



Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response: **What Has Changed?**



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Taraba State

Nature's Gift to the Nation

Mambilla Plateau

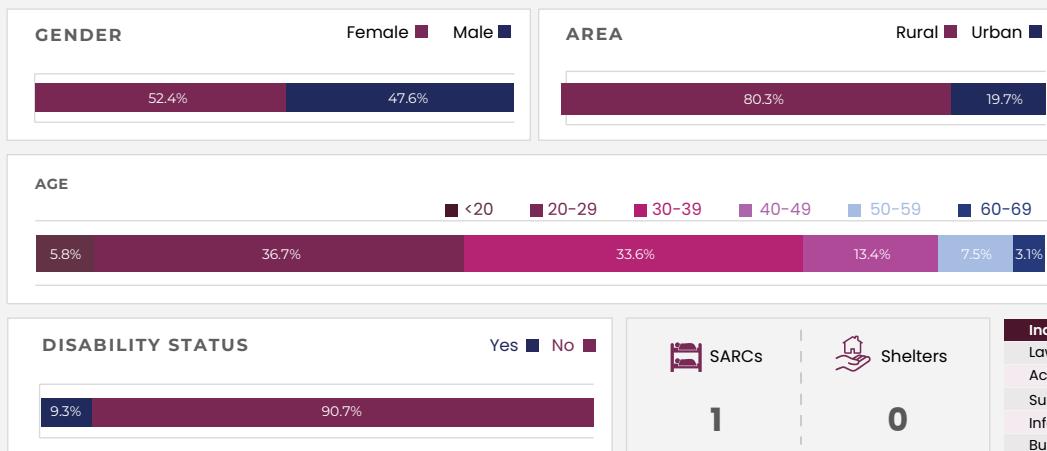
Taraba State

Population: 3,867,645

49.9% Female 50.1% Male

Overall Grade 56.7%

Respondents Demography (n = 1,083)



Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

BUDGET ALLOCATION

₦5.75bn

(This accounts for 0.8% of the total state budget)

BUDGET PERFORMANCE

₦1.98bn

(This accounts for 34.5% of total allocation to the ministry)

34.5%

Capital Personnel Overhead (Actual Spend)



Per Capita Spending

₦1,028.01

Total Grades
50.0%
50.0%
50.0%
50.0%
83.3%

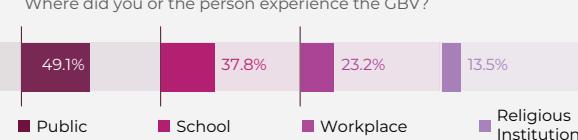
GBV Context 2025

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



No Yes

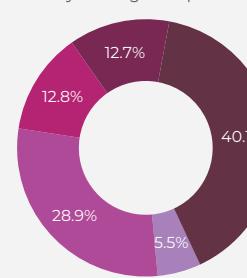
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



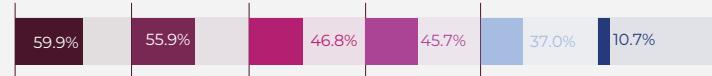
Where did you or the person first seek help?



Why did you or the person choose where you sought help?



What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



■ Domestic ■ Physical ■ Sexual ■ Mental ■ Economic ■ Cultural practices

■ Family/relatives

■ Police/law enforcement authority

■ Friends/neighbors

■ Traditional/community leader or group

■ Religious leader (Pastor, Ulama, Imam, Deity)

■ Employer/Work colleague/Labour group

■ I did not seek help

■ Lawyer

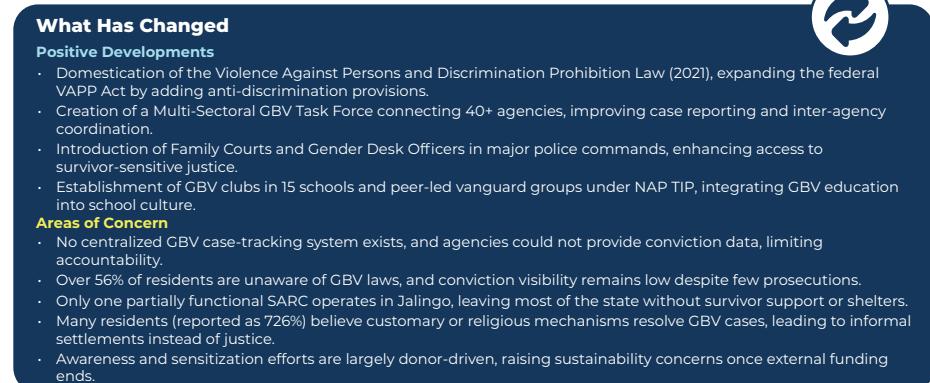
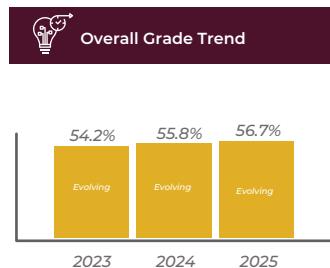
■ Trust

