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**‘Accentuating Recovery for Survivors of Gender Based Violence: A Focus on Cultural Creative Arts Based Methods for Trauma Healing in Nigeria’**

Gender Based violence (GBV) is a global challenge with very high prevalence, in Nigeria, GBV primarily stems from unequal power relations, deeply rooted in patriarchal tendencies and stereotypes which tends to create gender imbalance and portray females as more inferior to males.(Sumbal and Vijay, 2020). The patriarchal tendency embedded in traditional cultural values can be said to be the bane for purveyors in the fight against GBV especially in domestic settings in Nigeria. GBV comes in different forms including female disinheritance, harmful widowhood practices, female genital mutilation, harmful traditional practices, physical, emotional and psychological abuses, forceful ejection from home, abandonment of spouses and children without means of sustenance among others. (Which sections) (Nigeria Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act 2015 (VAPPA), sections 1-26). Several statistics in Nigeria indicate high level of incidence of GBV reported across different parts of the Country, for instance, twenty four thousand seven hundred and twenty cases (24, 720) of Gender Based Violence cases reported nationwide in one month (Daily Post Newspaper October 3, 2023), the GBV National Dashboard reported that between 2020-2023 Nigeria recorded (1,145 000) one million one hundred and forty five thousand fatal GBV cases (Punch Newspaper, 15 November 2023). Also on the average, a non-governmental human Rights organization in Nigeria, registers 20 cases of Gender Based Violence daily. Eighty percent (80%) of these cases bother on physical, verbal, emotional and other forms of abuses whilst twenty percent (20 %) center on sexual violence (see WACOL legal unit statistics report on GBV cases on (http// www.wacolnigeria.org). Majority of these survivors suffer emotional and psychological problems arising from the violence. These psychological problems can manifest in form of depression, anxiety, post traumatic-stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health challenges which are disruptive to life activities.( Carlson and Dalenberg, 2000, Ulman and Peter- Hagen, 2016). The trauma associated with GBV could be severe, long lasting and may be overwhelming depending on the personality of the individual. (AuCoin and Beauchamp, 2007, Shapland and Hall, 2007).That is why it is imperative that emphasis should be placed on restorative approaches as good alternatives to the criminal justice system in Nigeria, especially with the difficulties and technicalities in proving GBV offences coupled with delays in prosecution. Innovative approaches targeted at finding the voices of victims, promoting healing and recovery is imperative, as it grows victim’s esteem and confidence necessary to stop tolerating sexual and gender based violence. (Jo-Anne, Isabelle parent, Manka Lachance, 2022). Sadly, there is minimal support system for restorative practices in Nigeria addressing trauma in survivors of GBV and even where some channel of support exists, not much attention has been given to addressing trauma through the conventional traditional art -based methods. This is therefore a wake-up call for relevant stakeholders fighting the scourge of GBV in Nigeria. As these traumatic experiences endured by survivors necessitate innovative approaches for curative measures, such as conventional cultural arts -based methods entrenched in the cultural setting of Nigeria. In Nigeria, conventional cultural arts -based methods such as storytelling, folk tales, dance, drama, music, painting among others are deeply rooted in traditional cultural values of Nigeria ( Amali, 2014).). Consequently, these creative expressions can be a transformative tool in addressing the trauma experienced by survivors of Gender Based Violence.

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