

## **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: A BARRIER TO ACHIEVING HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA**

**Ogochukwu Okpokwasili, PhD**  
Department of Philosophy  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka  
ao.okpokwasili@unizik.edu.ng

### **Executive Summary**

*Gender-based violence (GBV) constitutes a significant impediment to the realization of human rights and the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the prevalence, drivers, and consequences of GBV within the Nigerian context, examining its profound impact on individuals, communities, and the nation's developmental trajectory. Drawing upon empirical evidence and scholarly literatures, the paper elucidates the intersecting dynamics of gender inequality, cultural norms, socio-economic disparities, and institutional weaknesses that perpetuate GBV in Nigeria. The paper begins by contextualizing the various forms of GBV prevalent in Nigeria, including domestic violence, sexual assault, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), child marriage, and trafficking. It explores the underlying structural factors such as patriarchal attitudes, unequal power relations, weak legal frameworks, and inadequate access to justice that contribute to the perpetuation of GBV. The paper will further highlight how cultural practices, religious beliefs, and socio-economic inequalities intersect to exacerbate vulnerability to GBV. A critical examination of the consequences of GBV reveals its profound and multifaceted impacts on individuals and communities in Nigeria, ranging from physical and psychological trauma to restricted access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Moreover, the paper underscores the broader societal ramifications of GBV, including diminished productivity, weakened social cohesion, and impediments to sustainable development efforts across various sectors. Against this backdrop, the paper evaluates existing policy and legal frameworks aimed at addressing GBV in Nigeria, highlighting gaps, challenges, and opportunities for reform. It discusses the importance of multi-sectorial responses that integrate prevention, protection, and support services, while also emphasizing the need for greater accountability, enforcement, and coordination among relevant stakeholders. The paper underscores the importance of engaging men and boys as allies, challenging harmful gender norms, and promoting gender-sensitive approaches*

*to development. In conclusion, the paper calls for a renewed commitment to combating GBV in Nigeria, grounded in human rights principles and aligned with the SDGs agenda. By prioritizing the elimination of GBV as a national priority and investing in comprehensive, evidence-based interventions, Nigeria can foster a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous society.*

**Keywords:** Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Human Rights, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Nigeria, Patriarchy

## **Introduction**

Council of Europe (2024) was of the opinion that “Gender-based violence is a human rights concern. People who experience gender violence may suffer from different human rights violations – for example the right to life, freedom from torture and degrading treatment, freedom from discrimination and the right to safety and security”. They went on to say that:

The right to life, gender equality, prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex, protection of physical integrity, the right to health - to mention a few of the human rights impacted by gender-based violence - are safeguarded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights.

UNFPA (2023) report stated clearly that:

In Nigeria, violence against women is evident in many forms, including domestic, verbal, and physical abuse, rape and sexual assault, early and forced marriages, incest, female genital cutting, acid baths and outright killing. Women continue to suffer all forms of degradation and deprivation in public and private spaces.

Gender based violence (GBV) in Nigeria is a critical issue that significantly hinders the achievement of human rights and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). GBV includes physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse, and it disproportionately affects women and girls, although men and boys can also be victims. The high prevalence of GBV in Nigeria is influenced by cultural norms, poverty, and limited access to education, which perpetuate harmful practices such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, trafficking, child marriage, and female genital mutilation. The consequences of GBV extend beyond personal suffering to impede national development. It negatively impacts health, education, economic productivity, and social stability, obstructing progress towards key SDGs, particularly those related to gender equality, health, education, and economic growth. Addressing GBV is essential for safeguarding human rights and fostering a society where everyone can thrive.

Efforts to combat GBV in Nigeria involve legal reforms, public awareness campaigns, and support services for survivors, alongside international cooperation and adherence to global human rights standards.

Going further, one can readily agree that Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a pervasive and entrenched issue in Nigeria, perpetuating inequality, discrimination, and harm against individuals based on their gender. This scourge affects millions of Nigerians, particularly women and girls, and has far-reaching consequences for their well-being, empowerment, and human rights. GBV not only violates fundamental human rights but also hinders Nigeria's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Despite efforts to address GBV, Nigeria still grapples with high rates of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, female genital mutilation, and other forms of GBV. This topic explores the complex dynamics of GBV in Nigeria, its impact on human rights and sustainable development, and potential solutions to mitigate this barrier to progress. The persistence of GBV in Nigeria and in Africa and beyond, is a reminder of the deep-seated gender inequalities that exist in our society. There are societal and cultural norms that perpetuate discrimination, subjugation and violence among us. The consequences are far reaching not only on the individuals involved but, on their families, communities and the nation at large. GBV limits not only women and girls but men and boys too. The truth is that when it comes to GBV, anyone can be a victim. It limits access, to education, economic opportunities and living a healthy and fulfilled life. It hampers economic growth, perpetuates cycle of poverty and erodes social cohesion.