■ Services

■ Proximity or accessibility

■ Perception that they could help

■ Financial constraint



Key Actions



Laws and Policies

- The Taraba State Judiciary designated one of the High Courts as a Family Court in early 2024, specifically charged with hearing family-related cases and prosecuting offenders under the VAPP law.
- In collaboration with the government, the Comfort Human Rights Foundation developed a simplified version of the VAPP law and actively raised awareness through workshops

and community meetings throughout 2024.

Access to Legal Justice



Multiple security agencies, including Police, Civil Defence, and Immigration, received training on GBV case management and were assigned gender desk officers at headquarters and area command levels.

Support Services

- Taraba State initiated construction of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Jalingo, but the facility remains non-operational as of the assessment period.
- The Ministry of Women Affairs established and operationalized a comprehensive referral pathway system involving police, civil society organizations, health facilities, and the Ministry of Justice. Contact numbers of key officials were circulated across LGAs, enabling direct reporting from remote areas like Kurmi and Sardauna to the state capital, with cases handled within 24-48 hours of reporting.

Information and Awareness

- The Ministry of Women Affairs, with support from development partners, organized annual 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence campaigns. Activities included production and dissemination of IEC materials (stickers, banners, T-shirts, caps), town hall meetings, road walks, and consultations, though these efforts were concentrated in Jalingo and select urban areas.

Change Spotlight

Taraba State's most impactful achievement in the GBV response landscape was the establishment and operationalization of the State Multi-Sectoral GBV Task Force, led by the Ministry of Women Affairs in collaboration with NAPTIP, security agencies, CSOs, and community-based actors. This structure coordinates more than forty agencies including police, civil defence, judiciary, and healthcare institutions, ensuring that reported GBV cases are referred within 24 hours to the relevant authorities. Through this mechanism, GBV case handling has become more systematic, with improved referral follow-up, faster communication, and more consistent survivor support. The Civil Defence GBV desk and the Public Defenders Office also report closer cooperation with FIDA and NAPTIP under the Task Force framework, enhancing response efficiency and survivor safety.



Taraba State GBV Assessment Survey

Overall Grade 56.7%

LAWS AND POLICIES



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

Yes ■ No ■

43.6% 56.4%



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

Yes ■ No ■

72.6% 27.4%



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

Yes ■ No ■

44.7% 55.3%

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?

Yes ■ No ■

17.0% 83.0%



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

Yes ■ No ■

51.7% 35.6% 6.7% 4.4%

■ Agree ■ Strongly agree ■ Indifferent ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



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

Yes ■ No ■

70.5% 43.1% 16.4% 28.1% 2.7%

■ Police ■ Hospital ■ Support group ■ Legal ■ None



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

Yes ■ No ■

54.0% 46.0%

ACCESS TO LEGAL JUSTICE



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

Formal justice: e.g., police, courts, etc. 53.5% 42.9% 3.6%

Informal justice: e.g., traditional or religious heads, community groups, etc.

I will not seek justice



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

Yes, I would 42.3% 40.3% 17.4%

It depends on the robustness and effectiveness of the witness protection program

No, I would not



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

Yes ■ No ■

36.5% 63.5%

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS



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

Yes ■ No ■

36.1% 63.9%



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

Mostly useful 36.1% Completely useful 38.0% A little bit useful 19.6% Not useful at all 6.3%

■ Mostly useful ■ Completely useful ■ A little bit useful ■ Not useful at all



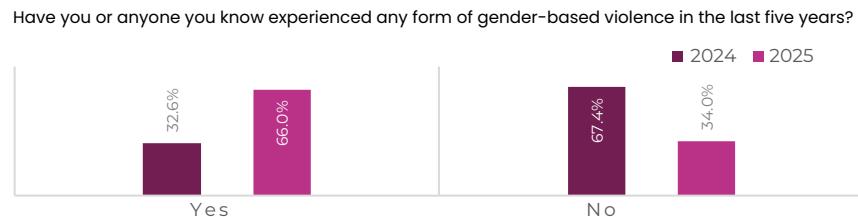
Which GBV information and education materials are you aware of for persons with disabilities?

