

## Conjugal Brutality and Women's Productivity in Formal Organizations in Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** The lives and bodies of women tend to have been the unacknowledged casualties of men for a long time. As a result of violence perpetrated against them, their workplace productivity has decreased over time. The study's purpose is to evaluate, from a sociological perspective, the consequences of violence on women's productivity in contemporary Nigerian society. This study reveals that violence against women disrupts women's lives, destroys their health, undermines their confidence, takes away their psychological sense of esteem, and undermines their full participation in social life. Essentially, violence against women lessens the woman's productivity. Based on this, the study concludes that since women represent an important population group in Nigeria, there is an urgent need to address marital violence against them, particularly those in the formal sector of the economy because they make meaningful contributions to the overall labour force and general societal well-being of all and sundry.

**Keywords:** Brutality, conjugal brutality, women's productivity, gender inequality, and formal organizations

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### INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a severe human rights violation that is widespread in Nigeria, this violence can take many forms, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, and it can have a devastating impact on women's physical and mental health, as well as their ability to work and earn a living, (UNICEF, 2022) In Nigeria, violence against women is often seen as a normal part of life. This is because Nigeria is a patriarchal society, where women are often seen as inferior to men.

Conjugal brutality, also known as intimate partner violence, is a pervasive issue affecting women worldwide, with significant implications for their well-being and societal participation. In Nigeria, a country situated in West Africa and known for its vibrant and dynamic workforce, the impact of conjugal brutality on women's productivity in formal organizations is a pressing concern, according to a study by Collins, (1990). Conjugal brutality can have far-reaching consequences on women's physical and mental health, economic empowerment, and overall productivity. The effects of this violence often extend beyond the confines of the home and spill over into other domains of life, including the workplace.

The study found that violence against women can lead to several health problems, including physical injuries,

mental health problems, and sexually transmitted infections. In Nigeria, where women's participation in formal organizations has been steadily increasing over the years, understanding the relationship between conjugal brutality and women's productivity is essential for creating inclusive and supportive work environments. Conjugal brutality is a form of violence that occurs within the context of a marital relationship, it can take many forms, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Women are disproportionately affected by conjugal brutality, and it can have a significant impact on their productivity in formal organizations. Conjugal brutality is a widespread problem. According to a 2018 study conducted by the National Population Commission, it was found that marital violence is more prevalent in rural areas compared to urban areas. This highlights the need for targeted interventions and support systems in rural communities to address this concerning issue. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA,) published a study in 2014 that found that violence against women can have a significant impact on women's economic empowerment. The study found that women who experience violence are less likely to be employed, earn less money, and have less access to financial resources. Conjugal brutality can have several negative consequences

for women's productivity in formal organizations. It can lead to absenteeism, presenteeism (showing up to work but not being productive), and job turnover. It can also make it difficult for women to concentrate and make decisions, and it can lead to anxiety and depression (WHO, 2013).

Krugal and Benjamin, (2020) explored the relationship between intimate partner violence and women's work outcomes, revealing the detrimental effects of violence on job satisfaction, absenteeism, and overall productivity. In light of the existing research and the increasing recognition of conjugal brutality as a significant social problem, it is crucial to examine how formal organizations in Nigeria address this issue and support affected women. (Adebowale et al., 2020) in correspondence with other authors opines that women who experience violence from their partners are less likely to be employed, earn less money, and have less access to financial resources. The study also found that violence against women can lead to absenteeism from work, decreased productivity, and job loss.

Violence against women is a serious problem that has a significant impact on their lives, both personally and professionally, it harms their productivity, this is especially true in Nigeria, where women make up a significant portion of the workforce. Violence against women can lead to physical injuries, psychological trauma and fear, all of which can make it difficult for women to work and participate fully in society (WHO, 2002).

According to the World Bank (2011), millions of women worldwide are violently abused; enslaved and harassed, violence against women has significant implications for international human rights, international criminal law and the global economy. WHO (2002), highlights that spousal violence as a global problem, affects all women, rich and poor, black and white, not only in developed countries but also in developing countries. Erika (2005) argues that women, in many cases, experienced verbal, physical and psychological violence exhibited in scolding, beating, forced and non-consensual sex. In this pain and discomfort, most women have more than the number of pregnancies they would ordinarily desire to have, without fear of contradiction, a woman suffers emotionally more than anyone else and is never allowed to express her feelings. In Nigeria, the cruelty the woman experiences parallels the nightmare of many women in all other patriarchal societies.

