



Sokoto State



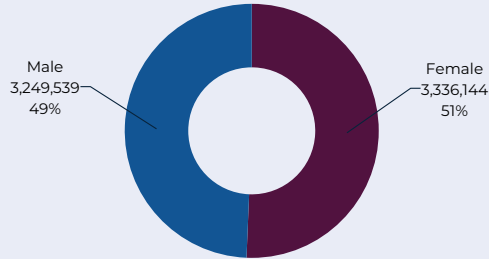
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INDEX
2024 Edition

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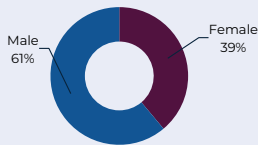




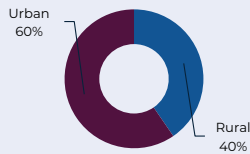
Total Population
6,585,683



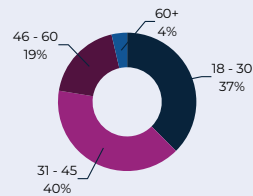
Respondents: 522



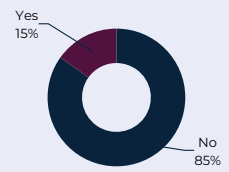
Location



Age Group



Disability Status



GBV Context



No. of GBV cases **67**



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



No. of active shelters **1**



No. of Family Support Units (FSUs) **1**

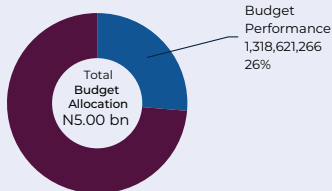


Index Grades

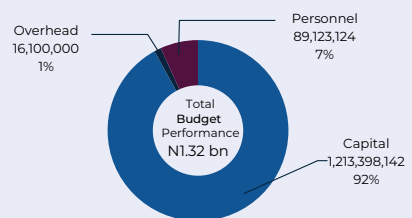
- Laws and Policies ●
- Access to Legal Justice ●
- Support Services ●
- Information and Awareness ●
- Budget and Spending ●

Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

Budget Performance (2023)

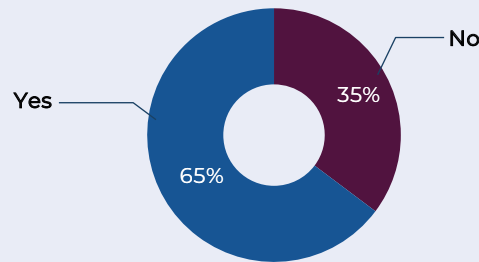


Budget Expenditure (2023)

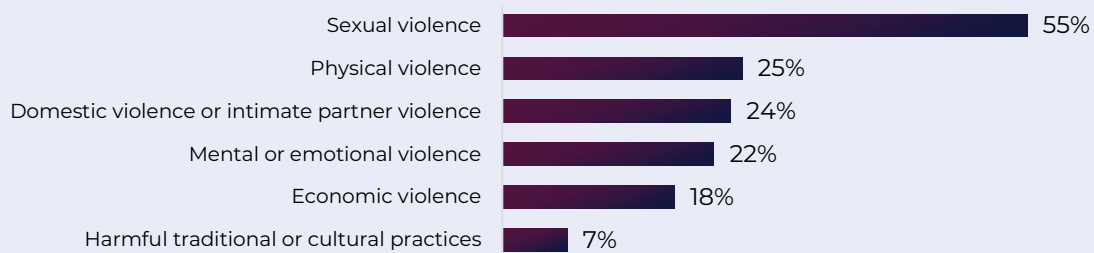


Per Capita Spending **N200.2**

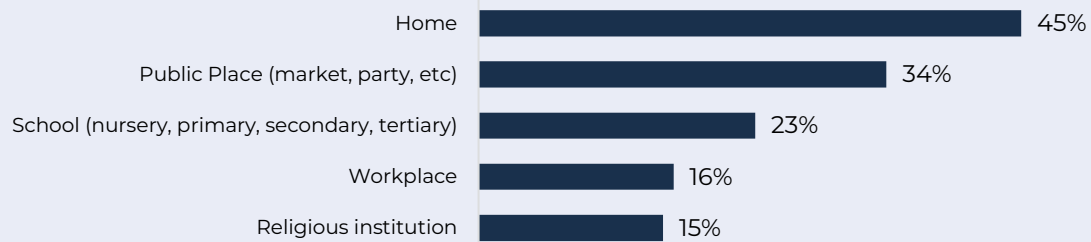
Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence (GBV) in the last five years?