Audio 53.7% Visual 36.9% Sign 44.6% Picture 32.5% Simplified 18.4% Subtitle 13.6% Braille 20.9%

■ Audio ■ Visual ■ Sign ■ Picture ■ Simplified ■ Subtitle ■ Braille ■ None

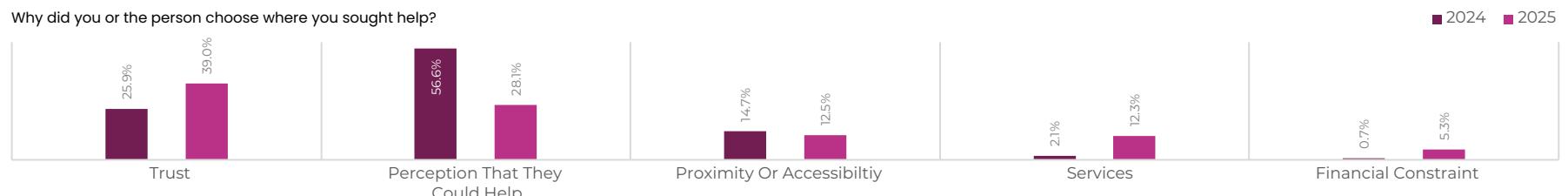
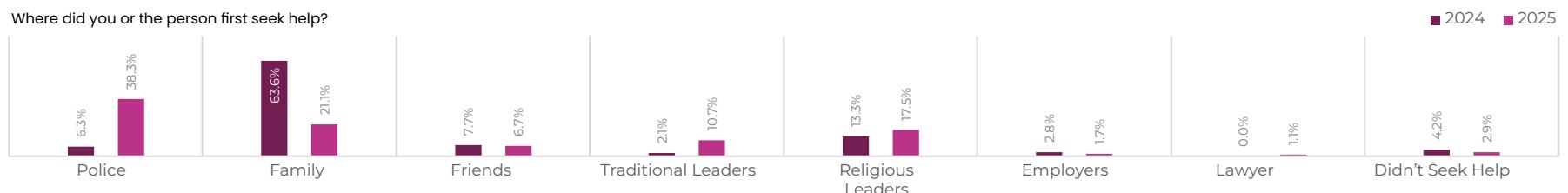
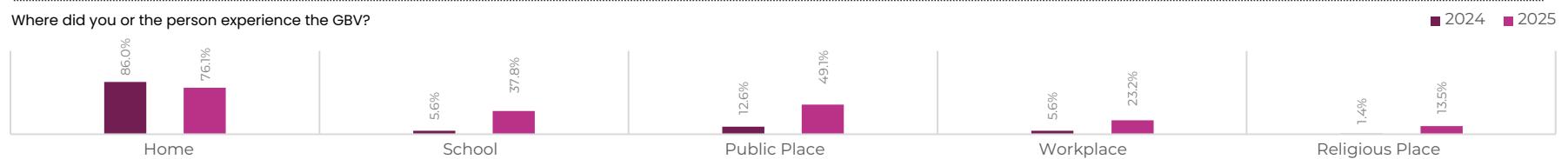
Taraba State GBV Context Trend (2024-2025)

Overall Grade 56.7%



59.2%

of Taraba State population have either experienced GBV or knows someone who have experienced GBV



Taraba State GBV Trend (2023-2025)

Overall Grade 56.7%





KEY INSIGHTS

Laws and Policies

Current State in 2025

Taraba State has made notable strides in establishing a robust legal framework to tackle GBV. In 2021, the state domesticated the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, enacting the Violence Against Persons and Discrimination Prohibition Law. This law surpasses the federal legislation by incorporating provisions against discrimination, showcasing Taraba's commitment to addressing violence and inequality within its justice system. Despite this legislative progress, awareness and enforcement remain limited, as 56.4% of respondents are unaware of existing GBV laws and policies, while only 43.6% demonstrate awareness, with television (40.6%), social media (40.8%), and radio (33.2%) serving as the main information sources.

