



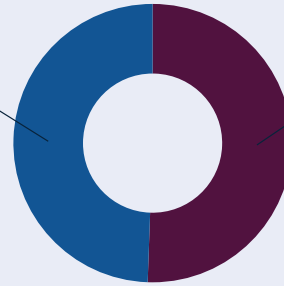
Benue State





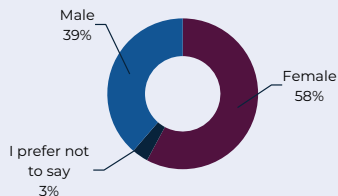
Total Population
6,328,314

Male
3,128,643
49%

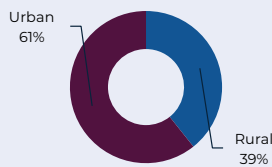


Female
3,199,671
51%

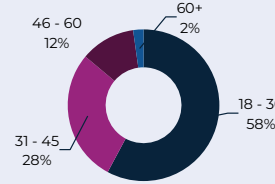
Respondents: 453



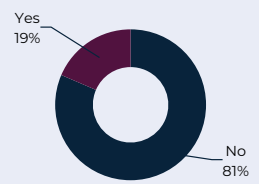
Location



Age Group



Disability Status



GBV Context



No. of GBV cases **36**



No. of active Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) **N/A**



No. of active Shelters **4**



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



Index Grades

Laws and Policies ●

Access to Legal Justice ●

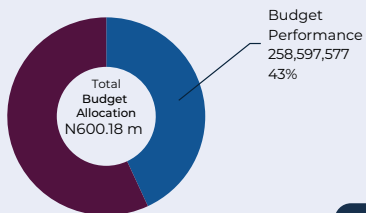
Support Services ●

Information and Awareness ●

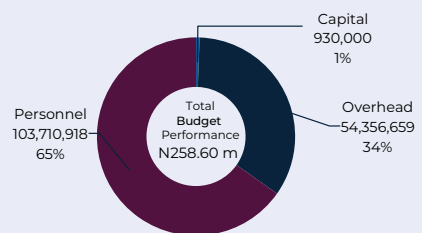
Budget and Spending ●

Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

Budget Performance (2023)

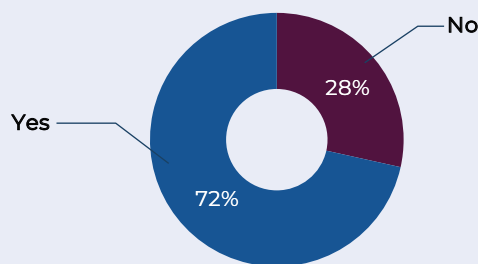


Budget Expenditure (2023)

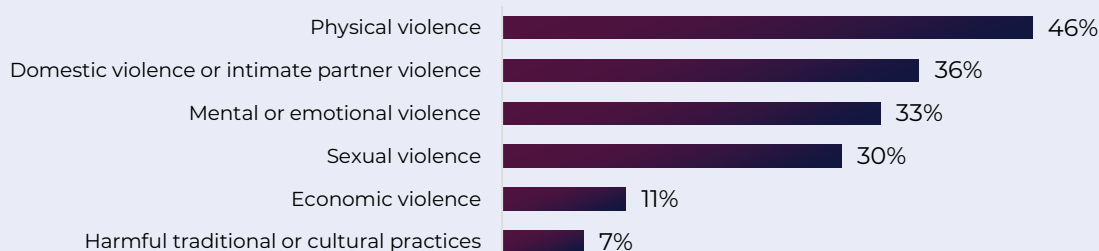


Per Capita Spending **N40.9**

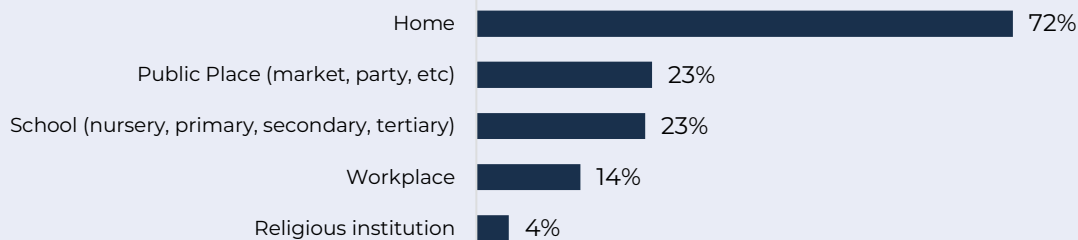
Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence (GBV) in the last five years?



