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ROLE OF LIBRARY IN INFORMATION PROVISION FOR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

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Abstract

Domestic violence has been a recurring phenomenon in the society from the time immemorial. Adding salt on the injuries of the victims is the fact that it seemingly looks as if there is no way out of this doldrums. This paper therefore, examines the role of library for the victims of domestic violence. Questionnaires were administered on 30 victims of domestic violence and the findings are revealing. The causes of domestic violence and the desire to be enlightened and find succour for the victims were parts of the findings.

Keywords: Violence, Domestic Violence, Library, Information

Introduction

Domestic violence is as old as man, as reflected in the biblical story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4: 1-8 which then led to the first murder in the history of mankind. Domestic violence is a range of violent and abusive behaviour perpetrated by one person against another, in marriage, marriage-like or intimate relationship. It includes battering of intimate partners and others, sexual abuse of children, marital rape and traditional practices that are harmful to women. Female genital mutilation is a form of domestic violence. Domestic violence occurs globally. It is adapted by a person to control their victims, which results in physical, sexual, and/or psychological damage, forced social isolation, or economic deprivation, which leaves victims living in fear. Naaeke (2006) asserts that domestic violence is much broader than wife beating, that in most cases it is the husband who beats his wife although the reverse is also true. According to Aihie (2009), citing UNICEF (2000), battering of women is a sanctioned form of discipline in virtually all African countries. In doing this, men believe that, discipline is being instilled in the women especially when such a woman is economically dependent on the man for sustenance.

Besides the traditional role of the library, it should be equally meant to be a safe place for families facing some of the most difficult times, for instance, families trying to overcome domestic violence. And this is predicated on books, the idea that

books can help take your mind off of things, even if for only a short time. And that brief distraction can help in the long run.

This paper therefore, will analyze the phenomenon of domestic violence and the victims, and the role libraries can play to enlighten the victims, wipe the tears by disseminating information to them.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Investigate the reason(s) for domestic violence
2. Examine the role of the libraries in bringing information to the victims of domestic violence.
3. Shed more lights on the victims of domestic violence
4. Examine library in the 21st century

Research Questions

The questions that need to be answered are:

1. What are the reasons for domestic violence?
2. What are the roles of libraries in bringing information to the victims of domestic violence?
3. Who are really the victims of domestic violence?
4. How should library deliver its services to the victims of domestic violence in the 21st century?

Statement of Problem

Quietly, many women, men and children in the world face an uphill battle at home. The battle is domestic violence. The numbers are staggering. Every day, hundreds of thousands are being battered domestically and in this our developing nation, mute has been the word. People are afraid to speak-out against this problem, perhaps because of customs, law, women are afraid and shy. Several studies however, have been carried out on domestic violence but not much has been done on the role the libraries are playing to ameliorate the impact and the scourge of this menace in our society. Therefore, this paper intends to look at the role of library in information provision for the victims of domestic violence.

Significance of the Study

The rate of domestic violence and crime is growing beyond bounds. Children, women and men are being maimed daily in our society. And this has begun to generate daily debates. One of the celebrated cases is one in which one Mr. Akolade Arowolo was alleged to have beaten and killed his wife, Titilayo on the 24th June, 2011 (The Punch, 2011). Stemming from this, violence and crime have suddenly become important social issues both at national and domestic levels and, have formed the subject of researches, conferences and seminars. It seemingly looks as if the society is not doing anything to ameliorate this menace. The victims are keeping

quiet, for fear of what would be the aftermath of the effrontery for coming out to talk or share their experiences. Against this backdrop therefore, the role of the library in providing information for the victims of domestic violence at this particular moment is very key. This information will help in ameliorating the pains from the violence and bringing to fore the evil in domestic violence.