This work explores the complex interplay between conjugal brutality and women's productivity, examining the extent to which these experiences influence their ability to thrive in formal workplace settings in Nigeria. It aims at shedding light on the strategies, policies, and interventions that can be implemented to create safe and empowering work environments, thereby fostering the productivity and well-being of women experiencing conjugal brutality.

## Conceptual clarifications

### Conjugal brutality

Conjugal brutality, also referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV), is a grave social issue characterized by a pattern of abusive behaviors and acts of violence within an intimate relationship. It encompasses various forms of abuse, including physical, psychological, and sexual violence, which aim to exert control and power over the victim. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013), conjugal brutality or intimate partner violence is defined as "behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors" (WHO, 2013). This definition acknowledges the multifaceted nature of conjugal brutality, recognizing the range of abusive behaviors that can occur within intimate relationships.

Physical violence is a prominent form of conjugal brutality and involves the use of force that results in bodily harm or injury. It can manifest as slapping, punching, kicking, strangling, or the use of weapons against the victim (Elika, 2022). Psychological or emotional violence is another form of conjugal brutality that targets an individual's emotional well-being and psychological state. It includes behaviours such as verbal threats, humiliation, constant criticism, gaslighting, isolation, and controlling behavior (Obi, 2022). Psychological abuse can cause long-lasting psychological trauma, leading to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and other mental health challenges (Courtois and Herman 2019). Sexual violence, a deeply concerning aspect of conjugal brutality, involves non-consensual sexual acts, coerced sexual behaviour, or marital rape. It encompasses acts where a partner forces the victim into unwanted sexual activities against their will, violating their bodily autonomy and consent (Elika, 2022). Such acts can result in immediate and long-term physical and psychological harm to the survivor (Campbel and Raja, 2005).

Conjugal brutality has severe consequences for women's well-being, productivity, and overall quality of life. It can result in physical injuries, chronic pain and even fatalities (Obi, 2013). The psychological and emotional impact of conjugal brutality can lead to anxiety disorders, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and a reduced ability to concentrate and perform effectively in various domains, including the workplace (Van Wormer, 2010).

### Women's productivity

Productivity is a crucial concept in the context of women's participation in formal organizations. It is defined as the ratio of output to input, indicating how efficiently

resources are utilized to achieve desired outcomes. Productivity is measured through various metrics such as sales revenue, profit, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and quality of output. In the context of women's participation in formal organizations, productivity is a critical factor in determining the success of individuals and organizations. Adler (2003), argues that women in leadership positions in organizations tend to prioritize productivity over other factors such as job security, flexibility and salary. Adler (2003) suggests that women's focus on productivity may be attributed to their desire to prove their competence and capabilities in a male-dominated workforce.

Measurement of productivity is crucial to assess an organization's performance and identify areas for improvement. The productivity of women in formal organizations can be measured through various metrics. For instance, employee productivity can be measured by the number of tasks completed in a given time or the quality of work produced. Customer satisfaction surveys can measure the effectiveness of women's roles in customer service or sales. The profitability of an organization can also be a measure of productivity, where women in leadership positions contribute to improving the financial performance of the company. Significantly, productivity is essential for personal and organizational success. For individuals, productivity can enhance job satisfaction, lead to career advancement, and increase income. Cho, Bonn and Li, (2019), state that women's productivity is positively related to their job satisfaction, which, in turn, leads to increased commitment to the organization and reduced intention to leave. In this way, productivity has a positive impact on an individual's well-being, career progression and job retention. For organizations, productivity is vital for enhancing performance, profitability and competitiveness. A productive workforce improves the organization's efficiency and effectiveness in meeting its objectives and achieving its mission. Women in leadership positions have a positive impact on organizational performance, contributing to higher productivity, increased profitability, and better decision-making. Organizations that prioritize productivity are more likely to attract and retain talented employees, improve customer satisfaction and gain a competitive advantage.

### **Formal organizations in Nigeria**

Formal organizations in Nigeria refer to legally established entities such as private companies, government agencies and non-profit organizations that have a defined structure, mission, and objectives. These organizations play a crucial role in the country's economic development, providing employment opportunities, contributing to the gross domestic product (GDP) and offering essential services to the public. Private companies are a vital part of the Nigerian economy,

contributing significantly to the country's GDP. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the private sector accounted for 90.8% of the country's GDP in the fourth quarter of 2020. Private companies operate in various sectors such as manufacturing, finance, agriculture and telecommunications, among others. These companies create employment opportunities for Nigerians, particularly in urban areas, where the formal sector is predominant. However, women's participation in the private sector is relatively low, with gender disparities in employment opportunities, wages, and leadership positions.