Encouragingly, 54.3% believe these laws are effective, although weak implementation and visibility of convictions undermine this confidence. According to the Ministry of Women Affairs, in the past five to twelve months they have recorded about five to six perpetrators taken to court in conjunction with FIDA. However, this progress remains minimal as officials acknowledged that they are unaware of any convictions secured to date, coupled with lack of data on convictions. These underscore the absence of a coordinated system for tracking convictions and limited follow-through on prosecutions.

Customary and religious norms remain highly influential in shaping responses to GBV. The survey indicates that 66.2% of respondents are aware of customary or religious laws, and 72.6% believe they help prevent or respond to GBV. Yet, justice actors emphasize that these systems often obstruct formal prosecution. Religious and traditional practices, coupled with societal pressures to preserve marriages, impede GBV prosecution in Taraba State, with influential perpetrators often escaping accountability through compensation and blame-shifting onto victims, particularly women.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Awareness of GBV laws fluctuated significantly: declining from 60% in 2023 to 22% in 2024, then increasing to 43.6% in 2025, suggesting inconsistent awareness campaigns rather than sustained progress. The belief that formal laws are effective dropped from 85% in 2023 to 57% in 2024, stabilizing at 54.3% in 2025. Trust in customary and religious systems decreased from 46% agreeing they're sufficient in 2023 to 56.5% believing they help in 2024, then rose to 72.6% in 2025, indicating persistent reliance on informal systems. Conviction awareness dropped throughout the assessment

period from 57% in 2024 to 44.7% in 2025.

Access to Legal Justice

Current State in 2025

Awareness of legal aid services in Taraba State remains critically low, with only 36.5% of respondents aware of available legal assistance. According to officials, there is still no well-structured or widely accessible legal aid system for survivors, as the majority do not receive legal advice at the onset of their cases. Although free legal representation exists through the Ministry of Justice's Public Defenders Office, coverage is geographically limited. The Ministry's Alternative Dispute Resolution Department reported that legal aid is available only in Jalingo, Takum, Wukari, and Gembu (Sardauna LGA), representing just 4 out of 16 LGAs in the state.

When seeking justice, 53.5% of respondents indicated a preference for formal channels, while 42.9% still turn to informal systems involving traditional or religious leaders, and 3.6% said they would not seek justice at all. Those avoiding formal mechanisms cited corruption, fear of retaliation, financial hardship, and societal shame as key deterrents. The formal justice process has, however, become more structured and responsive through the establishment of a multi-sectoral task force. NAPTIP described this coordination system as involving more than forty agencies, including security forces, CSOs, and state and non-state actors. When cases are reported, they are referred within 24 hours to the appropriate divisional head or local authority. Taraba State has made progress in establishing specialized infrastructure for GBV response, including designating a High Court as a Family Court and stationing GBV desk officers at police headquarters and area commands. The state has also created dedicated spaces for handling sensitive cases confidentially and provided ongoing capacity building initiatives for officers, with 2-3 GBV training annually, covering topics such as VAPP Act and child protection.

Confidence in witness protection remains limited. Only 42.3% of respondents said they would feel safe serving as witnesses, while 40.3% stated their willingness depends on the robustness of protection programs, and 17.4% would not feel safe testifying at all. Stakeholders confirmed that witness safety remains a weak point, with limited resources for follow-up, relocation, or financial assistance for witnesses during court proceedings.

About 69.1% of respondents trust informal justice systems, believing they help survivors achieve justice, but multiple sources warn that these systems often hinder formal justice. Community leaders may settle serious offences like rape with monetary compensation rather than prosecution, and traditional mediators often prioritize peace over justice, silencing victims. Cultural pressure and community norms also drive families to prefer private settlements, discouraging public exposure to

GBV cases.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Preference for formal justice systems declined substantially from 62% in 2023 to 48.3% in 2024, then rose to 53.5% in 2025. Those who would not seek justice increased from 1.0% in 2023 to just 3% in 2024, and the 3.6% in 2025. Willingness to serve as witnesses improved considerably from 56% in 2023 to 81% in 2024, though this dropped to 42.3% in 2025 – a concerning sharp reversal. Awareness of legal assistance remained improved significantly from 7% in 2024 to 36.5% in 2025.

Support Services

Current State in 2025

Taraba State's SARC infrastructure is limited, with only one functional SARC in Jalingo and plans for others in different zones still pending completion. The Ministry of Women Affairs noted that maintenance and continuity have been a significant challenge, as the SARC at the state headquarters is being used for other purposes. As a result, large parts of the state lack access to these services, and victims are temporarily housed in orphanages, which serve as improvised refuges.

