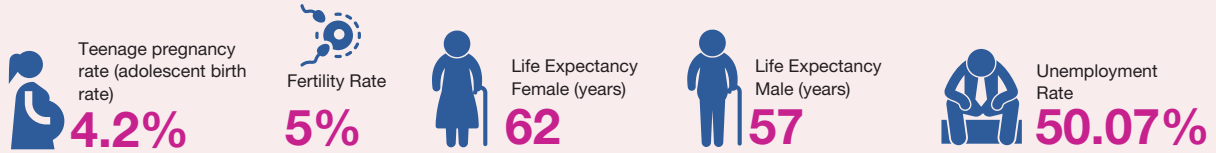
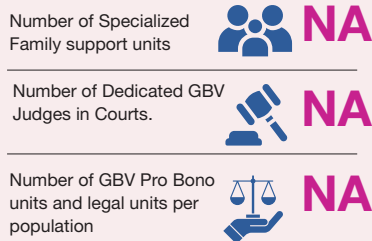


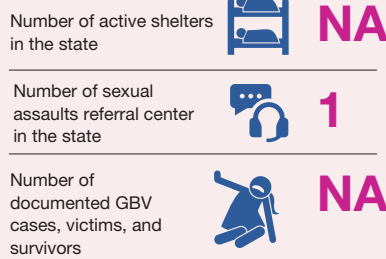
State Context



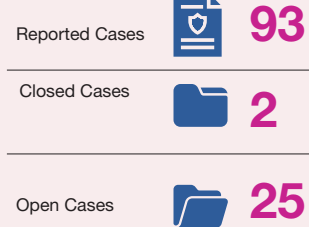
Access to Legal Justice



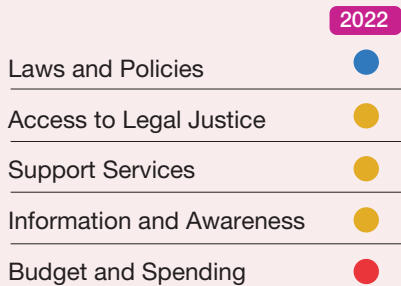
Support Services



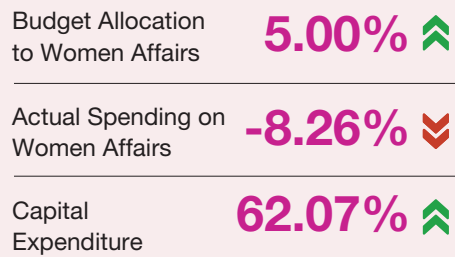
GBV Cases



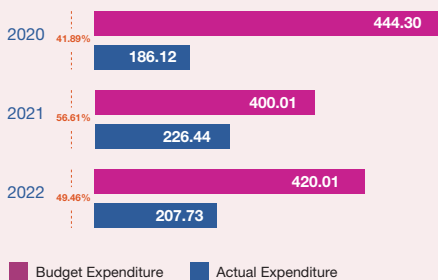
Womaniy Index (GBV) Ranking (out of 36 States)



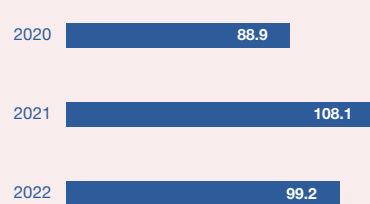
Year on Year Growth 2022







Total Allocation to Women Affairs (NGN'm)



Per Capita Analysis (NGN)



S/N	Indicators	Key Findings	Recommendations
1	 <p>Laws and Policies</p>	<p>The VAPP Law and Child Rights Act are two laws in the State for addressing GBV.</p> <p>Effectiveness of existing laws and policies is hindered by weak implementing institutions and a lack of awareness.</p>	<p>The VAPP Law should be reviewed by addressing problematic sections and updating it in alignment to changing dynamics.</p> <p>Government should engage in collaborative efforts with CBOs/NGOs to increase awareness of Laws and Policies and shore up support for implementing institutions to carry out their duties effectively.</p>
2	 <p>Access to Legal Justice</p>	<p>Robust and dynamic GBV reporting and referral pathway.</p> <p>The limited support by the state for the prosecution of GBV cases.</p> <p>Existence of GBV desks in security agencies but no dedicated GBV judges.</p>	<p>Government should allocate funds to the prosecution of GBV cases and invest in its witness protection program and the training of staff in line with modern technological advancements.</p> <p>Government should make provision for dedicated GBV judges to promote speedy dispensation of justice.</p>
3	 <p>Support Services</p>	<p>Presence of a single state-owned SARC which is inaccessible and non-functional.</p> <p>Existence of robust GBV reporting and referral pathways</p> <p>Existence of informal support systems run by CSOs/CBOs, with minimal to no government-provided formal support systems.</p>	<p>Government to establish and equip SARCs in each Local Government Area, ensuring accessibility for GBV victims/survivors.</p> <p>Improved collaboration between government, NGOs/CBOs for the provision of support services.</p>
4	 <p>Information and Awareness</p>	<p>Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) initiatives championed by CBOs and NGOs, with limited involvement from the government, leading to reduced effectiveness</p> <p>IEC materials and campaigns are modestly tailored to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.</p> <p>Comprehensive Sex Education incorporated into the curricula of Secondary and Tertiary institutions.</p>	<p>Government should make annual budgetary allocations for the implementation of comprehensive GBV awareness campaigns and programs in the state.</p> <p>Awareness campaigns to be intensified across formal and informal institutions in the state with more regular radio and tv programming.</p>