Government agencies in Nigeria are responsible for implementing public policies, providing essential services to the public, and regulating various sectors of the economy. These agencies operate in areas such as health, education, agriculture and finance, among others. Women's participation in government agencies has increased over the years, with some progress made in improving gender representation in leadership positions. However, there are still significant challenges in achieving gender equality in government agencies, particularly in rural areas where women's participation is lower. Non-profit organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria are crucial in providing essential services to marginalized communities, promoting human rights, and advocating for policy changes. Non-Governmental Organizations operate in various areas such as education, health, human rights, and environmental conservation. Women's participation in Non-Governmental organizations is relatively high, with many women-led organizations working to promote gender equality and empower women and girls. However, Non-Governmental organizations face challenges in securing sustainable funding, particularly in rural areas where the need for their services is high.

The participation of women in formal organizations is critical for Nigeria's economic development and gender equality. According to Adeyemi et al., (2020), women's participation in formal employment contributes to poverty reduction, income generation, and economic growth. The study suggests that increasing women's participation in formal organizations is essential for achieving sustainable development and reducing gender disparities in employment opportunities, wages, and leadership positions.

### **Various forms of conjugal brutality**

Conjugal brutality encompasses a range of abusive behaviors that occur within intimate relationships. Here are several forms of conjugal brutality:

1. **Physical Violence:** This involves the use of physical force, such as hitting, slapping, kicking, choking, or any other form of physical aggression. It can result to injuries, bruises, broken bones, or even death.
2. **Sexual Violence:** This refers to any non- consensual

sexual activity or coercion within a relationship. It includes rape, sexual assault, forced sexual acts, or any form of sexual contact without the person's consent.

3. **Emotional and Psychological Abuse:** This form of abuse aims to control and manipulate the victim's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. It includes constant criticism, humiliation, insults, threats, intimidation, and isolating the victim from friends and family. Emotional abuse can have long-lasting effects on a person's self-esteem, mental health, and overall well-being.

4. **Financial Abuse:** This involves controlling or exploiting the victim's financial resources. It can include preventing the victim from working, controlling their access to money, demanding financial account information, or forcing the victim to provide financial support against their will. Financial abuse can leave the victim financially dependent and restrict their ability to leave the abusive relationship.

5. **Verbal Abuse:** Verbal abuse consists of using words, tone, or language to belittle, demean, or degrade the victim. It includes name-calling, insults, yelling, and constant criticism, with the intention of undermining the victim's self-worth and confidence.

6. **Social Isolation:** Perpetrators of conjugal brutality often isolate their victims from their support networks. This can involve limiting contact with family and friends, monitoring their communication, or preventing them from participating in social activities. Social isolation increases the victim's vulnerability and dependence on the abuser.

7. **Stalking and Harassment:** Stalking refers to persistent unwanted attention or surveillance, both in person and through various forms of communication. It can involve following the victim, monitoring their activities, sending threatening messages, or invading their privacy. Stalking and harassment create fear and a sense of constant insecurity for the victim.

It is important to note that these forms of conjugal brutality are not mutually exclusive and can often coexist within an abusive relationship. Victims may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, and the severity can escalate over time.

### **Prevalence of conjugal brutality in Nigeria**

According to a national survey on domestic violence in Nigeria conducted by the National Population Commission, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other partners (National Population Commission, 2013), the prevalence of conjugal brutality is alarmingly high. The survey found that 28.3% of women aged 25-29 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 (National Population Commission, 2013). Additionally, the survey revealed that 6% of women in Nigeria have experienced sexual violence since age 15 (National Population Commission, 2013).

These statistics highlight the disturbing prevalence of conjugal brutality in Nigeria. Furthermore, the survey also found that 43% of women in Nigeria believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife for reasons such as neglecting the children, refusing sexual intercourse, or burning food (Obi, 2013). This indicates the existence of deeply rooted gender norms and attitudes that contribute to the perpetuation of conjugal brutality.

Conjugal brutality is a serious problem in Nigeria. According to a 2013 survey by the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2013), 15.2% of married or cohabiting women in the country reported experiencing IPV in the year preceding the survey. This means that an estimated 12.4 million Nigerian women are victims of IPV each year. Measuring the prevalence of conjugal brutality in Nigeria in relation to women's educational background, it is gathered that women with no formal education are more likely to experience this abuse than women with some or higher levels of education (NDHS, 2013). The NDHS (2013) found that 22.2% of women with no formal education had experienced physical/emotional abuse in the year preceding the survey, compared to 11.9% of women with some secondary education and 7.7% of women with higher levels of education.

