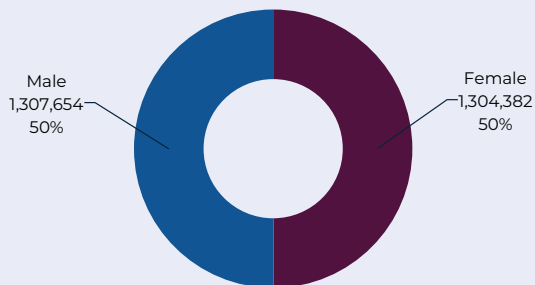


Bayelsa State

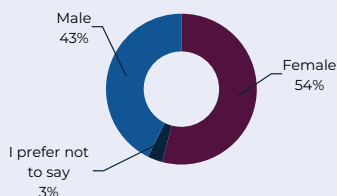




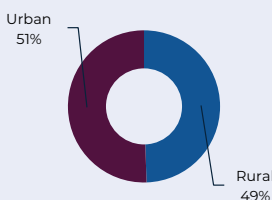
Total Population
2,612,036



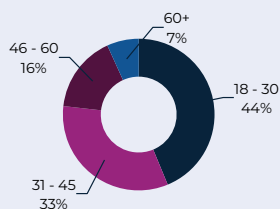
Respondents: 560



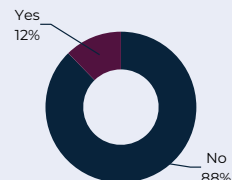
Location



Age Group



Disability Status



GBV Context



No. of GBV cases **N/A**



No. of active Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) **1**



No. of active shelters **1**



No. of Family Support Units (FSUs) **N/A**

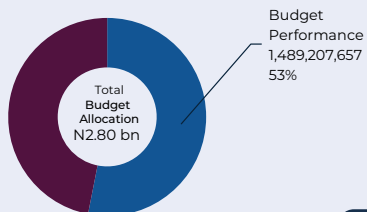


Index Grades

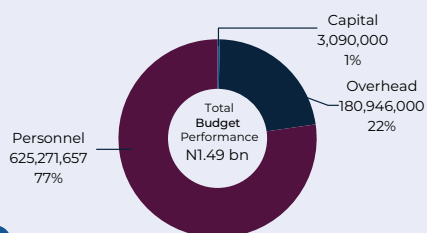
Laws and Policies	●
Access to Legal Justice	●
Support Services	●
Information and Awareness	●
Budget and Spending	●

Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

Budget Performance (2023)

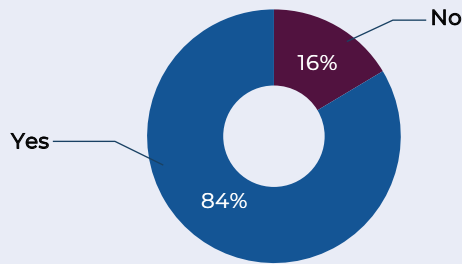


Budget Expenditure (2023)



Per Capita Spending **N570.1**

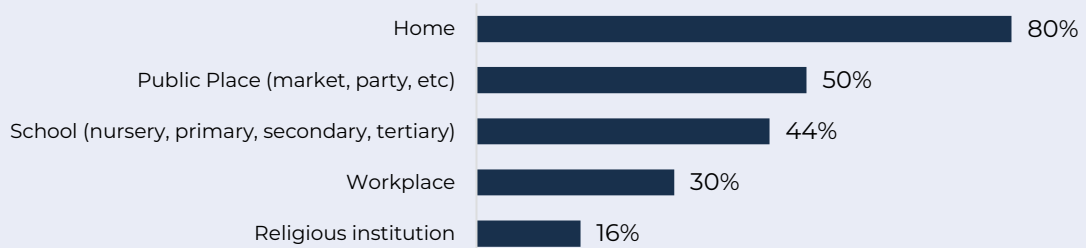
Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence (GBV) in the last five years?