Literature Review

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence, especially wife battering is the most widespread form of violence against women (Bhowon and Munbauhal, 2005). It is range of violent and abusive behaviour perpetrated by one partner against another in marriage, marriage-like or intimate relationship. Umweni, Uwadiae and Agbontaen-Eghafona (2009) define domestic violence as a pattern of violent behaviour including physical, sexual and psychological attacks as well as economic coercion used against intimate partner.

Narayan (2000) looks at the definition as including rape, beating and insults faced by women. He includes that when husbands are not getting their meals on time, when wives would not give their husband a massage, etc. Jones (1994) introduces power and control. He says it is a crime of power and control committed mainly by men against women. He calls it non-consultation of victim's wishes and from which the perpetrator will not let her victim escape.

Domestic violence often involves physical treating for instance, a slap, push, use of a weapon, criticism, intimidation, acid bath, threats, humiliation and/or isolation. Naaeke (2006) opines that it also includes wife beating her husband, parents beating their children excessively to the point of inflicting injuries on the child. Another violence at home could probably be children beating up their parents. This could be a rare occurrence but it does occur.

Hooks (2000) brings in the African family arrangement into the definition of domestic violence. The African family arrangement is polygamy, and extended family. This usually includes husband, many wives, children, uncles, nieces, nephews etc. All these live together in African setting. And occurrence of violence at home is looked at as domestic violence. It is a norm in African setting to settle any issues discussed within the family, so that non-family members would not know about out it.

Domestic Violence and its Victims

Domestic violence cuts across all racial, ethnic, religion, educational and social-economic lines. Unfortunately again, the voice of the victims are always unheard. When the children are victims, it is a taboo for a child to report his parents in Africa. Bunch (1997) says domestic violence often occurs behind closed doors, but often within earshot or eyeshot of children and family relations. And the word "domestic" makes and depicts that it is a "family affair" which is less threatening, less brutal, than the violence that takes place outside the home (Hooks, 2000).

It rarely occurs perhaps, that the victims of domestic violence would report, because of the socio-cultural background of the people and the Nigerian law which does not treat domestic violence as enabling until the victim is incapacitated or killed (Umwemi, Uwadiae, & Agboute (2009).

For example in Northern Nigerian, according to Section 55 (1) (d) of the Penal Code cap 345, laws of the federation of Nigeria 1999 permits a husband to chastise his wife so far as grievous harm does not occur. In the same law, section 241 of the Penal Code defines grievous harm as infliction on the wife, emasculation, permanent deprivation of the eye, of the hearing of an ear or the power of speech, destruction of permanent impairing of the power of any member or joint, permanent disfigurement of the head or face, fracture or dislocation of a bone or tooth, any hurt which endangers life or which causes the sufferer to be in bed during a space of 20 days in severe bodily pain or unable to follow her ordinary pursuit (WOPED, 1999). The implication of this is that injuries like swellings on the face, black eye, bites, marks and other enumerated above are signs of domestic violence and they are not to be reported by the victims because there are not disciplinary actions against the offender.

Victims of domestic violence often are reluctant to report their abuse either because of cultural influence which bothers on fear of not being well behaved, threats from the partner, isolation and /or condemnation from families or community, concern about break-up of the family, the hope that the partner will change and sometimes due to attitude displayed by medical workers (Umwemi, Uwadiae and Agbontae, 2009:29).

Are there reasons for domestic violence?

Yes. The reasons for violence at home are as varied as the domestic violence itself. For example, some people say that women are hit because lunch is not ready when the husband gets home (Narayan, 2000). This is what Naaeke (2006) calls cultural ideology or male superiority over the female. Oyekanmi (2000) opines that this is the institution of patriarchy, a system of male dominance, which conditions women psychologically to accept a secondary status by embracing a process of sex-role stereotyping.

Another reason is the sexual deprivation. Researchers have argued, according to Bergen, 1999; Johnson & Sigler, 1997, that marital rape is just an extension of domestic violence since majority of women are raped by their husbands and often also battered. Some of the victims are forced into having sexual intercourse with their husband amidst battering and injury.