Awareness of these formal support structures is extremely low, with only 17% of respondents aware of the SARCs, while a vast 83% remain unaware. Among those aware, 51.7% believe the facilities are functional and adequately equipped. Stakeholders, including FIDA and NAPTI, confirm that funding constraints are a critical barrier to operational efficiency, affecting infrastructure, outreach, logistics, and medical supplies.

Despite these challenges, stakeholders described an active coordination structure led by the State GBV Task Force, established in 2022, which links security officers, NGOs, and gender desk officers to ensure referrals reach the appropriate agencies. Emergency contact numbers are shared across LGAs, allowing survivors and local leaders to reach officials directly. However, accessibility challenges persist, particularly for survivors in remote areas or under religious restrictions.

Informal and community-based support networks continue to bridge these service gaps, with about 54% of respondents believing they provide better or more reliable support than formal mechanisms. Organizations like the Christian Association of Nigeria and the Muslim Council often provide financial or material assistance, highlighting the crucial role of informal actors in supporting survivors.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Awareness of SARCs and shelters declined drastically from 45% in 2023 to just 1% in 2024, then increased to 17% in 2025, still significantly below 2023 levels. The perception that informal support systems are helpful decreased from 62% in 2023 to 53.3% expressing uncertainty in 2024, then shifted to 54% believing them better than formal systems in 2025. Awareness of referral pathways showed improvement: police pathways rose from 48% in 2023 to 80.2% in 2024, maintaining at 70.5% in 2025; healthcare pathways increased from 32% to 33% to 43.1%; and legal representation grew from 28% in 2023 to 45.3% in 2024, and declined again to 28.1% in 2025.

Information and Awareness

Current State in 2025

Awareness and public education on GBV remain limited, with 63.9% of respondents unaware of any GBV information or education programs, while only 36.1% report awareness. Among those aware, the main information sources include television (48.4%), social media (37.2%), and radio (34.3%), followed by health facilities (31.7%), NGOs/CSOs (24.9%), schools (16.8%), and religious centers (18.6%). The state employs diverse platforms to spread GBV-related information, including posters, banners, documentaries, stickers, jingles, and TV and radio programs. However, production and consistency of materials remain weak, with no new materials printed or made due to government priorities.

GBV education is supported by 86.7% of respondents, who agree it should be taught across all levels of education. The Ministry of Education has established GBV clubs in 15 schools in the state capital and plans to build capacity for safe reporting. However, GBV is not part of the formal curriculum, and there is no state funding for it. NAPTI has also created student vanguards in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions to spread messages among peers, but coverage remains limited.

Public sensitization activities are often concentrated around commemorative events, such as International Women's Day, the 16 Days of Activism, and the International Day of the Girl Child. The state has implemented programs like 'Second Chance Education on GBV' and 'Abundance of Girl Child Education' to raise awareness. Partnerships between government agencies and organizations have also contributed to awareness efforts, including campaigns like 'If You See Something, Say Something.'

Use of disability-accessible materials varies among respondents. Over half (53.7%) reported using audio or spoken content, followed by sign interpretation (44.6%), visual content (36.9%), and picture-based messages (32.5%). Fewer respondents use simplified messages (18.4%), braille materials (16%), or screen subtitled (13.6%). The state has recognized the need for inclusive information dissemination, educating and supporting persons with disabilities on GBV prevention. These initiatives demonstrate a growing recognition of the importance of reaching marginalized groups with critical GBV information and services.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Awareness of GBV programs declined significantly from 36% in 2023 to 9.6% in 2024, then improved substantially to 36.1% in 2025, though still below 2023 levels. Material usefulness perceptions improved: those finding materials mostly useful increased from 24% in 2023 to 36% in 2024 and 36.1% in 2025, while those finding them completely useful rose from 18% to 22% to 38%. Support for school-based education remained consistently high at 86.7% in 2025. Awareness of disability-accessible formats fluctuated significantly: audio/spoken content dropped from 44% in 2024 to 53.7% in 2025; sign interpretation increased from 74.49% in 2024 to 44.6% in 2025; visual content decreased from 19.59% to 36.9%.