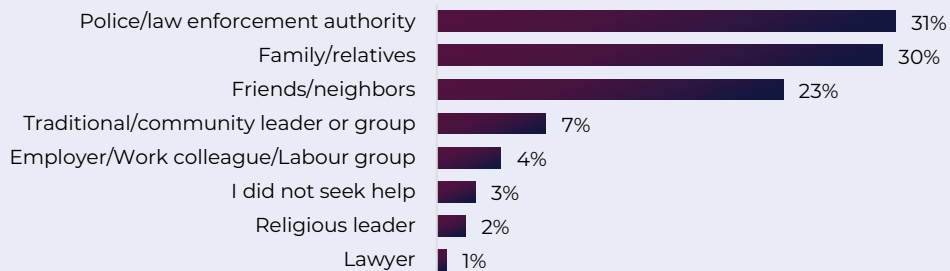
What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



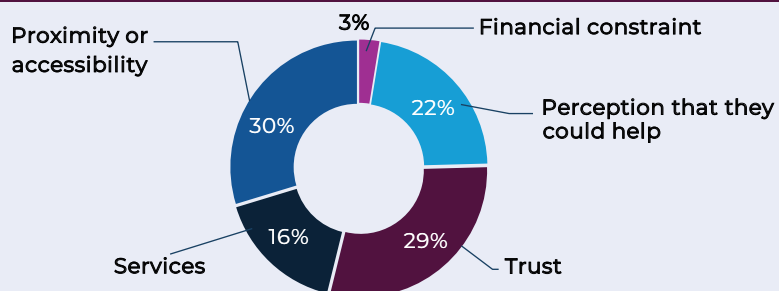
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



Where did you or the person first seek help?

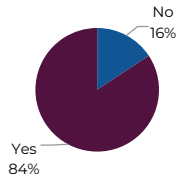


Why did you or the person choose where to seek help?

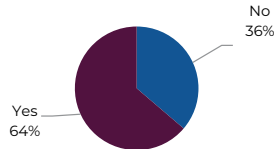


Laws and Policies

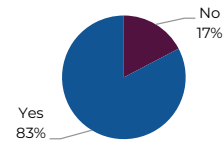
Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state?



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

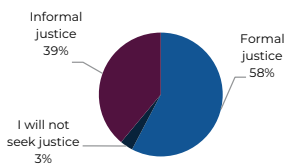


Do you know of anyone who has been convicted for GBV-related offenses?

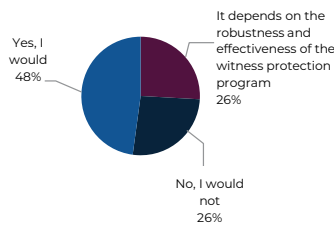


Access to Legal Justice

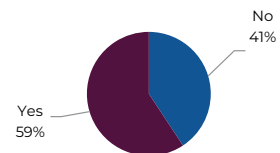
Where would you seek justice if you, or anyone you know, experience GBV?



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

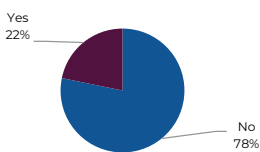


Are you aware of legal assistance and services provided by the State to GBV victims/survivors?

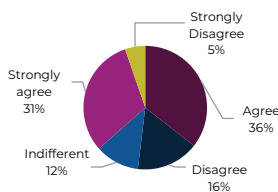


Support Services

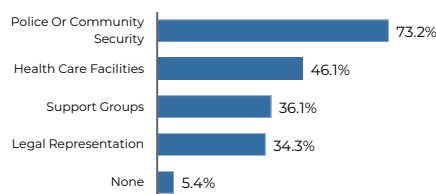
Do you know of, or have you visited, any active shelters and/or Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for GBV victims/survivors in the state?



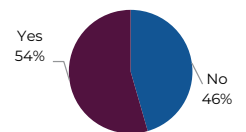
Do you believe that these shelters and/or SARCs are effectively functional, adequately equipped, properly maintained, and sustainable over time?