To address GBV and unlock Nigeria's potential for sustainable growth, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive and multifaceted approach in addressing every issue on ground. This is what this paper sets out to do. Bringing every sector involved starting from the home, the country is on the pathway of creating an equitable and just society where everyone can thrive.

## **Conceptual Analysis**

### *Human Rights*

Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that are inherent to all human beings, regardless of their race, gender, nationality, or religion (United Nations, 1948). These rights are universal, inalienable, and indivisible, and are essential for the dignity, well-being, and freedom of individuals (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

The concept of human rights is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 (United Nations,

1948). The UDHR sets out a broad range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to life, liberty, and security of person, the right to freedom of speech and assembly, and the right to education and healthcare (United Nations, 1948). Human rights are essential for promoting social justice, combating discrimination and oppression, and fostering a culture of respect and dignity for all individuals (Amnesty International, 2020). They are also crucial for achieving sustainable development and promoting peace and security globally (United Nations, 2015).

Despite the significance of human rights, many individuals and groups continue to face violations and abuses, including gender-based violence, racial discrimination, and political persecution (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The protection and promotion of human rights are essential for building a just and equitable society, where all individuals can fully exercise their rights and freedoms. However, human rights violations and abuses continue to be a significant challenge in many parts of the world.

One of the major challenges to human rights is the persistence of gender-based violence, which affects millions of women and girls worldwide. Gender-based violence includes physical, emotional, and sexual violence, and is a violation of women's rights to bodily integrity, autonomy, and dignity (UN Women, 2020).

Another significant challenge to human rights is racial discrimination, which continues to affect marginalized communities worldwide. Racial discrimination is a violation of the right to equality and non-discrimination, and perpetuates social and economic inequalities (UN Human Rights, 2020).

Political persecution is also a significant challenge to human rights, as it silences dissenting voices and restricts the right to freedom of speech and assembly. Political persecution is often used to maintain power and control, and can lead to serious human rights violations, including arbitrary detention and torture (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that are essential for promoting social justice, combating discrimination and oppression, and fostering a culture of respect and dignity for all individuals. However, human rights violations and abuses continue to be a significant challenge in many parts of the world, and require urgent attention and action from governments, civil society, and individuals.

Some notable philosophers' notion on human rights are:

- John Locke (1632-1704): "All men are born free and equal, and are endowed with certain unalienable Rights, among which are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" (Locke, 1689, p. 123).

- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804): "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become a universal law" (Kant, 1785, p. 36).
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778): "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains" (Rousseau, 1762, p. 1).
- Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797): "The rights of humanity are not to be trifled with" (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 13).

Philosophers arguing about the fundamental human rights argues it based on the "deontological grounds, which they agree that "the wellbeing of an individual is also a matter of moral concern," (Posner, 108). Awertin Kelvin (2020) narrowing it down to individual welfare noted that "Developing nations like Nigeria keep to improve their human rights records. In doing this, government is encouraged to poverty and improve education as a way of enhancing wellbeing. States should improve rights performance as a way of enhancing human well-being. He went in to say that: "human rights promotion enhances human well-being or I welfare. I will argue that it is by respecting specific rights; that government (states) will enhance public welfare.

John Rawls equated it with justice when he said that: "Justice is the first virtue of social institutions" (Rawls, 1971, p. 3). Amartya Sen was of the opinion that "Human rights are not just legal rights, but also moral and political rights" (1999, p. 227). One thing that is constant is that human rights exist and that they should not be tampered with. Then what are these human rights?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages.

The fundamental Human rights are:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

The fundamental human rights set out to achieve dignity, well-being, and freedom for all individuals, regardless of their race, gender, nationality, or religion. These rights aim to:

- Protect human life and security.
- Promote equality and non-discrimination.
- Foster freedom of expression and assembly.
- Ensure access to education, healthcare, and social services.

- Protect human dignity and well-being.

The fundamental human rights as entrenched in the Nigerian constitution are

- Right of life
- Right of dignity of human persons
- Right to person liberty.
- Right to fair hearing
- Right to private and family life
- Right of freedom of thought conscience and religion
- Right to freedom of expression and the press
- Right of peaceful assembly and association
- Right of freedom of movement
- Right to freedom from discrimination
- Right to acquire and own immovable property
- Compulsory acquisition of property
- Restriction on and derogation from fundamental human rights
- Special jurisdiction of high court and legal aid.