Laws and Policies

Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state?

82.24% **Yes** 17.76% **No** -- **Not Sure**

Do you agree that awareness of GBV laws and policies will prevent GBV?

44.74% **Strongly Agree** 33.55% **Agree** 13.16% **Indifference**
8.55% **Disagree** -- **Strongly Disagree**

Do you think customary or religious laws and/or practices are sufficient in preventing and responding to GBV in the state?

20.39% **Yes** 31.58% **No** 30.26% **Not Sure**

Abia State has numerous GBV-related laws and policies, including the Abia State Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) (VAPP) Law, 2019, the Abia State Gender Policy 2022, and the Child Rights Act, 2016. The VAPP Law need some amendments by adding grandaunt and granduncles among those who can commit incest (s.2), adding the offence of coercion, expanding the scope/reach of the Protection Order to nationwide (s.35), defining “Harmful Widowhood Practices”, and including “intent to cause distress under section 31.

While some respondents believe these laws are effective, most have not seen successful prosecutions under them, and are unaware of government efforts to reform them. Regardless, there is evidence that the laws have been used to mete out justice. Majority of the respondents are aware of some law or policy addressing GBV in the state. Additionally, there are informal customary and religious GBV-related laws used for arbitration. As of the time of this research, only the Child Rights Act, 2016 has been subjected to review within the past eight years, and although most of the respondents disagree that cultural and religious laws are adequate for GBV prevention and response, there is no recent record of their review in this regard.

The state operates an extensive reporting system involving government entities like the Ministries of Justice, Health, and Women Affairs, as well as law enforcement agencies such as the Police, NAPTIP, NSCDC, NHRC, and CSOs/NGOs like the local FIDA chapter. Among these, the police/security pathway stands out as the most active and accessible, with GBV desks in all 17 Local Government Areas. The police collaborate with various agencies to document, apprehend, and prosecute GBV offenders. However, many cases rely on pro-bono lawyers and face delays due to challenges like inadequate witness protection and a no dedicated

GBV-designated judges. GBV survivors often bear legal fees and logistical expenses. In the realm of informal justice systems, groups like Umuada intervene in matters related to inheritance and similar issues, while the Ezes-in-Council in different communities and the influential “Ikpirikpe” women’s group employ cultural laws to sanction GBV perpetrators. Nevertheless, over half of the surveyed population doubts the effectiveness of these informal justice systems in delivering justice to victims and survivors.

Abia State’s only SARC, Ihunanya Centre, domiciled in the State’s Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development was commissioned in December 2022 but is yet to be operational. In its absence, NAPTIP provides emergency shelter for rescued survivors. There is also the Women Development Centre which is accessible but practically non-functional. Reporting and referral pathways are diverse, with the police/security (NAPTIP and NSCDC) pathway being the most utilized and recognized. The NHRC offers support by documenting cases and providing counselling and pro-bono lawyers for GBV victims. The legal pathway, particularly with assistance from FIDA, aids in documentation, arrest, and prosecution. However, the medical pathway faces challenges due to funding shortages. CSOs also contribute to documenting and prosecuting GBV cases. Most of the population agrees that informal support systems provided by the likes of family and religious organisations benefit victims/survivors. Regrettably, aside from the Nigeria for Women Project (a Federal Government and World Bank initiative to enhance women’s livelihoods in targeted communities) between 2020-2022, there appears to be no actual investments in GBV or GBV-related support services in the state.



Access to Legal Justice

Where would you seek justice if you, or anyone you know, experience GBV?

47.37% **Formal justice system** 48.03% **Informal justice system** 4.61% **I will not seek justice**

If you witness GBV, would you feel safe serving as a witness during the investigation and trial?

21.05% **Yes** 24.34% **No** 8.55% **Not Sure**
46.05% **It Depends**

Do you think the informal justice systems in the state are effective and sufficient in providing justice for victims/survivors of GBV?

12.5% **Yes** 55.26% **No** 32.24% **Not Sure**



Support Services

Do you know of, or have you visited, any active shelters and/or Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for GBV victims/survivors in the state?