However, Oyediran et al. (2004) found that domestic violence can harm women's productivity in the workplace. The study surveyed 256 female employees in Lagos, Nigeria, and found that those who reported experiencing physical violence from their partners had a significantly lower level of productivity than those who did not experience violence. The study also found that women who experienced domestic violence were more likely to be absent from work due to injuries or other health problems related to the violence. On the same hand, A study by Hawes and Mileucnic-Polchan, (2019) found that violence against women can harm women's education and career opportunities. This study found that women who experience violence are less likely to complete their education, get a job, and advance in their careers. Also, (NPC, 2013) found that 31.4% of women in Nigeria had experienced physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The study also found that 20.2% of women had experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Also, (NPC, 2020) found that 31% of women in Nigeria have experienced physical or sexual violence from their partners. The study also found that violence against women is associated with several negative traits, including poor physical and mental health, low self-esteem, and economic hardship (Elika 2022).

Eze (2015) opined that women who are victims of violence are more likely to miss work, be less productive at work, and more likely to quit their jobs. The study also found that violence against women can lead to a loss of productivity for businesses and organizations. Another study by Eze (2015) surveyed 411 women in rural areas of Nigeria and found that domestic violence negatively

impacted women's employment opportunities. The study found that women who experienced domestic violence were less likely to be employed than those who did not experience violence. Additionally, the study found out that women who experienced domestic violence were more likely to quit their jobs due to the violence. According to a report by the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) conducted in 2018, approximately 30% of Nigerian women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence by their intimate partners at some point. This alarming statistic underscores the prevalence of conjugal brutality in the country and highlights the urgent need to address this issue. Several scholarly studies have examined the impact of conjugal brutality on women's productivity in formal organizations in Nigeria.

### **Consequences of conjugal brutality: impact on women's well-being and society**

Conjugal brutality has severe consequences not only for the individuals directly affected but also for society as a whole. The impact of such violence on women's physical, psychological, and emotional well-being can be devastating and long-lasting. Here, we discuss the consequences of conjugal brutality, drawing from existing research and studies:

#### **Physical injuries**

One of the most evident consequences of conjugal brutality is physical injuries sustained by the victims. Studies have shown that women who experience domestic violence are more likely to suffer from various physical health issues, including bruises, fractures, cuts, and other injuries. Campbell and Soeken (1999) identified a strong association between domestic violence and physical health problems, which can lead to chronic pain, disabilities, and even life-threatening conditions.

#### **Mental health challenges**

The psychological impact of conjugal brutality on women is significant. Victims often experience anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other mental health disorders as a result of the trauma they endure. The constant fear and stress associated with living in an abusive environment can have long-term effects on their emotional well-being. Coker et al. (2002) found that women exposed to domestic violence were more likely to report symptoms of depression and anxiety.

#### **Low self-esteem and self-worth**

Conjugal brutality erodes a woman's sense of self-worth and self-esteem. The constant emotional and verbal abuse from their partners can lead to feelings of

worthlessness and self-doubt. The loss of confidence can negatively impact their performance in various areas of life, including their careers, relationships with others, and decision-making abilities.

#### **Economic consequences**

Domestic violence often has economic implications for the victims. Abusers may use financial control as a tactic to maintain power over their partners, resulting in economic abuse. Women experiencing conjugal brutality may have limited access to financial resources, jeopardizing their financial independence and economic well-being. Studies have shown that domestic violence survivors often face challenges in securing and maintaining employment, as highlighted by Browne and Williams (1993).

#### **Social isolation**

Victims of conjugal brutality may become socially isolated, as abusers often seek to cut off their support networks. Isolation can further exacerbate the emotional toll of the abuse, leaving victims feeling trapped and without assistance or resources to escape the abusive relationship.

#### **Impact on children**

In households where conjugal brutality occurs, children are also adversely affected. Witnessing violence between parents can have detrimental effects on children's mental and emotional well-being. They may suffer from anxiety, depression, behavioral problems, and difficulties in forming healthy relationships in the future. This intergenerational impact is highlighted in studies by Holt et al. (2008).

