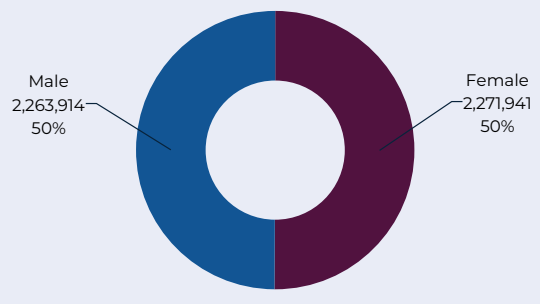


# Cross River State

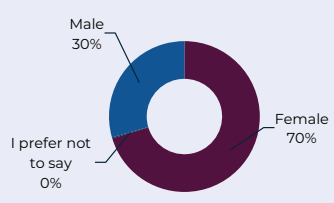




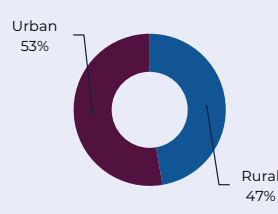
**Total Population**  
**4,535,855**



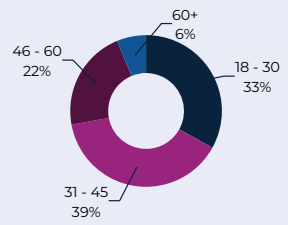
**Respondents: 448**



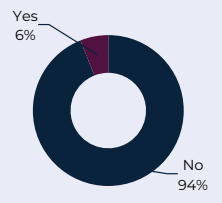
**Location**



**Age Group**



**Disability Status**



**GBV Context**

	No. of GBV cases	<b>1729</b>
	No. of active Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC)s	<b>6</b>
	No. of active shelters	<b>2</b>
	No. of Family Support Units (FSUs)	<b>1</b>

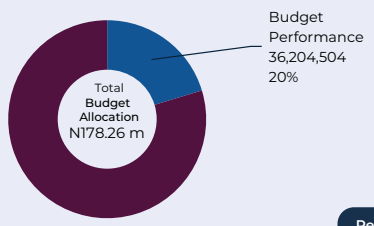


**Index Grades**

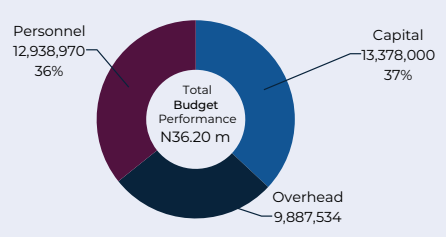
Laws and Policies	<span style="background-color: #FFC107; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 10px;">●</span>
Access to Legal Justice	<span style="background-color: #28A745; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 10px;">●</span>
Support Services	<span style="background-color: #FFC107; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 10px;">●</span>
Information and Awareness	<span style="background-color: #FFC107; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 10px;">●</span>
Budget and Spending	<span style="background-color: #FFC107; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 10px;">●</span>

Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

**Budget Performance (2023)**

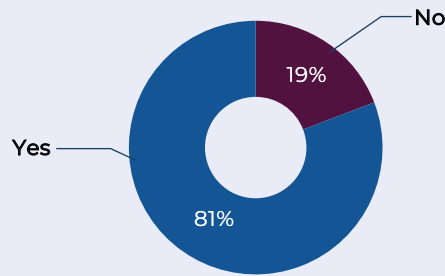


**Budget Expenditure (2023)**



Per Capita Spending **N8**

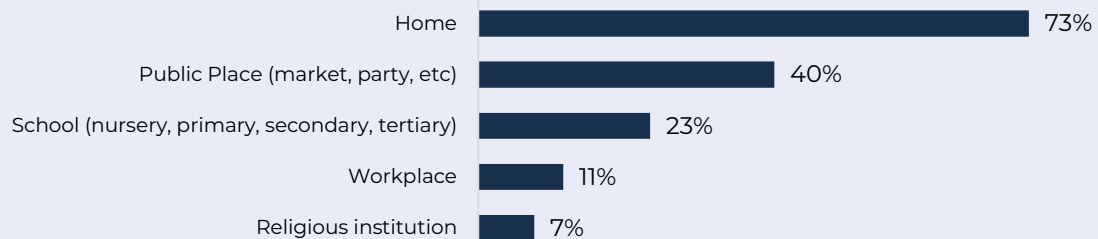
Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence (GBV) in the last five years?