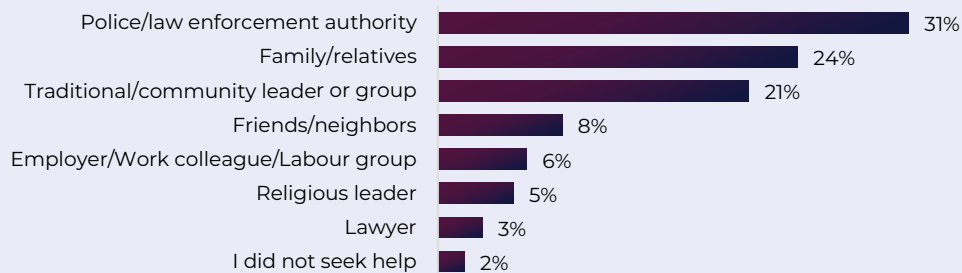
What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



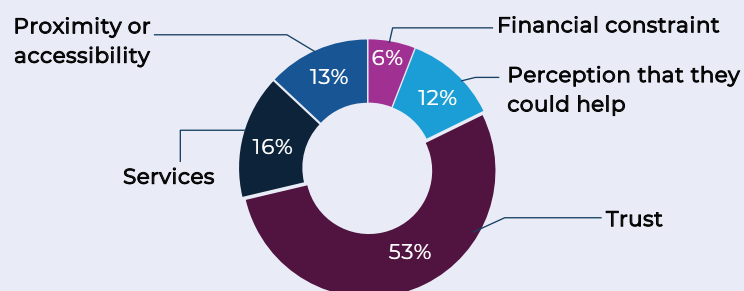
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



Where did you or the person first seek help?

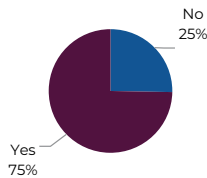


Why did you or the person choose where to seek help?

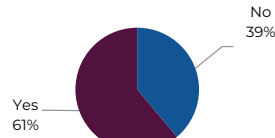


Laws and Policies

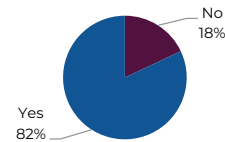
Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state?



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

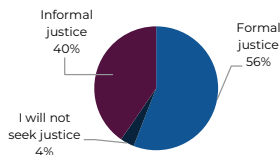


Do you know of anyone who has been convicted for GBV-related offenses?

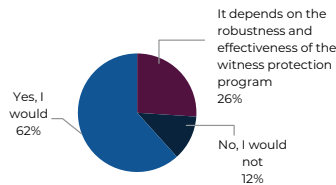


Access to Legal Justice

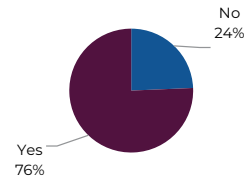
Where would you seek justice if you, or anyone you know, experience GBV?



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

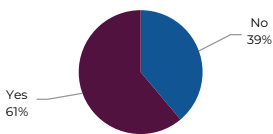


Are you aware of legal assistance and services provided by the State to GBV victims/survivors?

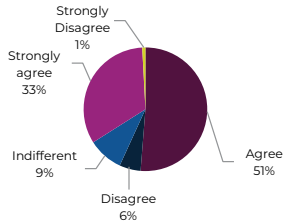


Support Services

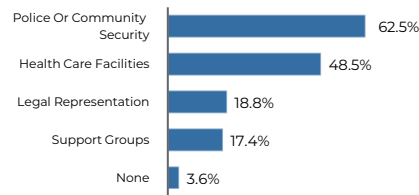
Do you know of, or have you visited, any active shelters and/or Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for GBV victims/survivors in the state?



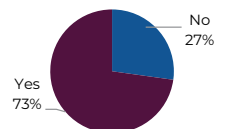
Do you believe that these shelters and/or SARCs are effectively functional, adequately equipped, properly maintained, and sustainable over time?