The common language embedded within all human rights is the principle of universality, which recognizes that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. This language includes:

- Universality: All human rights are universal and inalienable
- Indivisibility: All human rights are interconnected and interdependent.
- Equality: All human rights are equal in importance and scope.
- Non-discrimination: All human rights are free from discrimination.
- Participation: All human rights ensure participation and inclusion.

This common language is reflected in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which states: "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. One will at this point agree that there are certain actions that is committed and which negates human rights and one of such actions is that of Gender based violence. Gender based negation of human rights constitutes a profound ontological erasure, where the very existence and dignity of individuals is being denied them and their inherent worth negated. This perpetuates a metaphysical injustice

There are some ways governments can respect human rights and they include:

- Enact and enforce laws that protect human rights
- Establish independent judiciaries to uphold human rights

- Ensure fair and equal access to justice for all
- Protect freedom of speech, assembly, and association
- Respect and protect the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups
- Ensure equal access to education, healthcare, and social services
- Protect citizens from torture, arbitrary detention, and extrajudicial killings
- Promote transparency and accountability in governance
- Respect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers
- Ratify and implement international human rights treaties and conventions
- Establish national human rights institutions to monitor and promote human rights
- Provide effective remedies for human rights violations
- Ensure participation and representation of diverse groups in decision-making processes
- Protect the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities
- Ensure access to information and freedom of the press

By following these steps, governments can demonstrate their commitment to upholding human rights and creating a just and equitable society for all.

### **Gender Based Violence (GBV)**

Okpokwasili (2022:70) noted that when we talk of gender-based violence, we are talking of one gender using a brutal force against another gender. Gender based violence is usually targeted at women and children. They are the ones who are always at the receiving end. Violence against girls, women and children has gained momentum in this present age and time, seen in the ugly menace ravaging our society these days. She went further to say that: “violence has metamorphosed into something more dreadful eating deep into the fabrics of our societal norms and values which is the sum total of what our culture reflects”. Its ugly effects in our society is tearing down the walls of what we hold dear as a people. Md Mujahidul Hoque (2021) defined Gender violence’ as: "the term used to mean harm caused upon individuals and groups depending on their gender identity”. Going further, he noted that: “this violence can be termed as cultural and social understandings of gender, and the essential supremacy that hold violence subject on the basis of gender orientation and social effects that shape violent events along gender orientation circumstance" Again Europa (2024) noted that "Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality, and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies.” Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls."

## **Types of GBV**

1. Intimate Partner violence: this is a type of abuse of one's human rights by an intimate partner it could be Psychological, emotional, sexual and economical with the overall intention to restrict and harm the individual. WHO (2013). This in turn violates rights to life, security and liberty of the individual.
2. Sexual violence: is s the overall use of force to carnally take advantage of an individual without the person's consent. United Nations (1993) defined it as "any sexual act committed against someone against their consent|". This negates the right to freedom from torture and degrading treatments (Article 5)
3. Female genital mutilation (FGM) : this is very common in many Nigerian homes even as of today. WHO (2020) defined it as "a harmful practice involving partial or total removal of fem genital. This violates the right to one's health and wellbeing (Article 25UDHR). Such harmful practices can cause great harm to an individual because if the wounds are not well treated, infection can take the person's life.
4. Child marriage: This is commonly seen in the Northern parts of Nigeria where children are given out in marriages to older men. This is a violation of the child's right to childhood and adolescence and also negates the right to education which is what the child should be doing at that age.
5. Human trafficking: This is the exportation of an individual through force, coercion or deception (UNO 2015). Human trafficking violates right to freedom from slavery and servitude, right to liberty and security and also undermines the right to dignity and self-worth
6. Reproductive Coercion: forced pregnancy, abortion or sterilization.

There are several ways Gender-based violence negates human rights law in several ways:

- Violation of the right to life, liberty, and security of person (Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
- Violation of the right to equality and non-discrimination (Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
- Violation of the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment (Article 5, Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
- Violation of the right to bodily autonomy and integrity
- Violation of the right to dignity and self-worth
- Violation of the right to access justice and equal protection under the law
- Perpetuation of gender stereotypes and reinforcement of harmful gender norms
- Limitation of opportunities and choices, perpetuating gender inequality.

Gender based violence has severe consequences on the lives of the victims and should be curbed at all cost. It strips individuals of their autonomy, freedom and their overall sense of self leading to loss of identity and purpose. It also alters an individuals lived experiences distorting their perception of what reality is. An individual at this point is faced with the choice to re-interpret his or her past, present and possible future.

