…

JUSTICE FROM THE LENSE OF THE SURVIVOR

BY

LAGOS STATE DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSE TEAM (DSVRT)

DSVRT

SEPTEMBER, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENT

	PG
Title Page	**1**
Table of Contents	**2**
Summary	**3**
1.1 Background of The Study	**4**
1.2 Objective	**4**
1.3 Methodology	**5**
1.4 Data Presentation	**6**
1.4.1 Objective One: Examine the concept of justice to survivors	**6**
1.4.2 Objective Two: Examine the impact of justice on survivors' wellbeing	**13**
1.4.3 Objective Three: Investigate the timeline for justice perceived by survivors	**24**
1.4.4 Objective Four: Investigate the processes of seeking justice for survivors	**28**
1.5 Discussion of Findings	**37**
1.6 Conclusion	**41**
1.7 Recommendations	**42**
References	**44**

DSVRT

SUMMARY

Domestic and Sexual violence occurs throughout the world. Although in Nigeria, there has been no research conducted on justice from the lens of the survivor, available data suggest that domestic and sexual violence has a profound impact on the physical and mental health of survivors. This situation is further compounded by the inadequacy of the justice system to meet the needs and desire for justice, not only for the sake of the law, but from the perspective of survivors. Thus, justice has been perceived to many as a drug to remedy the aforementioned effect, however, the true meaning of justice from the perspective of the survivor and the experienced therewith is the major focus of this study.

This study explored the concept of justice from the lenses of survivors, as well as examined the process of seeking justice by survivors, the timeline of getting justice and the impact of justice on the wellbeing of survivors in Lagos State. The study surveyed 25 Domestic Violence Survivors, 20 Sexual Assault Perpetrators and five Bystanders otherwise referred to as Mandated reporters in Lagos State finding out results that show majority of survivors' experiences in Lagos State are noteworthy with emphasis on experiences with the police, the court and the family social welfare institutions.

The study discovered that a significant number of survivors believe that justice connotes power and the concept of truth. survivors here believe that justice brings power to them and once this power is not within their grasp, then there is no justice. Also, the study discovered that a number of participants felt relieved and happy with the intervention of the office and all other agencies involved in their individual experiences on the impact of justice or the process of seeking justice on their wellbeing (emotionally and psychologically).

DSVRI

1.1 Background

Securing justice for survivors is the rallying cry from influencers, campaigners, politicians, scholars and the public around the world as we all work towards ending domestic and sexual violence. Justice in the context of domestic and sexual violence is most commonly equated with 'positive outcomes' (usually a conviction and punitive sentence) from conventional criminal justice systems. Conventional here is used synonymously with state-run criminal justice systems, premised on procedures and mechanisms of formal legality in a structured pattern, from police investigations to prosecutions, to judgment and punishment. This is justice as a linear, one-directional, process: there is a clear beginning, the 'event' or 'incident' which sparks off the search for justice, followed by an understood sequence of processes through the criminal justice system. There is also a finite end. Justice is dichotomous: you either get it or you do not; a conviction or not (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019).

In the course of their recovery, victims of sexual and domestic violence confront the most basic questions about the meaning of justice: How can the truth be made known? How should offenders be held accountable? What is the appropriate punishment? Can the harm be repaired, and if so, what would be required to repair it? How can victims and offenders go on living in the same community? Is reconciliation possible? For this category of crime, such questions are particularly complicated, because the offences are committed mostly by people who are well known to the victims. The offenders are husbands and lovers, fathers, uncles, brothers, friends and neighbours, teachers and priests. They are often admired and respected members of their communities. Sometimes they are beloved, even by their victims (Herman, 2005).

In other views, survivors who participate in the justice system may also fear for their safety, because of the threat of retaliation by the perpetrator. Unfortunately, this fear is often well-founded. Perpetrators of sexual and domestic violence have intimate knowledge which makes it very easy for them to threaten or discredit their victims. To a victim who has already been terrorized and humiliated, the routine procedures of the legal system do not offer much reassurance. Though intimidation of a witness is nominally criminalized, the state offers little in the way of practical protection. Restraining orders are not consistently enforced, witness-tampering and obstruction of justice charges are rarely prosecuted, and witness-protection measures are very rarely implemented for crimes of this kind. Moreover, the accused perpetrator

DSVRT

may use the legal system itself as an additional means to harass the victim (Murphy, 1998). In domestic violence cases, for example, it is not uncommon for perpetrators to retaliate against their victims by seeking mutual restraining orders or petitioning for child custody, to compel their victims to back down (Quirion, 1997).