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

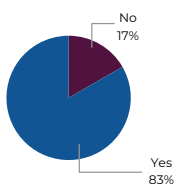


Do you think informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, community groups, etc., are helpful to GBV victims/survivors?

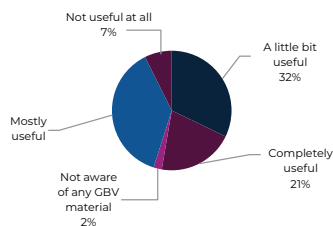


Information and Awareness

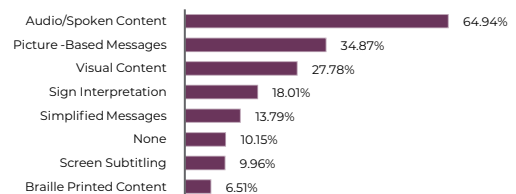
Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state?



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

Sokoto State's GBV-related laws include the Violence Against Persons (Prohibitions) Law 2021, Penal Code Law 2019, Child Protection Law 2021, and Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2019. The States' VAPP law requires amendments to contain penalties for coercion and violence committed by state actors, clearly indicate which courts have jurisdiction to administer the law and require annual reporting on its implementation to ensure accountability and transparency. Furthermore, the provision on rape should be amended to explicitly include the conditions under which sexual intercourse between spouses can be considered spousal rape, which include the absence of consent from one spouse and the use of force or coercion by one spouse against the other. While 70.5% of the population is aware of the GBV laws and policies in the state, and 74.7% perceive them as effective, enforcement remains a significant challenge due to factors such as low political commitment, cultural and religious barriers, and underreporting. Civil society organizations have played a crucial role in advocating for stronger laws, as evidenced by the review of the state's Penal Code in 2019. In the past year, 67 GBV cases were reported to the Ministry of Justice. While 20 cases are still pending, 30 have been adjudicated, and 20 convictions have been secured. Sharia law, administered in Sharia courts, is widely accepted and supports GBV prevention, with 79.2% of respondents viewing these practices as effective. As the state's spiritual and traditional leader, the Sultan of Sokoto has taken a strong stance against GBV, threatening to strip the titles of traditional leaders who undermine these efforts.

Access to Legal Justice

Sokoto State employs a multi-tier GBV reporting system, starting with community Surveillance Teams and escalating to the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence/Child Protection Response Team, which comprises CSOs, security agencies, and NGOs and is supervised by the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs. Security agencies, including the police, NSCDC, and NAPTIP, handle prosecution, while the response team serves as a follow-up mechanism. A referral pathway and list simplify reporting across the state. 48.6% of the surveyed population indicated they would seek formal justice. Survivors receive legal aid from the Ministry of Justice, Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), and pro bono lawyers, though no witness protection program exists. Efforts are made to ensure confidentiality and safety. Courts in Sokoto State lack dedicated judges or timelines for GBV cases, causing judgment delays. Informal justice systems, including traditional and religious leaders, resolve disputes through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) but need more enforcement powers and confidentiality, leading to limited survivor engagement. Police Family Support Units and trained desk officers across agencies handle GBV cases, but there are no specialized GBV courts or judges. The community considers the informal justice system effective but lacks documentation, perpetuating stigma and underreporting.

Support Services

Sokoto State has one functional shelter—the Nana Asmau Shelter—jointly managed by the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs and NAPTIP. It supports survivors of GBV and human trafficking with services such as counselling, skills training, and empowerment. Additionally, the state has one Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), which provides counselling, medical treatment, and forensic examinations. General hospitals and primary healthcare centres also offer psychosocial first aid before referring cases. The state employs a tiered reporting and referral pathway. At the community level, Surveillance Teams, comprising representatives from various groups, report and follow up on cases.

The Sokoto State Sexual and Gender-Based Violence/Child Protection Response Team, which includes CSOs, security agencies, and NGOs, coordinates services like legal aid, medical care, and empowerment. This team conducts monthly and quarterly reviews. It is worth noting that with the ending of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative project in December 2023, reporting and response to cases of GBV has drastically reduced, and sustaining the gains of the project has proven to be a challenge. Most of the surveyed population (80.7%) prefer informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, and community groups over formal mechanisms for assisting survivors. Medical units and forensic labs play a limited role due to the lack of DNA testing facilities, reducing their contribution to effective GBV prosecutions.