What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



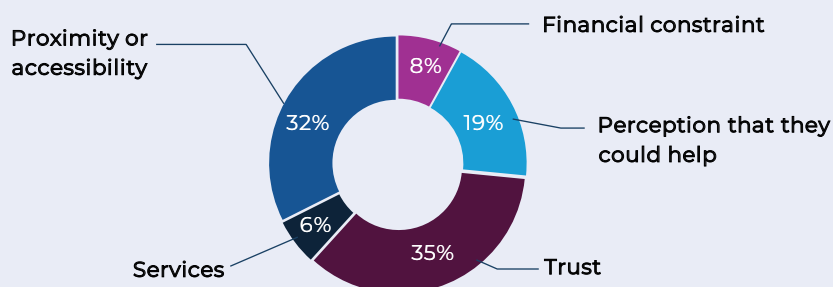
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



Where did you or the person first seek help?

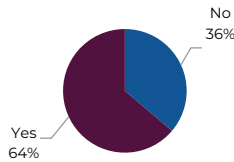


Why did you or the person choose where to seek help?

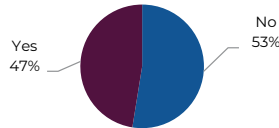


Laws and Policies

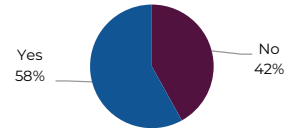
Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state?



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

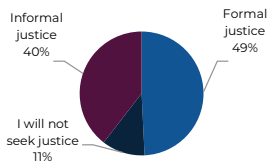


Do you know of anyone who has been convicted for GBV-related offenses?

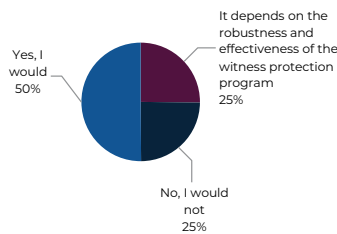


Access to Legal Justice

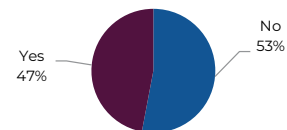
Where would you seek justice if you, or anyone you know, experience GBV?



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

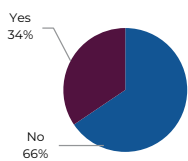


Are you aware of legal assistance and services provided by the State to GBV victims/survivors?

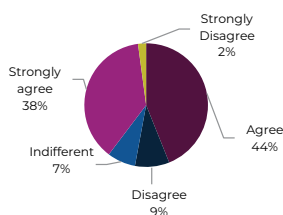


Support Services

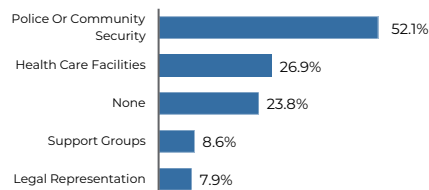
Do you know of, or have you visited, any active shelters and/or Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for GBV victims/survivors in the state?



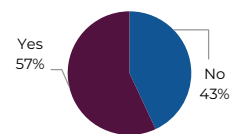
Do you believe that these shelters and/or SARCs are effectively functional, adequately equipped, properly maintained, and sustainable over time?



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

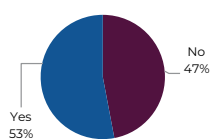


Do you think informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, community groups, etc., are helpful to GBV victims/survivors?

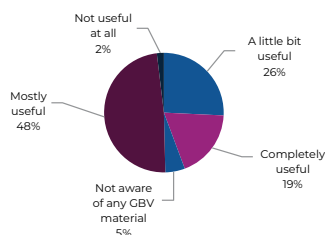


Information and Awareness

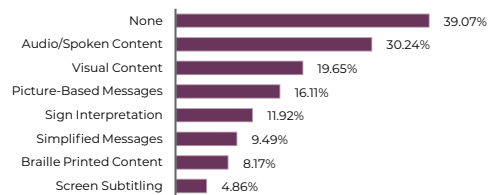
Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state?



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

To effectively prosecute GBV cases, Plateau State leverages a robust legal framework that includes the Penal Code, the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law (2019), the Administration of Criminal Justice Law (2019), the Child Rights Law (2008), the Human Rights Law (2003), and the Widowhood Protection Law (2022). These laws are designed to safeguard individuals from violence, but their enforcement remains challenging. Survey results indicate that 64% of the population is aware of these laws, a slight increase from the previous year. However, 51% of respondents believe these laws effectively prevent GBV. Identified impediments to the implementation of the laws include bureaucratic delays, non-functioning family courts, and low public awareness.