Moreover, possessive character of the batterer resulting in excessive jealousy is an important factor in the reason for domestic violence. Frude (1993) asserts that a profoundly jealous man has every tendency to judge every of his wife's action as infidelity. And when the wife would want to prove the

allegations as being wrong, it would lead to assault. Roberts (2002) points out that over-dependency of the abuser frequently manifest itself in jealous tirades and battering, is often the end-results.

Alcoholism and drugs are another reason for domestic violence. Bhowon and Membauhai (2005) citing from a survey carried out by the Ministry for Women's Rights, Family, n Welfare and Child Development (1998) in Ghana, indicate that alcohol played a significant role in the instigation of violence at home. Interestingly, the addicts (husbands) tend to lose memory of attitude when they are drunk. And the wives always believed them, and believing that they would change later (Mullender, 1996).

Theoretical Framework

Structural Theory

The structural theory identifies the source of violence as stress, frustration and deprivation resulting from economic crimes. People with fewer reasons experience higher level of frustration and stress coupled with fewer resources (material, emotional, social and psychological) to cope adequately. When there is deprivation of materials, it may result in physical abuse of the wife.

The effect of poverty is well pronounced in the reason for domestic violence. It can manifest on the side of the husband as well as the wife. When it occurs on the side of the wife, she would not be able to access any tools that would enlighten her and perhaps give succour and emancipation to her way.

To bring enlightenment and information, the library has a role to play in the lives of domestic violence.

The Library in the 21st Century

The library of today is a dynamic and challenging environment that offers many roles to the patrons. As dynamic as the library is, it provides unhindered access to essential resources for economic and cultural advance. In doing this, library contributes effectively to the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom, safeguarding democratic values and universal civil rights (International Federation of Library Association, 2003). In the report presented by IFLA 2003 in Geneva, library is said to be a means of access to information, ideas and works of imagination.

Library in the 21st century has taken many physical forms, ranging from large purpose-built buildings to mobile libraries and virtual library of electronic materials and services. Moreover, there are different types of library springing in different countries of the world. For example, National Library which plays the role of coordinating the network of other kinds of libraries throughout that country; public libraries attend to the need of mainly the public; educational libraries and special libraries.

The role of the library for victims of Domestic Violence

The library of 21st Century is a dynamic and challenging environment that offers many opportunities to new librarians. The library is facing daily challenges of bringing exemplary service and resources to a diverse community that can exist anywhere in the world. Amongst these communities are the domestic violence victims. The library without walls has become a reality in meeting the needs of this community. One needs to understand that while the delivery of services and resources has changed formats, the basic values of the profession remain constant and it is in developing these values that growth, success and contentment of the institution are found. Gorman (2000) states that the following values govern the interaction of libraries within their communities: "... stewardship, service, intellectual freedom, rationalism, literacy and laboring, equity of access to recorded knowledge and information, privacy (and) democracy".

Libraries are in a good position to contribute positively to bridging the digital divide, because they are staffed by people whose business it is to help users obtain the information they need (IFLA 2003). The victims of domestic violence are in dire need of information to enlighten them, though they may not come out to say so. They may not even visit the library. But libraries can reach out to them.

Libraries can serve as information centres to the domestic violence victims. Before now libraries have not gone beyond traditional activities of encircling themselves and tucking themselves up with books (Ford, 1997) without any progressive activities. However, the digital era that we are in is capable of transforming the library from book warehouse to information warehouse (Chisenga, 2000). These libraries therefore, in their role as information warehouses will mean less preoccupation with physical collections, and more emphasis on providing information when it is needed by patrons who will not necessarily even visit the library physically, like the victims of domestic violence, but may access it remotely via Telnet or through the World Wide Web.

Closely related to the above information is the fact that there are many libraries around the world with substantial collections of CD ROMS and electronic journals. And these technologies may proffer solution to the domestic violence victims, by using the media houses to intimate the general populace of the availability of such items for their use. It is the duty of the libraries in the communities to provide this information to them. From these, the importance of libraries will be felt more in that community.