11.18% **88.82%**
Yes No

Which GBV reporting and referral pathways are you aware of currently available in the state?

6% **Specialized medical healthcare pathway**

8% **Psychosocial/mental health pathway**

56% **Police/security pathway**

28% **Legal pathway** **2%** **None of the above**

Do you think informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, community groups, etc., are helpful to GBV victims/survivors?

80.92% **2.63%** **16.45%**
Yes No Not Sure

The program, “Ruffles,” airs on seven (7) TV stations monthly, while the NHRC, in collaboration with Flo FM, broadcasts “Know Your Right” every Friday. Unfortunately, the previous state administration rarely created IEC materials for GBV public awareness, and such materials were not sighted in the government offices visited. Among surveyed respondents, 77.63% are aware of information and education programs, with radio programs being the most common source of GBV information. Approximately 42.11% of respondents found this information to be mostly useful. CSOs, NGOs, associations, and security agencies (Abia Gender Technical Crew) are credited with raising awareness in the state, using billboards, and adapting messages for people with disabilities. The state, however, includes comprehensive sex education in the curricula of its secondary and tertiary institutions.

The approved allocations to the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development for 2022, 2021, and 2020 were N420 million, N400 million, and N444.3 million, respectively. However, the actual expenditure during the same period was N207.7 million in 2022, N226.4 million in 2021, and N186.1 million in 2020. Of significance is the state’s high per capita allocation to the Ministry of Women Affairs, ranking as the second highest at N88.9, N108.1, and N99.2 in 2020, 2021, and 2022, respectively. This figure surpasses the regional average of N52.0, N99.0, and N68.7 for the same period. Despite the state’s commendable budgetary provisions for the Ministry, it faces challenges in budget performance. The budget performance stood at 49.46%, 56.61%, and 41.89% in 2022, 2021, and 2020, respectively.



Human Angle Story

Two sisters, aged 8 and 10, share a troubling story. Their parents cohabited until their father ended the relationship due to jealousy over their mother’s higher income. He secretly entrusted the girls to his sister’s care before eloping with a girlfriend. When their mother sought custody, the girls were moved to Isialangwa, where their cousins, aged 14 to 16, subjected them to servitude and severe physical abuse, including several assaults with a hot, pressing iron. Thankfully, a concerned neighbour reported the abuse, leading to the boys’ arrest and legal action against their mother and her partner. The girls received medical treatment, and an out-of-court settlement was reached, with the aunt providing compensation. Ultimately, the girls were reunited with their mother.



Information and Awareness

Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state?

77.63% **13.82%**
Yes No
8.55%
Not Sure

How useful is/was the content of the GBV awareness material in educating you on GBV?

13.82% **25%**
Not at all useful **A little bit useful**
42.11% **19.08%**
Mostly useful **Completely useful**

Which GBV information and education materials are you aware of for persons with disabilities?

26% **2%** **7%** **22%**
Audio/spoken content **Braille printed content** **Visual content** **Screen subtitling**
27% **4%** **5%** **6%**
Sign interpretation **Picture-based messages** **Simplified messages** **None of the above**

Index	Indicators	Result Justification
 Laws and Policies	The VAPP Law, Child Rights Law, and the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Law are some of the laws in Abia State for addressing GBV.	1.0
	Effectiveness of existing laws and policies is hindered by weak implementing institutions and a lack of awareness.	1.0
	Existence and usage of customary and religious laws and policies that criminalizes GBV	1.0
	Consistent, result-producing efforts at reforming and strengthening laws, policies, and customs on GBV prevention and response within an eight-year period	1.0
 Access to Legal Justice	Available system of GBV reporting, prosecution, and enforcement	1.0
	Availability and accessibility to legal aid services; with/or witness protection program	0.0
	Existence of functional specialized Family Support Units (FSUs), Human Rights Desks in Police Commands or Divisions, or dedicated GBV Judges	0.5
	Existence of informal justice system, with processes and outcomes that does not perpetuate or advance GBV in the courts	0.5
 Support Services	Availability of at least one active shelter in each local government in a state in the courts	0
	Availability of accessible and user-friendly GBV Reporting and Referral Pathway	1.0
	Existence of and access to holistic support systems for GBV victims and survivors	0
	Existence and usage of holistic informal support systems	1.0
 Information and Awareness	Availability and widely disseminated GBV IECs materials	0.5
	Existence and usage of comprehensive sex education curriculum in secondary schools	1.0
	Frequent sensitization and awareness programs on GBV across all local governments in the State	0.5
	Equally accessible GBV IEC materials especially for PWDs and those in remote or rural communities	0.5
 Budget and Spending	Women Affairs Ministry budget allocations and spending (85% and above execution rate)	0.0
	Women Affairs Ministry spending per capita	0.0