What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



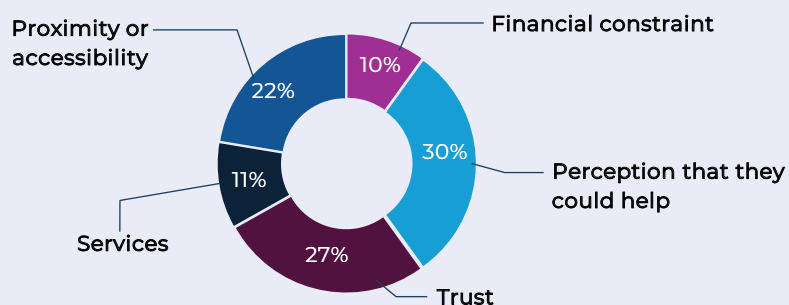
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



Where did you or the person first seek help?

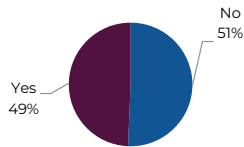


Why did you or the person choose where to seek help?

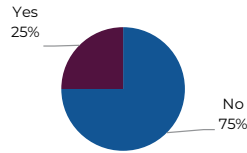


## Laws and Policies

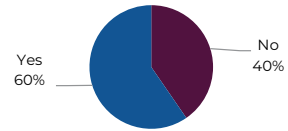
Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state?



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

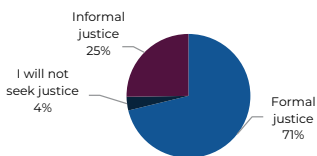


Do you know of anyone who has been convicted for GBV-related offenses?

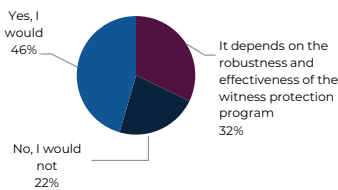


## Access to Legal Justice

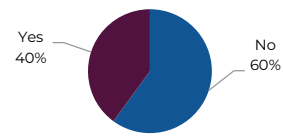
Where would you seek justice if you, or anyone you know, experience GBV?



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

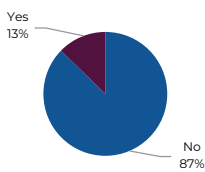


Are you aware of legal assistance and services provided by the State to GBV victims/survivors?

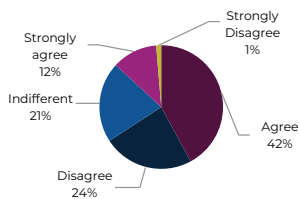


## Support Services

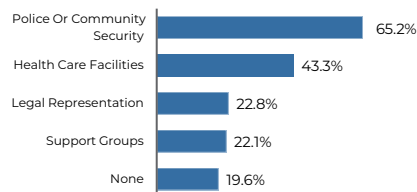
Do you know of, or have you visited, any active shelters and/or Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for GBV victims/survivors in the state?



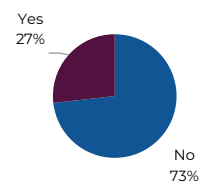
Do you believe that these shelters and/or SARCs are effectively functional, adequately equipped, properly maintained, and sustainable over time?



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

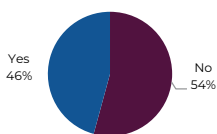


Do you think informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, community groups, etc., are helpful to GBV victims/survivors?

