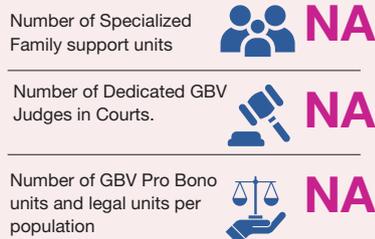


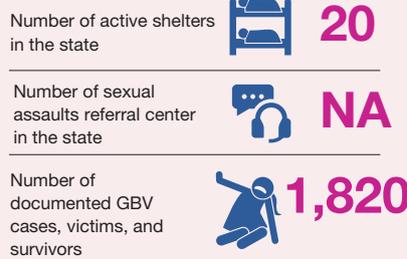
### State Context



### Access to Legal Justice



### Support Services



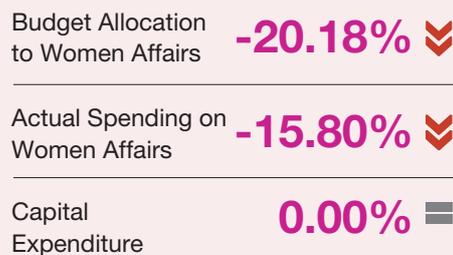
### GBV Cases



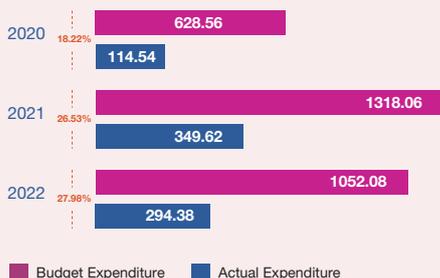
### Womaniy Index (GBV) Ranking (out of 36 States)



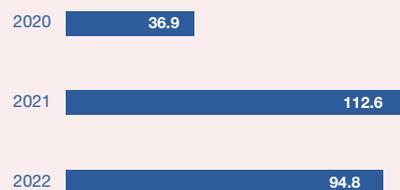
### Year on Year Growth 2022



### Total Allocation to Women Affairs (NGN'm)



### Per Capita Analysis (NGN)



S/N	Indicators	Key Findings	Recommendations
1	 <p>Laws and Policies</p>	<p>Non-functioning of Family Courts (Advisory Courts) in the state to try victims.</p> <p>Lack of enforcement of laws in getting justice for victims/survivors</p> <p>Lack of awareness of laws and policies by the public.</p> <p>Inexperienced Police Officers in handling GBV cases.</p>	<p>Establish separate Children's Court with structure, judges, and laws</p> <p>Advocacy and sensitization of people on the laws.</p> <p>Enforcement of laws by stakeholders as deterrent.</p> <p>Provide facilities and monitoring for agencies handling GBV</p>
2	 <p>Access to Legal Justice</p>	<p>Inadequate logistics support for Police to prosecute GBV cases</p> <p>Inability of Police to prosecute using VAPP law</p> <p>Inexperienced staff to handle GBV cases at Police Commands</p>	<p>Budgetary allocation to the Police and line Ministries for logistics in prosecuting GBV cases.</p> <p>Training for Police personnel on distress lines</p> <p>Educate people that GBV is wrong</p>
3	 <p>Support Services</p>	<p>Lack of awareness on available support services</p> <p>Lack of funding for shelters and homes</p> <p>Abandonment of victims/survivors at shelters</p>	<p>Increased awareness on availability of shelters and homes.</p> <p>Funding support to revitalize Government SARC's and shelters</p> <p>Ensure accessibility of shelters and homes for Persons with Disabilities</p>
4	 <p>Information and Awareness</p>	<p>Exclusion of PwDs in designing projects and campaigns</p> <p>Lack of inclusion of PwDs in awareness campaigns</p>	<p>Capture needs of PwDs in GBV policy implementation</p> <p>Establish GBV Desks in MDAs to address PwDs needs and Make GBV Awareness Campaigns more inclusive</p>



## Laws and Policies

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

74.35% **Yes** 25.65% **No** -- **Not Sure**

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

-- **Strongly Agree** 83.12% **Agree** 3.25% **Indifference**  
-- **Disagree** 13.31% **Strongly Disagree**

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

16.56% **Yes** 65.58% **No** 17.86% **Not Sure**

The Penal Code, Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPP) 2019, Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2019, Child Rights Law 2008, Human Rights Law 2003, and Widowhood Protection Law 2022 are established legal frameworks that the state uses to prosecute GBV cases. Laudable as this is, there exist gaps that impede the effectiveness of the laws, such as non-functional family courts, lack of enforcement, negative cultural practices, and inadequate public knowledge of the laws. Furthermore, customary, and religious laws contradict conventional laws, contributing to gender inequality and family disputes. Cultural practices like 'Ayam Amough' and 'Aleku' (when a woman is judged for adultery, but a man is not) often lead to GBV incidents, showcasing the need to address these traditions. Legislations like the Widows Protection Law and ongoing reviews of customary laws indicate the state's effort to improve GBV prevention and response. However, challenges exist, such as excluding women in decisions about chieftaincy titles.

The first point of call when a GBV incidence occurs in Benue State is the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Other institutions that play key roles in reporting, prosecution, and enforcement are NAPTIP, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, and civil society organisations. 74% of the respondents prefer the formal justice system and its ability to effectively administer justice to survivors of GBV. However, the formal justice system is not without its challenges as adequate witness security, resource limitations, and cultural barriers often impede access to justice for GBV victims and survivors. Apart from the legal support provided by FIDA, the state provides free legal services through the Legal Aid, NPF, and Ministry of Justice. The informal justice system, including religious and traditional councils, has been found to be less effective due to their inclination towards

settlements rather than prosecution. Overall, there is necessity for improvements in witness protection, resource allocation, and cultural awareness to enhance access to justice for GBV survivors in the state.