Budget and Spending

Budget Analysis 2024

Taraba budgeted ₦5.85 billion for GBV—0.83% of its total state budget—but achieved notably better execution than many states, spending ₦1.98 billion, which represents 33.9% of the allocation. While still leaving over 66% of funds unutilized, this expenditure constituted 1.13% of the state's total actual spending, the highest percentage among all states reviewed. Taraba's per capita GBV spending of ₦1,028.01 is substantial, reflecting meaningful investment per citizen. Despite the execution gap, the state demonstrates genuine budgetary commitment to GBV interventions, with actual spending exceeding its proportional budget allocation in overall expenditure terms.

Changes Over Time (2022–2024)

Over the last three years of the Womanity Index, Taraba State has consistently included gender-based violence (GBV) specific line items in its approved budgets for 2022, 2023, and 2024. Funding for the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development, along with other relevant ministries, fluctuated significantly. In 2022, Taraba received an allocation of ₦4.62 billion, with an actual performance of 44% (₦2.03 billion). The allocation decreased to ₦2.82 billion in 2023, achieving a performance of 43.1% (₦1.57 billion). In 2024, the allocation increased sharply to ₦5.75 billion; however, execution fell to a concerning 33.9% (₦1.98 billion). These patterns reflect persistent challenges in effective budget implementation. Per capita spending stood at ₦1,028.01 in 2024 (third highest nationally), ₦835.28 in 2023, and ₦1,112.95 in 2022. The fluctuations across the three years, with a high in 2022 followed by a decline and then a partial recovery, indicate inconsistent investment patterns despite comparatively strong overall spending levels.

KEY GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Index	Key Gaps	Recommendations
 Laws and Policies	Multiple agencies could not provide specific conviction data, indicating lack of coordinated tracking systems across security and justice agencies.	Create a centralized electronic database managed by the Ministry of Justice to track all GBV cases from reporting through conviction, with mandatory quarterly reporting from all security agencies, courts, and prosecution offices.
	Despite the VAPP law being enacted in 2021, 66.2% of respondents remain aware of customary and religious systems, with 72.6% believing they help prevent GBV.	Develop and implement a structured program to train traditional rulers, religious leaders, and community heads on GBV laws and their role in supporting formal justice processes, with signed commitments to refer cases to appropriate authorities rather than settling them informally.
 Access to Legal Justice	Legal aid services exist in only 4 out of 16 LGAs (25%), with offices in Jalingo, Takum, Wukari, and Gembu. Survey data shows 63.5% of respondents are unaware of available legal assistance.	Establish legal aid desks in the remaining 12 LGAs, prioritizing border areas (Kurmi, Karim, Sardauna, Ussa) where GBV prevalence is higher, and deploy mobile legal aid clinics to reach rural communities quarterly.
	There is high rate of case withdrawal. The GBV Reporting Officer at Civil Defence stated that parents of survivors often report cases, but later opt out, unwilling to proceed to court, indicating systemic challenges in sustaining prosecutions, contributing to low conviction rates.	Require all security agencies to provide survivors with immediate access to legal counsel within 24 hours of reporting, provide hotline and ensure survivors understand their rights and options before making decisions about case withdrawal.
 Support Services	Willingness to serve as witnesses dropped dramatically from 81% in 2024 to 42.3% in 2025, with only 42.3% feeling safe to testify and 40.3% stating it depends on witness protection programs.	Establish formal witness protection guidelines including safe houses, identity protection, transportation support, and psychosocial services for witnesses, and conduct public awareness campaigns on available protections to rebuild confidence in the formal justice system.
	There is a critical shortage of SARC and shelter as only one partially operational SARC exist in Jalingo out of 16 LGAs, with 83% of respondents unaware of any active SARC or shelters.	Finalize construction and equip the SARC at the Specialist Hospital in Jalingo, and establish fully functional SARCs in Wukari (Southern zone) and Gembu (Northern zone), ensuring each facility has trained legal officers, medical staff, forensic equipment, counselling services, and 24-hour operation capacity.
 Information and Awareness	Only 39.5% of respondents are aware of available support services (medical, legal, psychosocial, economic), with 60.5% unaware. The Ministry of Women Affairs confirmed that sensitization reached only "about 8 LGAs" out of 16 (50%), leaving half the state underserved.	Transition from reliance on orphanages to purpose-built shelters with trained staff, security, counselling services, and economic empowerment programs, ensuring at least one shelter per senatorial zone and developing clear admission, case management, and exit protocols.
	No GBV curriculum in schools despite high public support. While 86.7% of respondents support teaching GBV across all education levels, no standardized curricula exist. Current efforts reach only 15 schools in the state capital through an unfunded personal initiative.	The Ministry of Education and State Universal Basic Education Board should integrate age-appropriate GBV and child sexual abuse prevention modules into the curriculum from primary through tertiary levels, train guidance counsellors and teachers as facilitators, and allocate dedicated government funding for implementation across all 16 LGAs within the next academic year.
 Budget and Spending	Critically low program awareness, as 63.9% of respondents are unaware of any GBV programs or materials in the state. This is a big decline compared to 2024, when only 8% were unaware.	Expand year-round awareness campaigns beyond annual events by moving beyond concentration around 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day to establish monthly community outreach programs in all 16 LGAs, especially in motor parks, markets, religious centres, and schools, and partner with community radio stations to broadcast weekly GBV prevention and reporting information in major local languages.
	There are limited disability-accessible formats for GBV awareness. While audio/spoken content (53.7%) and sign interpretation (44.6%) have some coverage, critical formats like braille (16%) and screen subtitling (13.6%) remain severely limited. The Head of Operations at NAPTIP noted efforts to reach persons with disabilities, but comprehensive multi-format approaches are not systematically implemented.	Develop comprehensive IEC materials in multiple formats including braille, large print, audio recordings, video content with sign interpretation and subtitles, and picture-based messages, ensuring distribution through health facilities, schools, police stations, religious institutions, and community centres in all LGAs, with specific targeting of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations.
	Despite allocating ₦5.85 billion for GBV in 2024, Taraba managed to spend only 33.9% (₦1.98 billion), continuing a three-year trend of declining budget execution—from 44% in 2022 to 43.1% in 2023, and now 33.9% in 2024—even as allocations increased substantially	Conduct a thorough review of its procurement and disbursement processes to identify bottlenecks preventing the release and utilization of GBV funds, then establish quarterly spending targets with accountability mechanisms to reverse the declining execution trend.