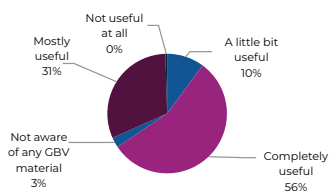


## Information and Awareness

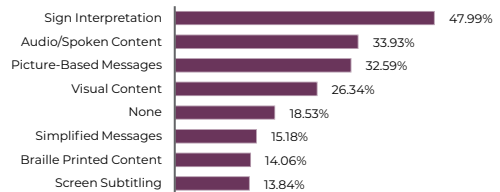
Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state?



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**

Cross River State has several GBV-related laws, including the VAPP Law 2023, Child Rights Law 2023, and the Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL) 2017. Despite their existence, only 49% of respondents are aware of these laws, and 63% believe that they effectively prevent GBV and respond. There are cultural hindrances to the effective implementation of these laws, and the law has lenient penalties for some offences, such as stalking. The VAPP Law, however, needs to be reviewed, for instance, by increasing the years of imprisonment for convicted perpetrators of rape in alignment with the parent VAPP Act (2015), as well as stiffening the penalty for the offence of forced financial dependence from just N1m to both imprisonment and an adequate minimum fine in line with necessary considerations.

Twenty six GBV cases have been reported over the past year, with 17 cases in court, nine judgments and nine convictions (NPF-Cross River state). Formal laws are periodically reviewed to suit modern realities, e.g., the Child's Rights Law, amended in 2023. Additionally, the survey showed that 60% of respondents believed customary laws can help address GBV in the state. The state, through MOWA, has made significant efforts to advocate for and sensitize the LGAs that practice money marriage. These efforts have led to the creation of bylaws with the contributions of the leadership of the communities. It is important to note, however, that the Child Rights law was reviewed and amended in 2023. In 2023, the state allocated N50mn for the Training of Women Development Officers (WDOs) on Child Protection Issues. Such training is useful to ensure proper awareness of the laws and understanding of the implementation and enforcement criteria.

### **Access to Legal Justice**

Victims and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) or their relatives can report incidents to various agencies, including CSOs, the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), or the police. The MoJ is responsible for prosecution while the police enforce the law. A significant portion of the study population (70.12%) expressed their intention to seek formal justice if they experienced GBV. Free legal aid is available through the state's Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and Citizens' Rights Commission (CCROPD), but awareness of these services among indigent individuals is low. While witness protection is legally mandated, the state lacks formal programs beyond safe houses provided by NGOs.

These NGOs often face financial constraints, limiting their ability to hire police or private security for witness and survivor protection. Court proceedings can be lengthy, hindering access to justice due to extended waiting times. Community leaders, customary courts, and councils of elders play a crucial role in maintaining order in areas with limited government reach. Some GBV cases are referred to formal courts for legal resolution. 57.59% of the study population believes that informal justice systems effectively prevent GBV. The state has established specialized family courts and desk offices within the judiciary and police to handle GBV and rape cases.

### **Support Services**

The state has six Sexual Assault Referral Centers (SARCs), a GBV centre, and two shelters. Due to the non-functionality of state-owned shelters, the state partners with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to provide shelter for GBV victims. Some victims are also referred to safe homes in Akwa Ibom State for safety. These shelters offer victims essential services such as temporary accommodation, medical care, and trauma counselling. CSOs, MOWA, and the police serve as the initial contact points for victims, who are then referred to the police GBV desk for investigation. A significant portion of the population (73%) prefers formal support systems over informal ones. Police investigation reports play a crucial role in the prosecution process. Insufficient budget allocation and delays in fund approval hinder effective GBV response in the state.

## Information and Awareness

The state primarily relies on capacity building and community engagement, implemented through CSOs, to conduct sensitization programs. Additionally, IEC materials are utilized during special events like Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism to raise school awareness. Targeted outreaches are conducted to vulnerable groups, including women, children, and people with disabilities (PWDs). In 2023, Cross River State allocated N1.27 million to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children and N50 million to the Gender-Based Violence Centre for Women and Children Advocacy, Monitoring, and Sensitization. Increased funding for such initiatives would enable more frequent and effective sensitization and awareness programs. While sex education and GBV awareness are not yet formally integrated into the education curriculum, some relevant topics are covered within subjects like biology. Although PWDs have access to sensitization programs and IEC materials, these materials may not be fully inclusive for all disabilities. Sign language interpreters are employed to accommodate PWDs during awareness programs. However, only 44.58% of the study population is aware of GBV information and awareness programs.