## **Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is a social system where men hold power and dominance over women and other marginalized group /Patriarchy (2022:52) in her work “the creation of patriarchy”, argued that “class society began with the dominance of men over women and developed into the dominance of some men over all men and over all women”. This is a good example of restrictions on ones right especially that of the woman. Patriarchal dominance was already incorporated into human society by men themselves even before the advent of history itself. Women have always played significant roles in history and their overall importance cannot be quantified. However, as class struggles and dominance continued to gain momentum over the years, women as usual were at the receiving end as men yielded more powers in the warfront and in every other place. Patriarchy is a primitive social organization in which authority which was exercised by a male head of the family extending such power even to distant relatives of the same lineage. bell hooks (2015:20) defined patriarchy as: “a social menace and disease that plagues the life of men in both body and spirit’. It is the dominant character exhibited by men using the socio-political systems and institutions to maintain their supremacy above females. Patriarchy puts men in charge of all the affairs of the female sex or gender with the sole aim of controlling every aspect of her life. Patriarchal influences are synonymous with words like, domination, subjugation, maltreatment and oppression and they are typical examples of violations of the rights of the individual.

There are several ways that patriarchy can violate the fundamental human rights of an Individual

1. Gender based discrimination: Patriarchy perpetuates gender stereotypes, limiting women’s access to education, employment and political participation.
2. Violence against women: Patriarchy condones and normalizes violence against women.
3. Reproductive rights: Patriarchy restricts women’s autonomy over their bodies, limiting access to reproductive healthcare, contraception and abortion.
4. Economic inequality: Patriarchy perpetuates wage gaps, limiting women’s economic independence and access to resources.
5. Political participation: Patriarchy erases and marginalizes diverse gender identities, sexual orientations and cultural expressions.

By perpetuating these inequalities, patriarchy violates the fundamental principles of human rights and dignity.

## **Nigeria and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**

Nigeria, officially the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is a country in West Africa with a diverse geography, culture, and economy. Its geography is characterized by a tropical climate with two main seasons, and it is divided into 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. The country has a population of approximately 213 million people, with over 250 ethnic groups, and a mix of Christianity, Islam, and traditional beliefs. Nigeria's economy is a mixed economy, with a focus on agriculture, oil and gas, and services, and it has a GDP of \$248 billion. The country has a complex history, with pre-colonial empires, British colonial rule, independence in 1960, and military rule and democratic transitions.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to address global challenges, and Nigeria has committed to achieving these goals by 2030. The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. Nigeria's emergence as a key player in achieving the SDGs is driven by its economic growth and development, demographic changes such as a large youth population and urbanization, climate change and environmental concerns, human rights and social justice movements, and international partnerships and cooperation. The country's commitment to the SDGs is reflected in its development policies and programs, which aim to address the challenges facing the country and ensure a sustainable future for its citizens.

The SDGs are integrated into Nigeria's development agenda, with a focus on achieving sustainable economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. The country's progress towards achieving the SDGs is tracked through various indicators and reports, which provide insights into the challenges and opportunities facing Nigeria in achieving the goals.

Nigeria, a country in West Africa, faces numerous human rights challenges, including:

- Gender-based violence: Widespread domestic violence, sexual assault, and femicide.
- Boko Haram insurgency: Ongoing conflict in the northeast, resulting in human rights abuses, displacement, and humanitarian crises.
- Police brutality\_: Extrajudicial killings, torture, and extortion by security forces.
- Corruption and impunity\_: Widespread corruption and lack of accountability for human rights abuses.

- Freedom of expression and assembly: Restrictions on media, civil society, and peaceful protests.
- LGBTQ+ rights: Criminalization of same-sex relationships and persecution of LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Child rights: Child marriage, forced labor, and lack of access to education and healthcare.
- Disability rights: Stigmatization, exclusion, and lack of access to services for persons with disabilities.

Efforts to address these issues include:

- National Human Rights Commission\_: Established to promote and protect human rights.
- Anti-corruption initiatives\_: Efforts to combat corruption and ensure accountability.
- Civil society engagement\_: Activism and advocacy by local organizations and communities.
- International partnerships: Collaboration with international organizations to address human rights challenges.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria are a set of 17 goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all. Nigeria has committed to achieving these goals by 2030. Nigeria's progress towards achieving the SDGs is tracked through various reports and indicators. According to the 2020 SDG Index and Dashboards Report, Nigeria has made some progress towards achieving the SDGs, but still faces significant challenges

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are:

- No Poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Good Health and Well-being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all

- Decent Work and Economic Growth: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
- Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure\*: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
- Reduced Inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Climate Action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Life below Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Life on Land: Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, forests, and biodiversity.
- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice, and effective and accountable institutions.
- Partnerships for the Goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

These goals are interconnected and aimed at achieving a sustainable future for all.