Despite these obstacles, more victims might be willing to participate in formal legal proceedings if they believed that the system offered remedies that could potentially make the ordeal worthwhile. But for many victims, even a successful legal outcome does not promise much satisfaction, because their goals are not congruent with the sanctions that the system imposes. The victim's vision of justice is nowhere represented in the conventional legal system. Indeed, only when we appreciate, and then act on, how survivors themselves conceptualize justice will we begin to address the failings of current approaches and most importantly be able to envision new ways of securing justice.

1.2 *Objectives*

The general objective of this study is to explore the concept of justice from the perceptive of survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Lagos State. Specific objectives are as follows;

1. To examine the concept of justice to survivors
2. To examine the impact of justice on survivors' wellbeing
3. To investigate the timeline for justice perceived by survivors
4. To investigate the processes of seeking justice for survivors

1.3 Methodology

The study adopted a non-experimental design which involved a qualitative method of data collection. The data for the study were gathered using In-depth Interview as a means of data collection. The interviews were conducted over the phone which is due to the current corona virus pandemic raging the world which guide against physical contact. This therefore informed the choice of our telephone interview. The study involved 50 respondents with 25 respondents being

DSVRT

domestic violence survivals, 20 respondents being sexual assaults survivors and 5 respondents being bystanders (mandated reporters).

The study adopted a purposive sampling technique in selecting each of the respondents. This of course had it challenges which include some of the respondents refusing to give audience to our research assistants. This was majorly because most of the survivors were not comfortable discussing about the case as they either had settled the case outside the knowledge of the office or were not pleased with the response of the referred agencies. The research studied survivors whose cases were handled in the office of the Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) within the space of three years (2018 and 2020); August 2018, October 2018, September 2019, November 2019 and January 2020. The interview was conducted from the office of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos through a telephone interview observing all ethics and principle in social work and social research.

1.4 Data Presentation

The purpose of this section is to organize collected data from the respondents and give a vivid interpretation using the content analysis method. This section presents an analysis of the research objectives;

1.4.1 **Objective One:** Examine the concept of justice to survivors

Survivors that participated in this interview gave their individual perceptions of justice as peculiar to their experience. A large part of the participants are domestic violence survivors and the data below are responses on their perception of Justice and their success in achieving it.

A Domestic Violence Survivor had this to say:

> *What I can say, what I understand by Justice is. Ah, how will I say it now. Like maybe revenge? Can I say that? Okay.* (Female, 31 years, Married and Unemployed)

DSVRT

Another Domestic Violence Survivor had this to say;

> *Well, justice to me means, you know, being able to give you that right like if you are right, to be able to give you your right ownership and being able to vindicate you from whatever thing you are going through and all that. I think that's all I know I can give right now. Of course, justice also means you reporting a case and getting the right result.* (Male, 37 years, Married, Self-employed)

A DV Survivor added this;

> *Justice is ehn, well... I am not a lawyer. In my lay man's understanding is just balance within two parties. Balance in judgement between two parties*. (Male, 39 years, Married, Employed)

Speaking in Yoruba Language, a DV survivor said:

> *"Iyeni pe ki Ijoba ja fun eto mi" {**That is, for the Government to fight for my rights**}*. (Female, 33 years, Married, Self- employed)

A more assertive DV survivor had this to say;

> *Justice to me I believe no event no history, if there is nothing someone did to wrong another person, there will be no justice but when part A wronged par B, definitely part B should be able to demand justice from part A but it now depends on how transit the justice is because Justice delayed is justice denied. So, it depends on how fast the justice is able to be delivered. Yes, that is what I was expecting.* (Male, 45 years, Married and Employed)

Another DV survivor said this;

> *To my own understanding, when you table a matter and they give you exactly what you want. Give you an answer that suits you, that is good to the ear*. (Female, 38 years, Married and Self-employed)

One other DV survivor added;

> *Justice? In my own lay man words, I think Justice is getting your right and getting help as at when due when you actually need help and you know, finding you innocent of the cause*

DSVRT

of whatever problem that you have. Maybe you went to someone for help and the person was able to judge right, vindicate you and help you. That's all I can say. That is what I came for, I wanted to be out of my marriage. (Female, 34 years, married and self-employed)