Which of these processes and procedures for reporting GBV-related incidents are you aware of? (Referral Pathways)

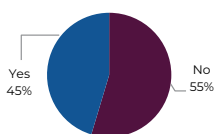


Do you think informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, community groups, etc., are helpful to GBV victims/survivors?

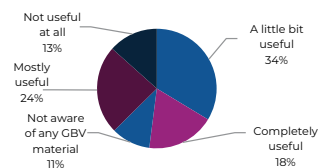


Information and Awareness

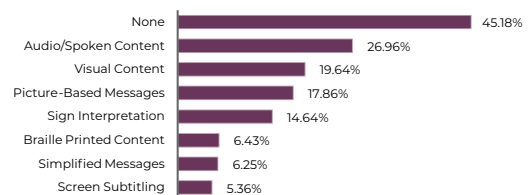
Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state?



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



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



Key Insights

Laws and Policies

Bayelsa State has enacted several laws to address GBV, including the Child Rights Law 2022, the VAPP Law, the Criminal Code, and the Widow and Widower Protection Law. Despite these legal frameworks, enforcement remains inconsistent. The state government has made efforts to address the gaps in the laws through the establishment of sexual exploitation, abuse harassment and gender-based violent action plans. Out of 34 GBV cases recorded this year, only four convictions have been secured, with most cases still in court. To improve the effectiveness of the response to GBV in the state, efforts are ongoing to review and amend the VAPP law to enhance its implementation and effectiveness in tackling GBV within the state.

Survey results show that awareness of existing laws and policies in the state grew from 69.9% in 2023 to 84% in 2024. Public awareness campaigns have been partially implemented, with increased involvement of NGOs and the Ministry of Women Affairs in GBV advocacy. Customary laws lack formal regulations for addressing less severe GBV cases. However, in serious offences like rape, community leaders and vigilante groups typically impose punishments on the offender before transferring the case to the police. However, 83% of respondents believe customary laws are effective in addressing and preventing GBV-related issues. Bayelsa State has established GBV reporting systems involving the police, medical facilities, and support organizations like GRIT and FIDA. While mechanisms exist, challenges persist, including victim withdrawal, slow prosecution, and insufficient witness protection. These gaps further reflect the survey results, which show that 58% of the population seeks formal justice while 39% seeks informal justice, showing just a little above-average trust in the formal system.

Access to Legal Justice

Victims typically report to the police and are referred for medical examinations. However, legal aid, including pro bono services, is offered by organizations like the Ministry of Justice, GRIT, and FIDA. However, the state lacks a robust witness protection program, discouraging testimonies. Prosecution is often delayed due to lengthy legal procedures and intimidation of witnesses, weakening cases. Community leaders and local vigilante groups lead informal justice systems, and these groups handle non-severe GBV cases and hand over sexual offenders to the police. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) also exists; it handles all cases, excluding sexual offences. 82.1% of the Survey population perceived the informal justice system as effective in ensuring that GBV victims get justice. Specialized units like Gender and Family Desks and family courts handle GBV cases, but no dedicated GBV judges exist. Recent improvements include professional training for GBV investigators and increased funding facilitated by the First Lady, benefiting MDAs and NGOs like GRIT. Nonetheless, gaps in witness protection, funding, and dedicated GBV judges continue to impede the effectiveness of GBV response efforts in the state.

Support Services

There is one shelter and one active sexual assault referral center (SARC) owned by the Heartland Alliance in Bayelsa State, but it is limited in serving the general population. This center offers essential services, including medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid, HIV testing, STI treatment, emergency contraceptives, and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV. Additionally, a state-owned SARC is under renovation and is currently non-functional. The SARC and shelter play an essential role in victim recovery by providing medical services, shelter, and crucial evidence for prosecution. The medical examination reports are critical for GBV case prosecutions. A state-owned shelter is available for victims, which is insufficient for the population, further reflecting the need for state funding to improve the number of available support centers.