#### **Societal costs**

The consequences of conjugal brutality extend beyond individual well-being and have significant societal costs. These costs include increased demands on healthcare systems, legal and judicial services, social support programs, and lost productivity in the workplace due to absenteeism or reduced work performance among affected individuals. Research by Max et al. (2004) shows the economic burden associated with domestic violence on society.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Gender Oppression Theory/Radical Feminism by Shulamith Firestone (1970)**

This theory is known as radical feminism and it is an aspect of gender oppression theory. It was propounded in

1970 and the major proponent was Shulamith Firestone (1945-2012). According to Firestone (1970:8), "the major assumptions of the theory include that: Women are at a disadvantage biologically through experience in, pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and menopause which place physical burdens on them thereby imposing serious social consequences on them. Women's dependence on men is increased by long periods during which infants are nursed which is longer than infants of other animal species. The interdependence which exists between a mother and her child and their dependence on men has been found in every society which produces unequal power relationships and power psychology". Theorists of gender oppression argue that the plight of women is a result of the practice of patriarchy, a kind of relationship in which men are always having a domineering interest in whatever relationship that binds them with women. In agreement with this position, Ritzer (1996) submits that 'women's situation is centrally that of being used, controlled, subjugated, and oppressed by men'. Consequent upon this, gender oppression theory is seen, fundamentally, as being perpetrated by patriarchal social structures which expect women only to be seen, admired for their beauty, and also nurtured for the convenience of men. In its entirety, gender oppression theory states that women are oppressed, actively restrained, molded, used, and abused by men. From this perspective, Burns et al. (1997) note that everyday women are slapped, killed, beaten, humiliated, threatened, and sexually abused by their partners. Agreeing with this position, Ganny (1996) argues that physical violence is the in-thing in one out of every three marriages, and at some point, women are usually the victims. This is simply a result of women being subordinates to their husbands.

The gender oppression theory is a relevant framework for this study because it examines the broader power dynamics and societal structures that contribute to gender-based violence and inequality. It recognizes that gender oppression is deeply rooted in social, cultural, and economic structures, and it highlights how these systems perpetuate the subordination and marginalization of women. This theory helps us understand how patriarchal norms and expectations shape gender roles, influence power dynamics within intimate relationships, and ultimately impact women's ability to thrive professionally. It acknowledges that conjugal brutality is not an isolated issue but is intricately connected to broader gender inequalities and the unequal distribution of power in society. This theory highlights how societal attitudes, stereotypes, and gendered expectations contribute to the normalization and acceptance of violence against women. In the context of the workplace, this theory allows us to explore how gender-based violence affects women's ability to fully engage and contribute in their professional roles, leading to reduced productivity, limited career opportunities, and a hostile work environment.

### **Nigerian patriarchal culture: a breeding ground for spousal abuse**

In Nigeria, culture plays a major role in encouraging conjugal brutality. Traditional beliefs that men are superior to women and that they have the right to control their wives can lead to men feeling justified in using violence against their partners. Additionally, the lack of economic opportunities for women can make them more vulnerable to abuse, as they may be financially dependent on their partners and may be afraid to leave an abusive relationship. This culture of impunity for spousal abuse has a devastating impact on women's lives. It can lead to physical injuries, psychological trauma, and even death. It can also make it difficult for women to participate fully in society, as they may be afraid to go to work or school or to leave their homes. (Uzodi, 2023). Culture has introduced gender norms and expectations which play a significant role in encouraging conjugal brutality, also known as intimate partner violence. These norms are deeply ingrained in societies and contribute to the perpetuation of harmful behaviors within intimate relationships. Understanding the dynamics of conjugal brutality requires an examination of the ways in which gender norms and expectations shape power dynamics, influence behaviors, and contribute to the normalization of violence. One key aspect is the power imbalance created by traditional gender norms. These norms prescribe that men should be dominant, assertive, and in control, while women are expected to be submissive and obedient. This power imbalance sets the stage for abusive behaviors, as the dominant partner may use violence to exert control and maintain power over the other partner.

Furthermore, gender norms can contribute to the normalization of violence against women. In some societies, violence within intimate relationships is accepted as a means of resolving conflicts or enforcing discipline. Such norms perpetuate the cycle of abuse and make it difficult for survivors to recognize the abuse and seek help. The normalization of violence also creates a culture of silence, where victims may feel ashamed or hesitant to speak out about their experiences. Male entitlement is another aspect influenced by gender norms, and can also contribute to conjugal brutality. Cultural beliefs that men are superior and have the authority to make decisions for their female partners foster a sense of entitlement. This entitlement can manifest as a belief that men have the right to control their partners, including through the use of violence. On the other hand, Victim blaming is another consequence of gender norms that discourages survivors from seeking help and perpetuates the cycle of abuse. Gender norms often place the burden of responsibility on the victim, suggesting that they provoked or deserved the violence. This societal response creates a culture where survivors may feel reluctant to come forward and seek support.