Speaking in a more detailed fashion, a DV survivor had this to say;

Well justice to me is fighting for the less privileged. That's is what I will see it as. Yes, in a way I will also say the vulnerable. Why I will use that word is because my ex will always say I'm in a position and in a government system and there is nothing that can be done to him that he is above the law and no court can do anything to him. He made it clear to me that where ever I go to, any court I go to, that he will win and this really affected me that whenever there is an abuse I cannot make petition against him, because I when to women affairs, they told me outrightly that they cannot do nothing to him and that case went like that and he continued to abuse me not until someone told me about Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Team and I went there. He was scared and surprised how the thing went and he didn't know it will get to that length, the appointment that they gave to him, he tried to skip it but he was made to realize that this is not a child's play and he knows he won't go free. You know, he was thinking that it was the way it goes in the normal places where they start begging him. (Female, 37 years, Divorced and Civil Servant)

Another DV Survivor added;

Justice wow, well it is about, to me, it is about getting things done the right way and fighting for those that have been violated and maltreated, you know. (Male, 38 years, Divorced Private Teacher)

A DV Survivor had this to say;

To me, my own opinion, Justice is power. I did not know that justice like that existed because in a world where women do not have a say and whatever that happens to you, you have to endure it so far you are married, whether the man wants to kill you, you have to endure it. So, I was so surprised when I came to your place and they rendered justice to me. (Female, 39 years, Single mother, Self Employed)

More differently, a DV Survivor said this;

DSVRT

Justice to me, what it means for me is ability to get what I want. If somebody is trying to bring me down, trying to bring me in a place I don't belong to whereby I don't belong to that place, this is the place I belong to. So, I need justice to help me to say this is where I belong to. To me, that is what I believe, the truth, to get truth or fact. That is what I think justice means. (Female, 39 years, married, Self-employed)

With an interest in court decisions, A DV Survivor had this to say;

Eeeh to me justice to me hmmm any way, what justice first of first the relationship of my petition hmmmm justice to is eeh when the when the law are taking to court and when justice are especially the parties or you are full or law has been or matters has been or law has been apply to the fact and then the two or both the decision has been made that's the justice. (Male, 59 years, Married and Self-employed)

Struggling to communicate their understanding of the word Justice, this DV survivor had this to say;

hmmm justice is the act but that are not been facial, okay hmm in that aspect, eehm may be something doing or when something is done, I don't have much I think you should gets what am saying like something must done for offender. (Female, 30 years, Married and Employed)

From the point of view of freedom, this DV survivor said this;

What justice means to me, I don't kno much about that ooo, I can't really explain ooo, hello it means one to be free under the law, that's what I kno. no, that's not what I mean I want their father, even although he sent their school fees now apart from the school fees once in a while he normally buy things to the children but for me I just want to be free under the law. (Female, 33 years, Married and Self-employed)

Sequel to the foregoing, Sexual Assault Survivors such as rape, defilement and Sexual Assault that participated in this study gave their individual understanding of "**Justice**" as pertinent to their experience. When asked about their perception/ understanding of the word justice to them, one of the SA survivors had this to say;

DSVRT

Basically justice is ensuring that where a wrong has been done to me and emm I complain, it is handled in a way that I am comfortable, comfortable in the sense that I am put back to the position where I was before this wrong was done and am in, I am am put back in the position where I was before the wrong was done and in a safe in a safe manner truth to speak. (Female, 40 years, Defilement, Victim's Mother)

When asked the same question, the father to an SA survivor said this;

Basically justice is ensuring that where a wrong has been done to me and emm I complain, it is handled in a way that I am comfortable, comfortable in the sense that I am put back to the position where I was before this wrong was done and am in, I am am put back in the position where I was before the wrong was done and in a safe in a safe manner truth to speak. (Male, Married, Self-employed, Defilement, Victim's Father)

Speaking with intense emotion than the rest, this SA survivor had this to say;

ah ah justices is to let the person know that he's guilty of what he has done. (Female, 27 years, Single, Self-employed, Rape)

Speaking with an SA survivor's mother, she had this to say;

Justice, justice mean equal right, especially for the less privilege ones and the vulnerable ones, the weak in the society, justice is equal right. (Female, 49 years, Married, Defilement, Victim's Mother)