Information and Awareness

Sokoto State uses Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials developed by the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs, development partners, and CSOs to raise GBV awareness. These materials, produced in Hausa, English, and Ajami, include banners, pamphlets, flyers, and posters with images and messages about GBV prevention and reporting. They also provide helpline numbers. Materials are distributed in schools, places of worship, markets, and during workshops, though they lack Braille formats for the visually impaired. The state's education curriculum does not include GBV prevention and response topics, mainly due to cultural and religious sensitivities, often conflating them with sex education. Efforts by CSOs aim to clarify these misconceptions and promote inclusion. Among the surveyed population, 81.9% are aware of GBV information and awareness materials. Although PWDs can engage with some materials, more inclusive formats like Braille are needed to ensure equitable access.

Budget and Spending





The 2023 budget for the Sokoto State Ministry of Women Affairs highlights significant gaps in execution. Of ₦5.01 billion allocated, only ₦1.32 billion was utilized, reflecting a 26% budget performance. This shortfall hinders the ministry's ability to deliver critical programs effectively. Personnel costs amounted to 6.8% (₦89.12 million), and overhead expenses were 1.2% (₦16.1 million), leaving most funds—92% (₦1.21 billion)—dedicated to capital projects. While this suggests focusing on infrastructure, operational and administrative needs remain underfunded. With a population of 6,585,683, per capita spending by the ministry was ₦200.20, indicating limited impact relative to the needs of women, children, and other vulnerable groups. Improved financial accountability, strategic resource utilization, and enhanced budgetary provisions are essential to maximize the ministry's role in addressing gender-based violence, empowerment, and social welfare.

Human Angle Story



The VAPP Law has enhanced justice delivery in Sokoto State, with judges imposing maximum punishments. In 2024, a State High Court judge sentenced two perpetrators to life imprisonment, including a 70-year-old man who assaulted two young girls and his neighbors' children. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials on GBV have also been widely distributed alongside live phone-in programs sharing rapid response numbers. During the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative Project, a 16-year-old assault survivor from a rural LGA used a flyer with the SARC contact to seek help. She received medical treatment at the SARC and was referred to a teaching hospital for specialized care due to pregnancy complications. These efforts highlight the growing impact of awareness campaigns and legal frameworks in addressing GBV cases effectively.

Sokoto State

Index	Key Findings	Recommendations
Laws and Policies 	There is a widespread lack of awareness and understanding of the laws and policies, as they are not easily accessible or comprehensible to many community members, particularly those who cannot read or understand English.	Regular awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate the public on GBV-related laws and policies, with translations of the laws provided in Hausa and Ajami for wider accessibility.
	The limited application of the VAPP Law in prosecuting GBV cases hinders the enforcement of comprehensive legal protections and justice for victims.	Public prosecutors and the police should adopt and consistently apply the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law in the prosecution of GBV cases.
	The current laws and penalties fail to effectively deter GBV perpetrators, highlighting the need for a review of the legal frameworks.	GBV-related laws and policies should be thoroughly reviewed to strengthen punitive measures and effectively deter potential perpetrators
Access to Legal Justice 	Societal pressure, stigmatization, and political interference undermine the prosecution of GBV cases, often leading to inappropriate settlements and obstructing justice.	The government should allocate funds for promoting public awareness, implementing confidential reporting systems, and improving judicial independence to minimize undue settlements and guarantee fair prosecution.
	Prolonged legal proceedings result in undue delays that discourage survivors and impede the resolution of cases.	The government should establish specialized courts or judges and improve transparency by tracking caseloads and outcomes to expedite case resolution.
	Inadequate funding and limited capacity among law enforcement and judiciary stakeholders hinder thorough investigations and effective prosecution of GBV cases.	The government should allocate adequate funding for specialized training for law enforcement and judiciary stakeholders to improve GBV investigations and prosecution.
	The absence of a comprehensive witness protection program discourages witnesses from providing critical evidence, weakens perpetrators' prosecution, and jeopardizes fair justice outcomes.	The government should implement a robust witness protection program under the Ministry of Justice to safeguard witnesses and encourage their participation in GBV cases.
Support Services	The state's SARCs and shelters are insufficient, underfunded, lack manpower, and not easily accessible to all communities.	The government should allocate resources to establish, equip, and staff additional SARCs and shelters, prioritizing underserved areas across the state.
Information and Awareness 	GBV information is not effectively designed to address the diverse needs of persons with disabilities (PwDs).	The government should ensure the development and dissemination of inclusive GBV materials in accessible formats, such as Braille, sign language, and audio resources, to effectively reach PwDs.
	Awareness campaigns are insufficient, with no dedicated budgetary allocation in Sokoto State.	The Ministry of Women Affairs should allocate a specific budget for sustained GBV awareness campaigns targeting urban and rural communities to ensure broad coverage.
	There are no GBV teaching guides, and misconceptions about sex education due to cultural and religious beliefs.	There is a need to clear such misconceptions around GBV and sex education through advocacy and capacity building primarily targeted at traditional and religious leaders.
	Most awareness initiatives are driven and implemented by development partners, limiting sustainability.	The Ministry of Women Affairs should take ownership of GBV awareness programs to build local capacity and ensure long-term funding for these initiatives.
Budget and Spending 	Having attained a budget performance of 26%, the budget credibility of the State Ministry of Women Affairs is below-par.	The government should increase the budgetary allocation, disbursement, and releases to the Ministry of Women Affairs to ensure its planned program of activities geared towards GBV prevention and response are effectively and efficiently carried out.
	The expenditure per person (N200.20) by the Ministry of Women Affairs is too low to cater to the population of the state.	