## Budget and Spending

In 2023, the State's Ministry of Women Affairs received a budget allocation of N178.26 million. However, only 20% of this allocation, amounting to N36.20 million, was spent. Over half of the budget remained unspent. The funds were allocated as follows: N12.94 million for personnel costs, N9.89 million for overhead expenses, and N13.38 million for capital projects. With a population of 4.74 million, the actual spending per person is a mere N7.60, significantly lower than the per capita investment in other states and women-focused interventions, including GBV services. To effectively address GBV-related issues, there is a critical need to improve budget allocation and disbursements.

## Human Angle Story



A woman gave birth at a hospital, and her partner paid an initial N100,000 towards the N400,000 hospital bill. However, he subsequently disappeared without completing the payment. The hospital, fearing the woman would abscond, refused to release the newborn baby. Desperate, the woman left her child behind and sought help. She was eventually referred to the Citizens' Rights Commission (CCROPD), which initiated an investigation to locate the child's father. CCROPD successfully tracked down the father and compelled him to settle the outstanding hospital bill. Ultimately, both the mother and child were released, with CCROPD providing additional financial support from non-budgetary sources.


# Cross River State

Indexes	Key Findings	Recommendations
<b>Laws and Policies</b> 	Implementing policies like the Child Rights Act faces cultural resistance. Indigents dismiss it as foreign law.	Continuously conduct culturally sensitive awareness campaigns, engaging local leaders and influencers, to promote acceptance and implementation of laws like the Child Rights Act.
	Communities rely on unwritten customary and religious laws, which can change anytime new leadership comes into power, creating inconsistencies	Efforts should be directed towards coordinating the communities to document their customary and religious laws to ensure consistency and prevent arbitrary changes
	Limited awareness and knowledge of the VAPP Act and other GBV-related laws among the general public, law enforcement agencies and Legal practitioners.	Law enforcement, legal practitioners, and agency staff should receive regular training on the provisions, application, and importance of laws like the VAPP laws.
<b>Access to Legal Justice</b> 	Long litigation periods (2-5 years) hinder access to justice, causing frustration, loss of evidence, and witness intimidation.	Due to the high workload, the number of dedicated GBV judges in all courts should increase, and a specialized court should be created to cater to only gender-related cases.
	Laws to protect witnesses are poorly implemented, with inadequate resources to ensure their safety	An increase in funding to provide resources needed for effective implementation of witness protection
	Awareness and services are concentrated in the capital, leaving rural areas underserved despite higher GBV rates.	Establish and properly fund a task force charged with awareness creation will enable evenly targeted awareness creation across the state.
<b>Support Services</b> 	The available SARC centres are insufficient for the population they serve and lack the resources to provide comprehensive services to all survivors.	There should be increased funding to improve SARC and shelter capacity and services.
	SARCs and shelters are overcrowded. Survivors needing services at night face delays due to the requirement for ministry approval before admission.	Provision of more shelter and simplifying admission procedures, especially for emergency cases at night
	Many survivors withdraw cases due to fear and intimidation.	Informing and sensitizing the community would strengthen support systems to protect survivors and ensure follow-through in legal processes.
<b>Information and Awareness</b> 	Programs and materials do accommodate PWDs but not all forms.	Improve effort to accommodate all forms of PWDs for the GBV awareness program
	Sensitization programs lack adequate funding to provide enough resources, such as IEC materials, public address systems, and trained personnel, to ensure impactful outreach.	Increase funding and resources for sensitization campaigns to ensure their impactful outreaches.
<b>Budget and Spending</b> 	The budget performance of the Ministry of Women Affairs was extremely low at 20%.	The government should significantly increase the budget allocation and disbursements to the Ministry.
	An expenditure per capita of N8 by the Ministry of Women Affairs is acutely inadequate to cater to the GBV needs of the population	