Library services are compared with the concepts of "convenience" and "saving time" for customers just as it is in filling stations, thirty minute oil change; hotels, food delivery at home; ATMs in banks; the typical public

library is looked upon to deliver services in this formats using these principles. According to Vavrek (1995) the library is more a place than a service.

Montiel-Overall (2009) suggests another way the role of libraries could be felt in the community under discussion. She says libraries should do things that interfere with cultural norms of the community (domestic violence victims) and create ways of building on cultural norms of the groups as served by the library. She suggests recognition and respect preference of library users for text or digital information, forms of communication (telephone, face to face) and for presentation of information. And that, services should be provided in the dialect of the community, if the dialect is not the "official" dialect of the country or region.

To corroborate the above submission, in "Case Management Resource Kit for SAAP Services," State of Victoria (1999) considers the use of ethno-specific radio programmes and newspapers to talk about services offered by the library.

Moreover, it is the role of library to monitor and review its activities (services) with the victims of domestic violence. Monitoring is an ongoing process to evaluate the expressed goals and objectives.

Design

This study employed a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Qualitative research is not concerned with representative selection or making inferences about the larger population. It seeks to gain rich, comprehensive data from a small number of participants (Mason, 1996).

This is particularly appropriate for a study of this nature as it can give depth and detail of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The population of the study was made of 36 respondents chosen randomly from University of Lagos, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Open Door Parish, Ikorodu and Tinubu Estate, Odonla, all in Lagos. A non-probability of these victims was selected using purposive sampling. Bailey (1987) states that with the purposive sampling, the researcher uses his/her judgment on which participants to use and picks only those who best meet the purpose of the study.

Result**Research Question 1: What are the reasons for domestic violence?****Table 1: Percentages distribution on Reasons for Domestic Violence**

Variables	Yes	No
Are you assaulted because of poverty?	18(50%)	18(50%)
Are you assaulted because the law permits it?	3(8%)	33(92%)
Are you assaulted because of jealousy?	30(83%)	6(17%)
Is your 'assaulter' under the influence of alcohol/drug?	27(75%)	9(25%)
Do you consider your 'assaulter' a wicked person	28(78%)	8(22%)
Does the custom/culture permit it?	34(94%)	2(6%)

From the table above, there are several reasons why this menace is still rife in the society. The highest is that the culture (religion) permits it. The researcher once learnt the Islamic culture that permits the wife to be beaten if she offends the husband. Section 55(1) (d) of the Penal Code permits the husband to chastise his wife. Also the book of Proverb 22:15 says "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child: but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." And with all these points, one wonders less why the battering goes on.

Research Question 2: What are the roles of libraries in bringing information to the victims of domestic violence?**Table 2: Percentage distribution on the roles of libraries**

Variables	Yes	No
Do you think you need help?	28(78%)	8(22%)
Would you go to library for help?	15(42%)	21(58%)
Have you read/heard any materials/documentary on domestic violence?	13(36%)	23(64%)
Did they soothe your nerve?	13(36%)	-
Have the libraries been effective in disseminating information on this subject?	7(19%)	29(81%)

From the table, it is important to note that libraries have not been up and doing in the dissemination of information. And it is worthy of mention that the respondents who tasted the services of libraries through the reading of materials that had to do with domestic violence had their nerves calm down. Therefore, the libraries must arise to their responsibilities so that the communities can feel their presence.