WOMANITY INDEX IMPLEMENTATION TRACKER
2023 Policy Recommendations
Sokoto State

S/No.	Recommendations	Implementation Status	Remarks
Laws and Policies			
1	Comprehensive awareness campaigns should be conducted regularly to educate the public on the GBV-related laws and policies.	Not Implemented	No increase in awareness of GBV-related laws was observed. Furthermore, awareness levels decreased from 84.9% in 2023 to 70.5% in 2024.
2	Strengthen the political will to ensure the effective implementation of GBV-related legal measures.	Not Implemented	There is no budgetary provision for GBV response and legal measures
3	GBV-related laws and policies should be thoroughly reviewed within the legal and social paradigms to ensure that punitive measures are robust enough to dissuade potential perpetrators.	Not Implemented	
Access to Legal Justice			
4	Government should enhance awareness campaigns and establish a confidential reporting mechanism to reduce undue settlements in GBV cases and encourage reporting of GBV cases.	Partially Implemented	Reporting mechanisms are in place but not as active as required.
5	Government should strengthen the independence of the judiciary, increase transparency by publishing data on caseloads, outcomes, and sentencing, and improve training for legal professionals.	Not Implemented	Cases and data are not been published
6	Government should allocate funds to the Ministry of Justice for the implementation of a robust witness protection program.	Not Implemented	No budgetary provision and therefore no releases
Support Services			
7	Government to allocate funds for the establishment, equipping, and staffing of additional SARCs and shelters in different areas of the state, particularly in underserved regions.	Partially Implemented	Funds have been allocated in the budget but there is no release
8	Government should increase budgetary allocations to the Ministries of Women Affairs, and Justice to ensure they can provide comprehensive support for GBV survivors, including empowerment and skills acquisition programs.	Partially Implemented	There are provisions for empowerment and skills acquisition programs
Information and Awareness			
9	Government should increase investment in awareness and sensitisation programs, and collaborate with religious and traditional leaders, NGOs, CSOs, and media organizations to expand awareness campaigns and outreach efforts.	Not Implemented	Most of these investments are done by partners and since the ending of the EU UN Spotlight Initiative the activities have significantly reduced
10	Government should improve the inclusiveness of PwDs in GBV awareness campaigns, programs, and materials.	Partially Implemented	PwDs are being invited to programs and trainings on GBV but materials for PwDs are not readily available e.g brailles

WOMANITY INDEX IMPLEMENTATION TRACKER
2023 Policy Recommendations
Sokoto State

11



Government should increase dissemination of GBV prevention and response programs on radio and TV to help raise awareness and create a more supportive environment for survivors.

Not Implemented

This activity is mainly donor driven. Dissemination and response by government is not fully implemented



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INDEX
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