**WOMANITY INDEX IMPLEMENTATION TRACKER**  
**2023 Policy Recommendations**  
**Cross River State**

S/No.	Recommendations	Implementation Status	Remarks
<b>Laws and Policies</b>			
1	The VAPP Law, and other GBV-related laws should be amended in line with societal changes.	Partially Implemented	Child Right law has been reviewed and amended as at 2023
2	The government should re-orientate the legislators and push for legislation on rape cases that happen between spouses.	Not Implemented	
3	The state needs to prosecute high-profile offenders to demonstrate that no one is above the law.	Partially Implemented	The previous Commissioner for youth and sports was prosecuted and the court processes were ongoing when he passed out. It is speculated that he may have died due to the stress of the process.
4	The state needs to criminalise and outlaw money marriages in communities where they still exist and establish stiffer sanctions for perpetrators.	Partially Implemented	The state through MOWA, has made significant efforts in advocacies and sensitizations to the LGAs that practice these traditions. These efforts have led to the creation of bye-law with the contribution of the leadership of the communities. However, these bye-laws lack the legal jurisdiction to address criminal acts and rely only on pledges. When such practices are repeated, community leaders refer the case to the relevant government MDAs.
<b>Access to Legal Justice</b>			
5	The state should establish an effective witness protection program.	Not Implemented	Aside the safe houses by NGOs, the state lacks formal witness protection programs. Additionally, NGOs face financial constraints that prevent them from hiring the services of the police or private security to protect both witnesses and survivors.
6	The state should appoint dedicated GBV judges and regularly train them.	Not Implemented	Although the state lacks dedicated GBV judges or court, there is a judge who has recieved extensivse training during her time as a lawyer. With a comprehensive knowledge on GBV, she now presides over numerous GBV cases, giving justice to victims and survivors.
7	Funding should be made available for seamless performance of the GBV desks.	Partially Implemented	NGOs and CBOs support the GBV Desks with funding. From the goveremnt,there is a GBV budget in State Economic Planning and MOWA and Social Welfare and Humanitarian Services. While the budget is available, it is difficult to access the funds.
<b>Support Services</b>			
8	Support services should be prioritized for adequate funding.	Partially Implemented	These are implemented mostly by CSOs and NGOs
9	The government should establish more SARCs, at least one in every Local Government Area.	Partially Implemented	Only 1 SARC has been established in the state Capital and the services are not comprehensive. 5 SARCs were established by other NGOs in 5 LGAs and are comprehensive



WOMANITY INDEX IMPLEMENTATION TRACKER 2023 Policy Recommendations Cross River State			
10	The government should increase awareness on the reporting and referral pathway.	Partially Implemented	The reporting pathways are widely known and understood by NGOs but knowledge is still low in the communities
<b>Information and Awareness</b>			
11	Sensitisation and awareness on GBV prevention and response should be done on a more frequent basis.	Partially Implemented	Although mostly done during 16 days of activism and relevant international days
12	Sex education should be formally included in the secondary school curriculum.	Partially Implemented	It has been mainstreamed into family life education, a subject in schools. The ministry of education may try to integrate sex education and GBV awareness into other subjects, but this is still in the planning and development stage.
13	 Sensitization should be regularly created through various mediums	Partially Implemented	Advocay and Sensitisation has been central to all activities involving local, foreign and government stakeholders. This unified effort has significantly increased awareness in schools and communities. This collective voice of all relevant bodies has been instrumental in promoting justice for women and ensuring that their rights are recognised and protected
14	There should be more sensitivity and inclusion of the needs of PwD in sensitization programs.	Partially Implemented	Most public messages historically lack accessibility to PwD; they do not include sign languages, pictures or brails. While recent efforts have aimed for higher inclusivity through the incorporation of audio messages and pictures. However, during the planning of statewide sensitisation programs, PwD are now actively included and their opinions valued, venues are selected to be disability friendly reflecting a shift towards more inclusive practices.



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