Regressive Question 3: Who are really the Victims of Domestic Violence?**Table 3: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Background Variable of Respondents	Frequencies	Percentage
Sex		
Male	15	42%
Female	21	58%
Total	36	100%
Age		
0-18	3	8%
19-25		
26-30	10	28%
31-45	23	64%
46-60		
Others		
Total	36	100%
Marital Status		
Widow		
Widower		
Single	6	17%
Married	29	81%
Divorced	1	3%
Total	36	100%
Educational Qualification		
School Certificate	6	17%
ND		
HND	10	28%
Under graduate	5	14%
B.A/B.Sc	10	28%
Master	5	14%
Others		
Total	36	100.00%

From the table 3 above, the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents show that 15(42%) are male and 21 (58%) are female, while 3(8%) are 0-18 years, 10 (28%) are within 26-30 years of age and 23 (64%) of the respondents fall within 31-45 years. The implication of this is that not only female face domestic violence but all categories of people as supported by Naaeke (2006) when he asserts that domestic violence goes beyond husband beating wife but wife beating husband also. And the Holy Bible in Gen 4: 1-8 tells us of the first domestic violence in the story of Cain and Abel.

Research Question 4: How should libraries deliver its services to the victims of domestic violence in the 21st century?

Table 4: Percentage distribution on libraries services delivery

Variables	Yes	No
Would you like information on domestic violence posted on the net/TV/Radio/telecentres?	33(92%)	3(8%)
Would like information sent to you via GSM?	30(83%)	6(17%)
Would you prefer CD ROMS and electronic documents or books to help you?	31(86%)	5(14%)
Would you like to discuss this subject through teleconferencing?	27(75%)	9(25%)

From this table, it is crystal clear that the victims prefer technologically-driven services for them. The lowest, 27 (75%) respondents, show that they have not probably used teleconferencing before, because it is not commonly used in our local society.

Discussion

Information professionals have always played a key role in education. They have formed relationships with subject specialists to build library collections to support instruction in the classroom and provided instruction in the form of classes on library skills and library instructional orientation sessions to assist students doing research in their classes. Today, in the information age, library, librarians or information professionals can no longer be simply information providers or the “keeper of books”. They are no longer just custodians of books, today’s librarian is a specialist and answers a variety of names such as “information manager”, “information scientist”, “knowledge manager”, “indexer”, “cataloguer”, “information professional” and a host of other special and highly technical versions of professionals (Abiolu and Okere, 2009). In line with this, library and librarians are to be awakened by providing information to all and sundries through various means. For instance, The Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum (NDVF) website consists of information, resources and service guidance for professionals working with survivors and perpetrators, as well as information about current services for people experiencing domestic violence and abuse. This website also outlines the work that NDVF delivers as an organisation. Much of the website is made up of the library, which houses documents, research and good practice guidelines on a multitude of subjects relating to domestic violence. Library should serve as “a director” to such websites.

The library can equally come in form of a help line desk which should probably be toll-free for domestic violence victims with the assurance that their discussions would be kept secret.

Limitation of the Study

This study encountered unwillingness among the women participants, while men would want to discuss it; the women were not willing to divulge their information. Though, the 36 questionnaires we sent out were retrieved, it took them time to share

their experience. This is attributed to apathy and lack of education on domestic violence. The more educated women were willing to participate in the survey, hence, our decision to make the questionnaire simple by asking open ended questions (‘Yes’ or ‘No’).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has tried to expound the role of library in disseminating information and ameliorating the impact of domestic violence victims. Through an analytical review of available literature, the paper has established who the victims of domestic violence really are, that not women alone but it cuts across the gender board, and the role that libraries should serve and are serving.

This paper therefore recommends the following:

- All and sundry should be educated on what constitutes domestic violence. One way of doing this is to politicize cases of domestic violence and the way out of this.
- The Federal Government of Nigeria should find a way round the penal code that permits beating ones wife. And that when correcting children it should not be to injure or maim but to correct.
- Thorough communication should be established between the concerned.
- Churches and mosques should organize seminars and outreach programmes where professional counsellors are invited to enlighten the people on the need for a violence free society with the home as the cradle.
- Young couples planning to get married should be guided on the ways to avoid violence in the intimate relationship of marriage.
- The library should liaise with government to establish and fund counselling centres at the community, and Local Government levels and employ professional counsellors to help victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

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