Addressing the Nigerian perceived patriarchal culture is crucial in tackling conjugal brutality. Efforts should focus on challenging harmful stereotypes, promoting gender equality, and educating communities about healthy and respectful relationships. Engaging men and boys in these discussions is particularly important, as they can play a significant role in breaking the cycle of violence. Creating supportive environments where survivors feel empowered to seek help and holding perpetrators accountable are essential steps in combating conjugal brutality.

### **The cost of conjugal brutality: its impact on women's productivity**

Conjugal brutality, also known as domestic violence, is a prevalent problem in Nigeria and can have a significant impact on women's productivity in formal organizations. Domestic violence can take various forms, including physical, psychological, and emotional abuse, and it often affects women's mental and physical health, ultimately impacting their work performance. Physical abuse can lead to physical injuries that make it difficult for women to perform their job responsibilities. Women who experience physical violence may miss work due to injuries or may be unable to work effectively due to pain or discomfort. Ogundipe and Alabi (2017) opined that women who experienced physical violence in Nigeria from their partners were more likely to miss work than those who did not. This can lead to decreased productivity, reduced job performance, and potential job loss, all of which can have negative consequences for women's economic well-being. Psychological abuse, such as verbal abuse, can also have significant consequences for women's productivity in the workplace. Verbal abuse cause anxiety, depression, and stress, which impact job performance. Women who experience verbal abuse may have difficulty concentrating, making decisions, and communicating effectively with colleagues and supervisors. This leads to decreased productivity, missed deadlines, and potential conflicts with coworkers, ultimately impacting job performance. Lawoko and Soares (2002) found that women who experienced emotional abuse were more likely to report absenteeism and decreased productivity at work. Emotional abuse, such as threats, intimidation, and controlling behavior, also impact women's productivity in the workplace. Women who experience emotional abuse may feel isolated, anxious, and fearful, which leads to reduced motivation and job satisfaction. These feelings lead to a lack of engagement in work-related activities, which impact job performance. Owoaj et al., (2015) found that women who experienced emotional abuse were more likely to report decreased productivity and decreased job satisfaction than those who did not. Conjugal brutality, or domestic violence, poses a significant threat to the productivity of women in formal organizations in Nigeria.

The impact of such violence extends beyond the confines of the home and permeates the workplace, affecting women's ability to perform their job responsibilities effectively. The physical effects of conjugal brutality can severely hinder women's productivity in formal organizations. Women who experience physical violence may sustain injuries that impede their ability to carry out their job tasks. These injuries can range from bruises and fractures to more severe traumas requiring medical attention. Owoaje et al. (2015) highlight the negative correlation between emotional/physical violence and productivity among civil servants in Nigeria. Women who face physical abuse are more likely to experience pain, fatigue and limited mobility, making it challenging to perform their duties efficiently.

The emotional consequences of conjugal brutality also take a toll on women's productivity. Verbal abuse, threats, and controlling behaviour lead to anxiety, depression, and stress, affecting women's mental well-being and work performance. The psychological distress caused by domestic violence can result in difficulties concentrating, making decisions, and maintaining positive relationships with colleagues and superiors. Moreover, the fear and insecurity resulting from conjugal brutality can lead to decreased job satisfaction and motivation. Women who live in constant fear of violence may experience heightened stress levels and a diminished sense of self-worth, affecting their engagement and commitment to their work. This manifest as reduced initiative, creativity, and enthusiasm, all of which impact productivity and overall job performance. Beyond the direct impact on the individual, conjugal brutality also has indirect effects on the workplace environment and organizational outcomes. Agbese and Anyebe (2015) highlight that domestic violence in the workplace contributes to reduced morale among employees and increased absenteeism. The negative atmosphere created by the presence of domestic violence affects team dynamics, communication, and cooperation among colleagues. Ultimately, this can result in decreased overall productivity and hinder the organization's ability to achieve its goals.

### **Workplace challenges faced by women experiencing conjugal brutality**

Women facing conjugal brutality encounter several challenges in the workplace, which affect their productivity and career advancement opportunities. One of the primary challenges women face is absenteeism. Women who experience domestic violence often miss work due to injuries or appointments related to the abuse. They may also miss work due to the psychological effects of abuse, such as anxiety and depression, which make it difficult to concentrate and perform well at work. Owoaje et al. (2015) opined that civil servants in Nigeria who experienced emotional partner violence were more likely

to miss work than those who did not.