Customary laws in Benue State are often informal and vary by ethnicity, complicating the enforcement of formal legal mechanisms. Many cultural practices, like forced marriage and child marriage, continue to conflict with state laws. Laws must be revisited periodically, but customary laws continue to hinder progress. A more harmonized approach, strengthening formal and informal systems, is critical. Survey findings reveal that 41% of respondents perceive customary and religious laws as ineffective in preventing and responding to GBV in Benue State. Despite recognizing their cultural importance, many respondents question the capacity of these practices to address modern issues of GBV, particularly in the face of evolving legal frameworks.

Access to Legal Justice

GBV victims and survivors in the state typically report to the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), which handles investigations and prosecutions through First Information Reports (FIRs). The Ministry of Justice offers legal advice on cases, while the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare provides psychosocial support and case referrals. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) also collaborates on investigations, particularly in sexual violence cases. The survey reveals that 46% of respondents seek justice through formal systems, primarily the police or courts, while 42% opt for informal justice, including traditional and religious leaders. Notably, 12% of participants stated they would not seek justice due to fears of retribution or social stigma.

Legal aid services are available through the state's Legal Aid Council, the NPF, and NGOs such as the Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA) and Lawyers Alert. The NHRC provides witness protection for those involved in GBV cases, offering measures like anonymous reporting and relocation when necessary. However, concerns about the safety of witnesses persist, as only 50% of respondents felt safe participating in the justice process. The courts struggle to adhere to the prompt timelines stipulated by the VAPP law. Delays in investigation and prosecution are common, especially in cases involving minors. While specialized units, such as the Family Support Unit (FSU) and dedicated Gender Desk Officers within the police, exist, challenges such as lack of resources and training hinder their effectiveness. Informal Justice Systems: Informal justice systems, including community leaders and religious organizations, are prevalent but often ineffective. They may perpetuate GBV by encouraging settlements, which undermine formal legal proceedings. Many respondents have low awareness of these systems and prefer formal judicial channels for GBV cases.

Support Services

In Benue State, there are no functional Sexual Assault Referral Centers (SARCs). Still, shelters like NAPTIP Rest Homes, Mama Abaiyol Orphanage, and facilities by Second Voice Foundation and OWADO provide crucial support for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors. These shelters offer temporary housing, psychosocial assistance, and empowerment programs, ensuring survivors receive essential care. Awareness of these services remains low, with 63% of surveyed individuals unaware of SARCs or shelters. However, informal support systems such as religious organizations, community leaders, and family networks play a significant role, with 58% of respondents viewing them as more effective than formal mechanisms. This preference highlights the cultural trust placed in community-based support.

Medical units like the Red Cross facility at Ikyogen IDP Camp provide basic services and collaborate with law enforcement to handle GBV cases. However, the lack of forensic labs limits the state's capacity for evidence-based prosecution. This gap underscores the need for investment in medical and legal infrastructure. Despite efforts by the government and CSOs, budgetary prioritization for GBV services needs to be improved. Most shelters rely on NGO and donor funding, leaving room for improved public-sector commitment. Strengthening these systems is critical for sustainable GBV response and survivor recovery. Benue State has made progress, yet significant challenges remain in awareness, accessibility, and resource allocation for both formal and informal GBV support systems. Bridging these gaps requires collaborative efforts to ensure survivors receive comprehensive care and justice.

Information and Awareness

Evidence indicates a strategic deployment of IEC materials to address GBV in Benue State. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare, in partnership with organizations like the CLEEN Foundation, produces and distributes materials during market campaigns, International Day events, and in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Agencies like the NOA also facilitate roadshows, seminars, and media campaigns to enhance public knowledge of GBV, complementing their IEC distribution during community sensitization programs. Similarly, NHRC conducts radio and TV advocacy while supporting schools and public campaigns with awareness materials. Survey findings reveal a 55% awareness rate of GBV education programs, a marked increase from previous years. However, accessibility issues persist, particularly for marginalized groups, underlining the need for enhanced inclusivity in public sensitization efforts.

The integration of GBV education within the state's curriculum needs to be improved. While civic education is part of the curriculum, comprehensive sex education topics are often omitted. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have compensated for this gap by establishing school clubs as platforms for targeted GBV education. Survey responses overwhelmingly advocate for policy changes to institutionalize GBV prevention education across all educational levels. The availability of PWD-friendly IEC materials remains limited. The survey results highlight significant gaps, with only 22% of respondents aware of audio content and 14% aware of visual aids tailored for persons with disabilities. Efforts by organizations like NRCS to involve sign language interpreters and PWD representatives during campaigns suggest progress, but they remain insufficient in ensuring accessibility.