Although the Ministry of Women Affairs made mention of a special fund from the First Lady's office, they are insufficient to cater to the needs of victims. Also, the bureaucracy in accessing the funds is a major problem; furthermore, such funding is not reflected in the state budget, making tracking more difficult. The reporting and referral pathway in the state involves collaboration between law enforcement, health institutions, legal bodies, and support organizations. However, the respondents have low awareness (47%) of these pathways. It is, however, important to note that state medical facilities charge to attend to GBV victims, further discouraging victims from using the medical pathways. According to the survey, 53.8%

of the population perceives informal support systems (family, friends, religious centers, and community groups) as more effective than formal systems in supporting GBV victims.

Information and Awareness

The state employs Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials such as flyers, radio, television, and social media to raise awareness about GBV. Organizations like FIDA play a crucial role in these efforts. Regular campaigns, including the Sixteen Days of Activism and special days for women, involve distributing flyers, screening films, and conducting outreach, particularly targeting disabled individuals. Comprehensive sex education, incorporating GBV prevention and response, is integrated into the secondary school curriculum, taught through Civic and Social Studies using specific lesson notes. While the available IEC materials are generally PWD-friendly, they are not fully inclusive for all disabilities and lack sign language interpretations and audio content. No specific IEC materials are tailored for the disabled community. According to the survey, only 48.5% of the population knows the state's GBV programs and materials.

Budget and Spending



The state's Ministry of Women and Children affairs had a 2023 budget allocation of N2.8 billion, with a budget performance of 53%, spending N1.49 bn. This included N625.27 million for personnel, N180.95 million for overhead, N679.90 million for capital, and N3.09 million for other expenses. With a population of 2.61 million, the actual spending translates to N570.10 per person; this reflects a better per capita investment than some other states in its region and other states in the country but still needs focused allocation for GBV prevention and response. The need to have GBV-specific line items is very crucial to addressing implementation, enforcement and support gaps, as highlighted in the study.

Human Angle Story






A father, separated from his wife, sexually abused and impregnated his daughter. When the horrific incident was reported, the victim was immediately removed from the harmful environment and taken to the SARC for medical attention and treatment. Subsequently, she was transferred to the Ministry of Women Affairs shelter, where she remained until she gave birth. During this time, her siblings were taken in by their uncle. The case file was forwarded to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution. After a thorough legal process, the perpetrator was convicted and sentenced to 14 years in prison. This case received significant media attention, highlighting the gravity of the crime and the importance of justice for victims of sexual abuse.

Bayelsa State

Indexes	Key Findings	Recommendations
Laws and Policies 	Lack of public awareness of the existence of the Law	Increased efforts to create awareness of the existence of these laws
	Inadequate support system for victims, e.g. SARC and Shelters.	Establish a comprehensive support system to enhance GBV responders' efforts and ensure holistic care for victims
	Inconsistency in the application of the Law	Strengthening the enforcement system review processes to ensure consistency in the application of laws to boost people's confidence in the law
Access to Legal Justice 	Delays in the litigation process	Fastening the legal process by recruiting more lawyers and having dedicated judges to preside over GBV-related cases
	Lack of funds to support the logistics of victims and GBV responders	Provision of funds for legal medical assistance, including logistics both for the victims and for the service providers
	Societal pressure on the victim to pursue an informal system or not seek justice due to fear of stigma	Increasing public sensitization to expose the victims, witnesses, and public on their rights and the importance of seeking justice
Support Services 	Insufficient SARC and shelters to serve the population of the state	Provision of more SARC centers by the state by improving budget allocations to the construction of at least one SARC across all state LGAs
	Poor awareness of the reporting and referral pathways in the state	The allocation of proper funding is needed to scale up the information and awareness programs the state is carrying out and those being done by NGOs.
	Poor awareness of the available support services that the state offers	
Information and Awareness 	Insufficient funding to carryout GBV related awareness program	More funds are needed to carry out extensive sensitization targeted not only for secondary school but also primary and all vulnerable groups
	Lack of special inclusive awareness targeted at PWD	Sensitization material should be designed to be inclusive and accommodate all PWD
Budget and Spending 	Bayelsa state lacks any GBV-specific line item in its budget.	The state needs to significantly increase the budget allocation and spending of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
	Its budget performance, alongside its spending per capita, is extremely low.	