Conjugal brutality also leads to reduced concentration and decreased job satisfaction. Women who are victims of abuse often experience stress and anxiety, which make it difficult to focus on their work and be productive. This leads to feelings of dissatisfaction with their job, as they may feel that they are not meeting their goals or performing to their full potential. Olapegba et al., (2021) argue that women who experienced domestic violence reported lower levels of job satisfaction and were less likely to feel that they were achieving their career goals. Another challenge for women facing conjugal brutality is limited career advancement opportunities. Women who miss work or experience reduced job performance due to abuse may be overlooked for promotions or other career advancement opportunities. They may also feel that their career goals are unattainable due to the effects of abuse on their productivity and concentration. Lawoko and Soares (2002), argue that female managers who experienced emotional abuse were less likely to feel that they had achieved their career goals than male managers who did not experience abuse.

In addition to these challenges, women facing conjugal brutality may also experience stigma and discrimination in the workplace. They may fear that disclosing their abuse to their employer or colleagues will lead to negative consequences, such as being fired or passed over for promotions. This can make it difficult for them to seek help or support, further exacerbating the effects of abuse on their productivity and well-being. Agbese and Anyebe (2015) hold that employees who experienced domestic violence often felt stigmatized and discriminated against in the workplace.

### **The Power of voice: how women's stories can help to end conjugal brutality**

The power of women's voices and their stories is a crucial aspect of addressing and ending conjugal brutality. Situations where women share their experiences, not only raise awareness about the issue but also help to break the silence surrounding domestic violence. This section will discuss the importance of women's stories in ending conjugal brutality, citing authors who have highlighted this aspect. Sharing personal narratives and stories of survival can help to humanize the issue of conjugal brutality and create empathy and understanding among the general public. It can challenge societal norms and stereotypes that perpetuate violence and victim-blaming attitudes. Johnson et al., (2017) emphasize the transformative potential of women's stories in raising awareness and changing attitudes toward domestic violence. They argue that personal narratives have the power to engage emotions, challenge social norms, and motivate actions.

Furthermore, women's stories can provide support and validation to other survivors who may feel isolated or

ashamed. Hearing stories of resilience and survival can inspire hope and empower others to seek help and break free from abusive relationships. Renck and Kayser (2018) explores the impact of sharing narratives in support groups for survivors of domestic violence. The authors found that storytelling within a safe and supportive environment enhanced participants' self-esteem, coping strategies, and ability to break the cycle of abuse. In addition to personal narratives, documenting and sharing women's stories through research and academic literature is crucial for understanding the complexities of conjugal brutality and informing policy and intervention strategies. Research studies that give voice to survivors' experiences contribute to the knowledge base on domestic violence and provide evidence for effective interventions. For instance, Oyediran, and Feyisetan (2017) utilized survey data to shed light on the impact of domestic violence on women's productivity in the workplace. Their research helped to highlight the importance of addressing conjugal brutality and supporting affected women in the Nigerian context. Moreover, storytelling and women's narratives have the potential to challenge the structures that perpetuate conjugal brutality. By sharing their stories, women can advocate for policy changes, legal reforms, and the implementation of comprehensive support services for survivors. Kyegombe et al., (2014) demonstrate how women's narratives can inform policy and practice. The authors used qualitative interviews with survivors to inform the development of interventions that address the unique needs of women experiencing domestic violence in Uganda. The power of women's voices and stories is instrumental in ending conjugal brutality. Sharing personal narratives helps to raise awareness, challenge social norms, provide support to survivors, and inform policy and practice. By listening to and amplifying women's voices, we can create a society that supports survivors, holds perpetrators accountable and works towards the prevention and eradication of domestic violence.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the issue of conjugal brutality and its impact on women's productivity in formal organizations in Nigeria is a complex and multifaceted problem that requires urgent attention and action. The prevalence of violence against women within intimate relationships and its repercussions on women's ability to participate fully in the workforce is a critical issue that affects not only individual women but also the broader economy and society. Throughout this discussion, it has become clear that conjugal brutality has severe physical, psychological, and emotional consequences on women, which negatively impact their ability to perform their job responsibilities effectively. Women who face violence at home are more likely to experience absenteeism,

reduced concentration, decreased job satisfaction, and limited career advancement opportunities, ultimately resulting in reduced productivity and decreased economic growth. Despite the significant challenges that women facing conjugal brutality encounter in the workplace, there are various strategies that formal organizations can adopt to support and empower affected women. These strategies include implementing workplace policies that prohibit discrimination and violence against women, providing counseling services and other interventions aimed at creating safe and supportive environments, and raising awareness about the issue through campaigns and other initiatives.