GBV reporting and referral pathways in the state involve entities like NAPTIP, religious organizations, and CSOs, while formal support systems, such as the criminal justice system, Nigerian Police Force, Judiciary, and correctional centres, are accessible to citizens. The state has three government-owned and run SARCs/Shelter, while the three other shelters are run by non-governmental organisations. However, only 26% of the surveyed population are aware of the existence of the shelters and SARCs, indicating low awareness and visibility. The state needs to enhance awareness and accessibility of shelters and SARCs, improve functionality and sustainability, and increase general awareness on its reporting and referral pathways. Informal support systems, including religious organizations, CSOs, and Women's Associations, are perceived as not quite effective due to funding challenges, despite their usage based on different circumstances or incidences. There is a need for comprehensive, tailored support services and the recognition of the valuable role played by informal support networks to strengthen the support system for GBV survivors.



## Access to Legal Justice

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

69.81% **Formal justice system** 28.25% **Informal justice system** 1.95% **I will not seek justice**

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

75.65% **Yes** 6.49% **No** 7.47% **Not Sure**  
10.39% **It Depends**

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

11.69% **Yes** 71.1% **No** 17.21% **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?

**14.29%** **74%**  
Yes 85.71%

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

**9.74%** **Specialized medical healthcare pathway**  
**7.47%** **Psychosocial/mental health pathway**

**44.81%** **Police/security pathway**  
**35.39%** **Legal pathway** **25.97%** **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?

**28.9%** **50%** **20.78%**  
Yes No Not Sure

The insights gathered through key informant interviews highlight both the existing efforts and the substantial gaps in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) awareness and education programs in the state. While bodies like the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) contribute to regular sensitization on GBV through information, education, and communication (IEC) materials, there remains a distinct lack of frequent, inclusive, and comprehensive campaigns. The need for expansive, routine sensitization and a more inclusive approach—particularly concerning Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)—is evident. Despite isolated successful campaigns, there’s a crucial requirement for more frequent, holistic, and accommodating programs, especially considering the recent notable initiative conducted by the Eunice Spring of Life Foundation (ESLF), which, although impactful, lacked due consideration for PwDs. This sheds light on the significant gap in sensitivity and inclusivity within GBV awareness programs, especially in addressing the needs and perspectives of PwDs.

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development received N114.54mn in 2020, N349.62mn in 2021 and N294.39 in 2022 as budget allocations. It is safe to say the actual allocation per capita dropped from N112.9 per capita in 2021 to N94.8 in 2022 due to the decrease in allocation between 2021 and 2022, making Benue state the 3rd lowest in per capita allocation in the north central region of Nigeria. Furthermore, the state performed below the regional and national averages of N117.4 and 231.3 respectively.



## Human Angle Story

The report includes two anonymous human angle stories depicting personal experiences with GBV in Benue State. One describes a 22-year-old rape survivor from Makurdi LGA. Though her attacker was initially arrested when reported, he was soon released and only made to vacate his apartment with no criminal charges. The other story is of a 27-year-old domestic violence victim from Oju LGA. Despite repeated beatings from her husband, efforts to involve her family only led to temporary mediation without formal justice or accountability. These first-hand accounts highlight the trauma of GBV, the lack of justice and perpetrators accountability, the common recourse to informal mediation by families, and the cycle of violence this enables, underscoring the need for greater formal justice and enforcement of laws to truly support survivors in the state. The stories put human faces and voices to the survey’s findings.



## Information and Awareness

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

**18.51%** **54.87%**  
Yes No  
**26.52%** **Not Sure**

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

**13.31%** **61.69%**  
**Not at all useful** **A little bit useful**  
**22.08%** **2.92%**  
**Mostly useful** **Completely useful**

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

**33.44%** **25.97%** **27.7%** **22.08%**  
**Audio/spoken content** **Braille printed content** **Visual content** **Screen subtitling**  
**19.16%** **12.34%** **6.82%** **42.86%**  
**Sign interpretation** **Picture-based messages** **Simplified messages** **None of the above**

Index	Indicators	Result Justification
 <p>Laws and Policies</p>	Existence of State laws that criminalize the GBV	1.0
	Quality of State VAPP Laws	0.5
	Existence and usage of customary and religious laws and policies that criminalizes GBV	0.0
	Consistent, result-producing efforts at reforming and strengthening laws, policies, and customs on GBV prevention and response within an eight-year period	1.0
 <p>Access to Legal Justice</p>	Available system of GBV reporting, prosecution, and enforcement	0.5
	Availability and accessibility to legal aid services; with/or witness protection program	0.5
	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
 <p>Support Services</p>	Availability of at least one active shelter in each local government in a state in the courts	0.5
	Availability of accessible and user-friendly GBV Reporting and Referral Pathway	0.5
	Existence of and access to holistic support systems for GBV victims and survivors	0.0
	Existence and usage of holistic informal support systems	0.5
 <p>Information and Awareness</p>	Availability and widely disseminated GBV IECs materials	0.5
	Existence and usage of comprehensive sex education curriculum in secondary schools	0.5
	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	0.0
 <p>Budget and Spending</p>	Women Affairs Ministry budget allocations and spending (85% and above execution rate)	0.0
	Women Affairs Ministry spending per capita	0.0