WOMANITY INDEX IMPLEMENTATION TRACKER
2023 Policy Recommendations
Bayelsa State

S/No.	Recommendations	Implementation Status	Remarks
Laws and Policies			
1	 <p>GBV laws and policies in the state need to be strengthened to address the gaps in the laws.</p>	Fully Implemented	There is the establishment of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and gender-based violent action plan. Also, the Bayelsa State through the Ministry of Women Affairs have written to the National Assembly to review a section in the Nigeria Constitution which benefits the cause of GBV.
2	<p>Government should provide stiffer sanctions for informal players that try to pervade the course of justice.</p>	Not Implemented	Government still allow local communities to handle most GBV cases that are not life-threatening.
3	<p>Government should increase awareness on existing laws and the formal justice system.</p>	Partially Implemented	There is an intensification of the campaign against GBV in the state with more involvement of NGOs which deal with GBV issues by the Ministry of Women Affairs
Access to Legal Justice			
4	 <p>The officials who handle reports and investigations of GBV should undergo professional training on how to handle evidence as well as the proper processes to follow when investigating a GBV-related case.</p>	Fully Implemented	Most officials that handle GBV cases have undergone several professional trainings within and outside the state.
5	<p>Robust witness protection programs and services should be provided by the state.</p>	Not Implemented	The state does not have a witness protection programme
6	<p>More dedicated GBV judges should be added to the already existing family court, while ensuring continuous training.</p>	Partially Implemented	While the existing judges still remains, there have been continuous trainings for them.
7	<p>Sufficient funds should be made available to relevant MDAs and organizations that handle GBV-related cases.</p>	Partially Implemented	Given the involvement of the first lady of the state, most MDAs (e.g GRIT) and NGOs dealing with GBV have received some form of additional funding. Although, they noted that more funding is still needed
Support Services			
8	 <p>Government should establish Shelters/SARCs in the state such that is adequate for the state's at-risk population.</p>	Not Implemented	The state government although have established one SARC centre and partner with Heartland to establish another, these two are not sufficient to still deal with the teeming population who experience GBV. Additionally, these two SARC centres are located at the state capital.
9	<p>Special funds should be allocated to the relevant MDAs to enable them to provide the necessary support for victims.</p>	Partially Implemented	While MDAs especially the Ministry of Women affairs made mention of a special fund from the office of the first lady, they are not sufficient to cater for the needs of victims. Also, the bureaucracy involved in accessing the fund is a major problem

WOMANITY INDEX IMPLEMENTATION TRACKER
2023 Policy Recommendations
Bayelsa State

10	All state-owned hospitals should be directed to provide free medical services to victims of GBV so as to alleviate the strain on the meagre fund of the MDAs and NGOs.	Not Implemented	Government health centres still charge to attend to victims of GBV. Most times, the officials of NGOs and MDAs who prosecute the cases pay for the medical bills of victims
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Information and Awareness

11	More sensitization programs need to be organized especially in rural areas.	Partially Implemented	There have been more sensitisation programmes through community townhall meetings, though it is not enough to create awareness to most persons in the rural areas.
12	Materials on and teaching of sex education should spread across schools in the rural communities.	Partially Implemented	While NGOs in collaboration go with teaching AIDS for GBV in schools, there are still sufficient gaps in the rural areas
13	Sensitization materials should be made more accessible to a diverse range of PwDs and simplified and translated into the various languages spoken in the state.	Not Implemented	PwD still find it hard to access GBV related materials tailored towards their needs.





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