20 (7.14)	30 (10.71)
5	Female find it difficult to get justice most of the time	46 (16.43)	108 (38.57)	36 (12.86)	90 (32.14)

Table 3 reveals that the respondents opined that females are subjected to educational violence with higher percentage of respondents agreeing to four of the five items on educational violence. Item four disagreed to the view that school materials for males are usually met before that of female.

**Question Four: To what extent are females subjected to psychological violence?**

*Table 4: Frequency count and percentage of respondents' perception of female subjection to psychological violence*

ITEM	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	Female are sometimes categorized as being of low intelligence	40 (14.29)	84 (30.00)	46 (16.43)	110 (39.29)
2	Women are not carried along in some important issues concerning the family	74 (26.43)	94 (33.57)	50 (17.86)	62 (22.14)
3	Females are rated as second class citizens	50 (17.86)	126 (45.00)	44 (15.71)	60 (21.43)
4	Women are always left out in decision making	42 (15.00)	102 (36.43)	50 (17.86)	86 (30.71)
5	Women that give birth to female children alone are being traumatised (sent out of their home, deprived of their rights)	70 (25.00)	88 (31.43)	64 (22.86)	58 (20.71)

Table 4 reveals that the respondents opined that females are subjected to psychological violence with higher percentage of respondents agreeing to the five items on psychological violence.

**Question Five: What is the individual and combined effect of age, gender; religion, literacy and occupation on respondents' perception of violence against female gender.**

*Table 5a: Summary of Regression analysis of age, gender, religion, literacy and occupation to respondents' perception of violence against female gender*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.302	0.091	0.074	10.59717

*Table 5b: Analysis of variance of age, gender, religion, literacy and occupation on respondents' perception of violence against female gender*

Model	R	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	3079.145	5	615.829	5.484	.000
Residual	30770.227	274	112.300		
Total	33849.371	279			

Tables 5a and 5b show that age, gender, religion, literacy and occupation had combined effect on respondents perception of violence against female gender ( $P < 0.05$ ). It reveals adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.074 indicating combined contribution of a mere 7.4% to the variance measure.



Table 5c: Regression Analysis of age, gender, religion, literacy and occupation on respondents' perception of violence against female gender

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (constant)	26.636	6.278		4.242	.000
Age	.948	.668	.086	1.419	.157
Gender	5.058	1.409	.228	3.588	.000*
Religion	4.982	1.355	.227	3.675	.000*
Literacy	3.117	1.441	.140	2.163	.031*
Occupation	-.688	.408	-.109	-1.685	.093

Key: \*Significant at 0.05level

Table 5c shows that three of the five variables namely gender, religion and literacy singly affect respondents' perception of violence against female gender. These three variables contributed to the variance in the dependent measure in the order: Gender ( $\hat{\alpha} = .228$ ) > Religion ( $\hat{\alpha} = .227$ ) > literacy ( $\hat{\alpha} = .140$ ). The contribution of age and occupation to variance in respondents' perception of violence against female gender is not significant ( $P > .05$ ).

### Discussion and Conclusion

The act of violence against women could be; intimate partner violence, marital rape, sexual violence, dowry-related violence, female infanticide, sexual abuse of female children, female genital mutilation/cutting and other traditional practices harmful to women, early marriage, forced marriage, non-spousal violence, and violence perpetuated against domestic workers, and other forms of exploitation like female trafficking. The most prevailing violence experienced by women globally is intimate partner violence, and this is often perpetuated by a male partner against a female partner. 95% of domestic assaults reported in the Pacific region, the husband was the perpetrator, (Jalal, 2008:2).

Violence against women is of different dimensions. Physical violence against women is one of the violence faced by women. The study showed that women are faced with physical violence. In line with the finding, Falayi (2012) reported how one Mr. David Sulaimon poured acid on one Miss. Chika Egbo his girlfriend who is the mother of his child, this later caused the death of the lady. Also Utebor (2013) reported that George Iheanacho killed his living wife, Regina James in their residence sometimes in April, 2013. Etim (2013) reported the raping and killing of a market woman by hoodlums in Uyo. In the same vein Isiguzo and Oladele (2009) reported a case of 18 year-old girl rape ordeal by two male undergraduates. Nineteen teenage girls who lived on the western weather coast during the conflict reported of being raped by forces occupying or raiding their village (Secretariat of the Pacific, 2009).

Levinson (1989) found that male economic and decision-making authority in the family was one of the strongest predictors of societies that demonstrate high violence against women. Flood (2011) likewise found that decision-making in the family was highly related to a husband's level of violence. The most violent husbands tended to make most of the decision regarding family finances and strictly controlled when and where their wives could go.

Girls face many barriers to education some of them involve in violence or make them more vulnerable. For example, many families place little value on educating girls, and prefer to keep them working at home or for wages elsewhere. Poor families who can afford to send one person to school will prefer to send the boy leaving the girl (Abama and Kwaja, 2009). There is a global evidence of inequality in the area of preference of sons to daughters, limited education and work opportunities for girls and women, and higher levels of physical and sexual violence against girls and women.



Women in many parts of the world have no social or legal recourse against violence by their husband or partner, and men use domestic violence to diminish women's autonomy and sense of self-worth (Abama and Kwaja, 2009). Women are frequently segregated involuntarily into different types of sports, events and competitions specially targeted for women. Women's access to positions of leadership from the local level to the international level. The values placed on women's sports are often lower, resulting in inadequate resources and unequal wages and prizes (United Nations, 2007). The positive outcome of sports for gender equality and women's empowerment are constrained by gender-based discrimination in all areas and at all levels of sports and physical activity, fuelled by continuing stereotypes of women's physical abilities and social roles.

### Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- ✓ People should be educated on the effect of violence against women.
- ✓ Perpetuators of violence against the female gender should be prosecuted.
- ✓ Government should embark on the campaign against any act of violence against women.
- ✓ Women organisations should have representatives in all government agencies to forestall any act of intimidation from the agency where reports are being made.

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