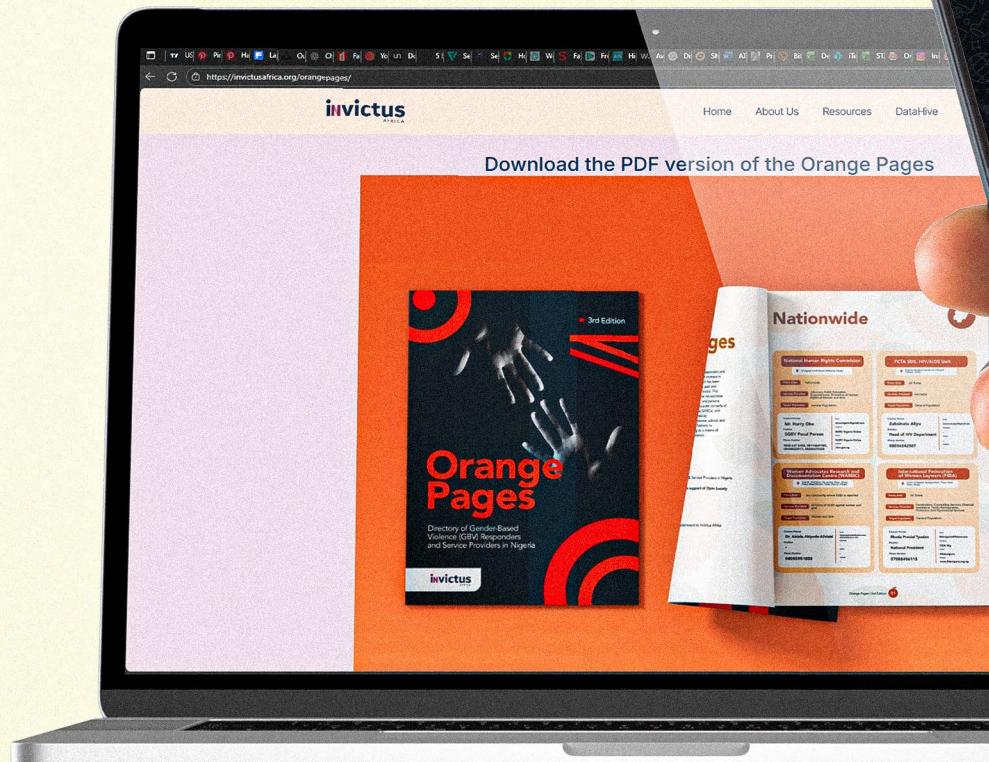


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