Budget and Spending

Benue State allocated N600.18 million to the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare in its 2023 budget. However, only N258.59 million (43%) was actually spent. A significant portion of this expenditure (N103.71 million or 40%) was allocated to personnel costs, while overhead costs consumed N54.36 million (21%). Capital expenditure, crucial for required infrastructure like shelters and SARCs, received a negligible amount of N930,000 (0.4%). With a per capita spending of N40.9, Benue State's investment in GBV prevention and response is insufficient. To effectively address GBV, the state must increase its budgetary allocation, prioritize capital expenditure, and ensure efficient utilization of funds to support essential infrastructure and services.



Human Angle Story



A 30-year-old woman from Makurdi LGA has endured a decade of domestic abuse. Her husband, a Keke rider, consistently fails to provide for their two children and resorts to physical violence when frustrated. Despite support from her family, she chooses to remain in the abusive relationship, hoping for change. In another case, a 23-year-old woman from the same area was sexually assaulted by a man she repeatedly rejected. While the perpetrator was initially arrested, he was later released due to insufficient evidence. This experience has left her disillusioned with the justice system's ability to protect victims of sexual assault.

Benue State

Index	Key Findings	Recommendations
Laws and Policies 	Public awareness of formal GBV laws like the VAPP Law and Child's Right Act has improved. Still, many remain unaware of provisions, limiting their ability to seek justice or hold offenders accountable.	Increase public education campaigns focused on the provisions of GBV laws to ensure wider understanding and application.
	The enforcement of SGBV law using the VAPP law is hindered because it is domiciled within the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare (MOWASW), which lacks the operational mandate for enforcement. Additionally, Family Courts remain non-functional despite being mandated by the VAPP Law, contributing to inefficiency in justice delivery.	Transfer enforcement responsibilities to appropriate judicial or law enforcement bodies while keeping MOWASW in a supportive role. Operationalize Family Courts nationwide and provide resources and training for effective functioning.
	Bureaucratic inefficiencies, unclear implementation processes, delays in prosecution, and cultural interference—such as lack of family cooperation—significantly obstruct justice delivery for SGBV cases.	Develop guidelines for implementing SGBV laws and streamline prosecutorial processes to reduce delays. Engage community leaders and families through sensitization programs to mitigate cultural interference and foster cooperation.
	The lack of adequate training of key stakeholders to handle GBV cases is based on professionalism.	Provide targeted, ongoing training for MOWASW staff and law enforcement agencies to improve their capacity to handle GBV cases with professionalism and sensitivity.
Access to Legal Justice 	While formal justice systems have made progress in providing legal recourse for GBV survivors, structural challenges and the growing preference for informal systems impede full access to justice. The declining use of formal systems and increased reliance on informal systems highlight gaps in accessibility, trust, and efficiency in the formal mechanisms. There is limited access to formal justice channels in rural areas.	Strengthen formal justice systems by addressing structural challenges, building trust through community engagement, and improving efficiency to encourage survivors to seek justice through these channels.
	While awareness of legal assistance has improved, insufficient witness protection, limited training and resources for institutions, cultural practices, and court delays hinder access to justice.	Enhance witness protection programs, provide training and resources to institutions, combat harmful cultural practices, and expedite court processes.
	Family Support Units (FSUs) and Gender Desks exist but face resource constraints and capacity gaps. Functional family courts are needed to handle GBV cases.	Establish family courts to enhance prosecution efficiency and strengthen coordination among existing support units and stakeholders.
Support Services 	The State lacks an operational SARC, though functional shelters exist, including NAPTIP (Rest Homes) and CSO-owned shelters such as OWACDO and Second Voice Foundation. Many facilities are overcrowded, and victims/survivors often face abandonment or inadequate care.	Establish an operational SARC in the State and ensure consistent funding for existing shelters. Improve shelter infrastructure and capacity to accommodate more survivors and provide comprehensive care. Deploy trained social workers to shelters and increase staffing at the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare (MOWASW).
	Police and healthcare facilities are the most recognized formal reporting pathways, but awareness of other mechanisms, such as support groups and legal assistance, remains low. Informal systems, though preferred by some survivors, are often ineffective and rooted in traditional practices.	Strengthen formal reporting and referral pathways by enhancing collaboration between government agencies, CSOs, and healthcare providers. Promote multiple reporting options, such as hotlines and digital platforms, to make services more accessible. Provide training for police, healthcare workers, and legal representatives to handle GBV cases sensitively and effectively.
	Many survivors rely on informal support systems such as family, friends, and community groups rather than formal mechanisms, often due to cultural comfort and trust in the community.	Strengthen formal support mechanisms while building community trust through training and collaboration with informal support systems.