Furthermore, it is essential to understand the broader context of gender inequality and the importance of promoting women's empowerment in reducing conjugal brutality and enhancing women's productivity in the workplace. Gender-responsive workplaces that recognize and address the unique challenges faced by women, such as violence and discrimination, are critical to promoting women's participation in formal organizations and achieving broader gender equality goals. It is also essential to recognize the power of women's voices in addressing the issue of conjugal brutality. Women's stories can help to raise awareness about the issue, challenge social norms that perpetuate violence, and advocate for policy and systemic changes to end the cycle of violence. It is crucial to create safe spaces for women to share their experiences and to ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon by policymakers and other stakeholders. Addressing the issue of conjugal brutality and supporting affected women in formal organizations in Nigeria requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that involves formal organizations, policymakers, civil society organizations, and individuals. It is crucial to recognize the intersections of gender, violence and productivity and to work towards creating safe and supportive environments that empower women to reach their full potential. Only through collaborative efforts can we create a society that is free from violence and discrimination, where women can thrive both personally and professionally.

## Recommendations

Addressing conjugal brutality and promoting gender equality in formal organizations in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach involving policymakers, organizations, and various stakeholders. The following recommendations outline effective policies and strategies that can be implemented to address conjugal brutality, protect women's rights, and promote gender equality in the workplace:

1. **Develop workplace policies:** Organizations should establish clear and comprehensive workplace policies that explicitly address conjugal brutality.

These policies should prohibit violence and harassment, provide guidelines for reporting incidents, and outline the support and protection available to affected employees. Policies should be communicated effectively to all employees and regularly reviewed and updated.

2. **Create a safe and supportive work environment:** Organizations should foster a culture of safety, respect and support in the workplace. This includes promoting open communication, encouraging employees to report incidents of conjugal brutality without fear of retaliation, and ensuring confidentiality. It is important to create an environment where survivors feel safe to come forward and seek assistance.

3. **Provide training and awareness programs:** Organizations should conduct regular training programs for employees and managers to raise awareness about conjugal brutality, its impact on women's productivity and how to respond to incidents. Training should include information on recognizing signs of abuse, appropriate intervention strategies and available support services.

4. **Establish employee support mechanisms:** Organizations should establish employee support mechanisms, such as confidential help lines, counseling services, or Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). These resources can provide emotional support, counseling, safety planning, and referrals to external services. Organizations should ensure that employees know these resources and how to access them.

5. **Flexible work arrangements:** Organizations should consider implementing flexible work arrangements for employees experiencing conjugal brutality. This may include options such as telecommuting, adjusted work hours, or temporary relocation to ensure the safety and well-being of affected employees. Flexibility can help alleviate the challenges faced by survivors and enable them to continue their work effectively.

6. **Foster a supportive organizational culture:** Organizations should foster a culture that supports and empowers survivors of conjugal brutality. This involves promoting gender equality, challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes and providing opportunities for career advancement and professional development for women. Organizations should also ensure that promotion and performance evaluations are based on merit and not influenced by personal circumstances.

7. **Collaborate with external stakeholders:** Organizations should collaborate with external stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organizations, counseling services and legal support organizations to provide comprehensive support to survivors of conjugal brutality. These partnerships can help organizations access expertise, resources and specialized support for affected employees.

8. **Conduct awareness campaigns:** Organizations can raise awareness about conjugal brutality through targeted awareness campaigns within the workplace. These campaigns can include information sessions,

workshops, or guest speakers who share personal experiences or expertise on the topic. Raising awareness helps to break the silence surrounding conjugal brutality and encourages a supportive environment for affected employees.

9. Monitor and evaluate initiatives: Organizations should establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their initiatives in addressing conjugal brutality and supporting affected employees. Regular evaluation allows for feedback, identification of gaps and improvements in policies and interventions.

10. Advocate for societal change: Organizations should actively engage in advocating for societal change by supporting initiatives aimed at preventing conjugal brutality and promoting gender equality. This can involve participating in advocacy campaigns, collaborating with other organizations and engaging with policymakers to promote legal reforms and policies that address conjugal brutality.

11. Addressing the consequences of conjugal brutality requires a multi-faceted approach that includes comprehensive support services, access to healthcare, counseling, legal protections and efforts to challenge societal norms that perpetuate violence. To mitigate the consequences of conjugal brutality and create a safer and more equitable society for all, we can provide survivors with the necessary resources, empower them to rebuild their lives, and promote a culture of respect and non-violence.

Through implementing these recommendations, organizations can play a crucial role in tackling conjugal brutality and reducing its effects on women's productivity in the workplace. It requires a collective effort from employers, employees and external stakeholders to create a safe, supportive and empowering environment for all individuals, irrespective of their gender or personal circumstances.

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