### **How has Gender based violence presented the actualization of this SDG goals**

Gender-based violence (GBV) has significantly hindered the actualization of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being\*: GBV leads to physical, sexual, and reproductive health problems, undermining efforts to ensure healthy lives and well-being.
- SDG 4: Quality Education\*: GBV creates a hostile learning environment, leading to absenteeism, dropout, and poor academic performance, compromising education quality.
- SDG 5: Gender Equality\*: GBV perpetuates gender inequality, reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes and limiting women's and girls' empowerment.
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth\*: GBV affects women's participation in the workforce, leading to economic losses and hindering economic growth.
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities\*: GBV exacerbates existing inequalities, particularly for marginalized groups like women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals.

- SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions\*: GBV undermines peace and security, erodes trust in institutions, and hampers access to justice.

GBV's impact on SDG actualization is multifaceted:

- Perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality
- Limits access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities
- Reinforces harmful gender stereotypes and social norms
- Undermines peace and security
- compromises human rights and dignity

Addressing GBV is crucial for achieving the SDGs, requiring a comprehensive approach that involves:

- Policy reforms and legislation
- Community engagement and education
- Support services for survivors
- Data collection and monitoring
- International cooperation and partnerships

By tackling GBV, we can accelerate progress toward achieving the SDGs and create a more equitable, just, and peaceful world.

## **Evaluation and Conclusion**

The integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the eradication of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are crucial for achieving a sustainable future. GBV hinders the actualization of several SDGs, particularly those related to health, education, gender equality, economic growth, and peace. The evaluation of the impact of GBV on SDG actualization reveals that:

- GBV perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality
- Limits access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities
- Reinforces harmful gender stereotypes and social norms
- Undermines peace and security
- Compromises human rights and dignity

To achieve the SDGs, it is essential to address GBV through a comprehensive approach that involves policy reforms, community engagement, and support services for survivors, data collection, and international cooperation. By tackling GBV, we can:

- Accelerate progress toward achieving the SDGs.
- Create a more equitable, just, and peaceful world.
- Ensure sustainable development and human well-being

In conclusion, the eradication of GBV is critical for achieving the SDGs. It requires a collective effort from governments, civil society, and individuals to create a world where women, girls, and marginalized groups can thrive and reach their full potentials.

The way forward involves:

1. Strengthening policies and legislation to prevent and respond to GBV
2. Increasing access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for women and girls
3. Challenging harmful gender stereotypes and social norms
4. Supporting survivors of GBV through comprehensive services
5. Encouraging data collection and research to inform GBV prevention and response efforts
6. Fostering international cooperation and partnerships to address GBV globally

By working together, we can create a world where:

1. Women and girls can live free from fear of violence and discrimination
2. Everyone has access to quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunities
3. Gender equality is a reality, and human rights are respected
4. Sustainable development is achieved, and human well-being is ensured

In this world, the SDGs are not just a distant goal but a reality, where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential.

Some of the SDGs where Nigeria has made progress include:

- SDG 1 (No Poverty): Nigeria has reduced the proportion of people living in poverty from 46% in 2015 to 40% in 2020 (World Bank, 2020).
- SDG 4 (Quality Education): Nigeria has increased access to education, with a net enrollment rate of 63% in 2020 (UNESCO, 2020).
- SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation): Nigeria has improved access to clean water, with 70% of the population having access to basic water services in 2020 (WHO/UNICEF, 2020)

However, Nigeria still faces significant challenges in achieving other SDGs, including:

- -SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being): Nigeria has a high maternal mortality ratio of 576 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020 (WHO, 2020).
- DG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy): Nigeria has a low access to electricity, with only 57% of the population having access to electricity in 2020 (World Bank, 2020).

- SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions): Nigeria faces challenges in ensuring peace and security, with a high rate of violent conflicts and human rights abuses (Amnesty International, 2020)

Gender based violence negation of human rights constitutes a profound ontological erasure where the very existence and dignity of individuals are denied and their inherent worth negated. This perpetuates a metaphysical injustice where the humanity of certain beings is deemed less valuable and their experiences, perspectives and lives marginalized. Ultimately, this negation undermines the fundamental principles of equality, justice and human rights. This poses great threat to the very fabric of our shared humanity and goals.

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