Index	Key Findings	Recommendations
<p>Information and Awareness</p> 	<p>Awareness of GBV education programs has improved significantly, with widespread community support for integrating GBV and Child Sexual Abuse education across all educational levels. However, accessibility remains a critical issue, particularly for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), as many are unaware of or excluded from these materials and campaigns.</p>	<p>Develop and distribute GBV awareness and education materials tailored to the needs of PWDs, including accessible formats such as Braille, sign language, and audio materials. Ensure representation of PWDs in the design and delivery of GBV programs to enhance inclusivity.</p>
	<p>While various campaigns and activities (e.g., radio jingles, roadshows, and IEC materials) have been conducted, they are periodic and often lack reach and engagement with marginalized communities, including PWDs. Programs are also inconsistent with modern educational practices like Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) in schools.</p>	<p>Institutionalize regular GBV sensitization campaigns, leveraging both traditional and digital media. Integrate Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) into the school curriculum at all levels and provide adequate training for teachers to deliver these programs effectively. Strengthen collaborations between MOWASW, NOA, CSOs, and other stakeholders to ensure continuous and cohesive public engagement.</p>
	<p>PWDs are not adequately involved in the design, execution, or evaluation of GBV awareness programs. Challenges include exposure to unsuitable environments (e.g., albinos exposed to the sun during campaigns) and lack of accommodations like ambulances for emergencies or tactile learning aids.</p>	<p>Adopt inclusive program design principles by consulting PWD representatives during planning stages to ensure campaigns address their specific needs. Provide logistical support during public campaigns, such as shaded areas, mobility aids, and emergency medical services. Standardize the inclusion of sign language interpreters and other accessibility features in all GBV programs.</p>
<p>Budget and Spending</p> 	<p>The budget execution rate of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare stood at a mere 43% in 2023.</p>	<p>To enhance the capacity of the state to adequately prevent and respond to GBV, the government must significantly increase the budget allocation and disbursement to the Ministry.</p>
	<p>Less than One Million Naira, representing 0.4% of the Ministry's total budget, went to capital expenditure.</p>	<p>To address the huge GBV prevention and response infrastructure gap, the government must prioritize its budgetary resources in financing the capital component of the Ministry's budget.</p>

WOMANITY INDEX IMPLEMENTATION TRACKER
2023 Policy Recommendations
Benue State

S/No.	Recommendations	Implementation Status	Remarks
Laws and Policies			
1	Establish separate Children's Court with structure, judges, and laws.	Not Implemented	There is no Family Court in place due to lack of funding in the Ministry of Justice
2	Advocacy and sensitization of people on the laws.	Not Implemented	The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and CSOs conduct sensitization on GBV especially during 16 Days of Activism but not on the laws
3	Enforcement of laws by stakeholders as deterrent.	Partially Implemented	The Nigerian Police Force has been enforcing the laws under the Gender Desk in collaboration with Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women Affairs and CSOs
4	Provide facilities and monitoring for agencies handling GBV.	Not Implemented	The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development who should handle this are not proactive, hence leading to lack of implementation
Access to Legal Justice			
5	Budgetary allocation to the Police and line Ministries for logistics in prosecuting GBV cases.	Not Implemented	The budget allocation for logistics support to the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) for prosecuting GBV cases is currently insufficient, and the limited resources that are allocated frequently face delays.
6	Training for Police personnel on distress lines.	Not Implemented	This is not implemented due to lack of funding for the NPF
7	Educate people that GBV is wrong.	Partially Implemented	CSOs mostly carry out these awareness campaigns and often the Ministry of Women Affairs also conduct some campaigns
Support Services			
8	Increased awareness on availability of shelters and homes.	Partially Implemented	The awareness is limited
9	Funding support to revitalize Government SARCs and shelters.	Not Implemented	The SARC Centre available was non-functional
10	Ensure accessibility of shelters and homes for Persons with Disabilities.	Partially Implemented	Most Shelters are owned by CSOs and they partially cater for the needs of PWDs
Information and Awareness			
11	Capture needs of PwDs in GBV policy implementation.	Partially Implemented	
12	Establish GBV Desks in MDAs to address PwDs needs and Make GBV Awareness Campaigns more inclusive.	Partially Implemented	The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Ministry of Justice, Nigerian Police Force and Nigerian Human Rights Commission all have GBV Desk in place



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