Taking responsibility seems to be the center of the Aunt to an SA survivor which is somewhat distant from the afore-stated, when asked the same question;

Ehn I believe in justice, se you understand, I really believe in justices, because I about two weeks ago, like two weeks ago I was still threatening her that se she knows she has a case in Alahusa, that the case is still pending, that if she does not change am going to bring back the case, se you understand, just using it to threatening her, that they will bring the family to justice, because she was underage, you got her impregnated, we were looking at you and you are not even allowing her to rest, we send her to go and learn work she's not ready to listen to anything we are doing. (Female, Defilement, Victim's Aunt)

DSVRT

Emphasizing on punishment, the brother to a SA survivor had this to say;

> *Justice should be you being emm, what is it, dealt with, ah, paid in your own coin basically, like getting getting emmm reward for whatever you do, for whatever you be it good or bad, be it good or bad, yeah that what it should be. Yeah, I wanted wanted the person that did that to my sister to be punished for what he did, because, I mean, but the matter went it almost like I mean anybody can do these things and just get away with it, without any proper whatever.* (Male, 28 years, Single, Employed, Victim's brother)

Also speaking emotionally, this SA survivor had this to say;

> *Talking about justice, I don't think it's something in this country, there's not even thinking about justice in the country. I don't think there is justices in Nigeria.* (Female, Engaged, Employed, Rape)

Another SA survivor had this to say;

> *What justice means to me in my own word but I don't how to explain it but justice to report and get results or I don't know. When someone did the wrong things and question the person.* (Female, 48 years, Married, Self-employed)

A hurting mother of one of the SA survivors expressed her understanding;

> By my own word if someone is guilty of what he did, he will face the judgement, the consequences. Yes, that's what meant. Because my own daughter is expensive details …. Filed for psychologist and I have been spending money on her because this man raped my daughter because I don't even know even though, I was carrying her up and down. (Female, 45 years, Married, business woman)

A mother whose daughter was sexually abused by a lesson teacher had this to say;

> *The justice means to my own understanding one who has been maltreated and doesn't have means of ….. and eventually … I don't know. It is a privilege when he or she has no means of being maltreated.* (Female, 38 years, Married, Self-employed)

The Study also explored the experience of Mandated Reporters on the field otherwise referred to as Bystanders. When asked about their understanding of justice, one had this to say;

> *It means that someone who feels aggrieved should see someone to talk to. That if you feel aggrieved one can still talk to the government agency and a help can at least come from*

DSVRT

that end especially ministry of justice. It still the same thing that at least someone can only have an unbiased third party. (Male, 57 years, Married and Employed)

With emphasis on freedom, another Mandated Reporter had this to say;

Justice to me is getting am looking how am going to say it but getting the right or freedom, aaah I don't know what is the word and am disappointed with that and I don't know how to say it but getting freedom at the right time. (Male, 37 years, Married and Employed)

A Mandated Reporter with experience working within one of the Local Government Areas of Lagos State contributed this;

What justice mean to me is for everyone to have the right to, like if one's right is being violated. So what it simply means to me is that that everybody should have, whether the person has money the person does not have money, should have access to justice. I want to know if my right is being violated, can I get justice? (Female, 42 years, Married)

Showing more concern for a reported case that hasn't been resolved, this Mandated Reporter added this;

Justice is to justice. So is like I bring some complain come to there last year and i was waiting for their call since all these days them never call me so that is the reason why I have not been there since all these days, and all this lockdown and everything make everything do this thing. But I could have been there since January before the lockdown come to block everything out. (Male, 57 years, Married, Self-Employed)

Lastly, from a more objective and educated point of view, this Mandated Reporter had this to say;

Ok, my own perspective of the word justice is peace, that means peace is in form of live and let's live, that means seeing the other person as you, treating the other person as you want to be treated. So, if you have intention of harming someone else, first think about it that if this thing is done to me how will I feel? So, if is something you can accept, your own definition can be just, but if it's something you can't accept that is being done to you that means its injustice that you have done to that person. Bearing in mind that we have different perseverance, we have different ways of persevering what happen to us anyway. (Male, 28 years, Employed)

DSVRT

1.4.2 **Objective Two:** Examine the impact of justice on survivors' wellbeing

Justice for survivors of domestic and sexual violence has been rallies call among politicians, advocate and he general public because his is thought to have significant effects on their social and psychological wellbeing. This study examined the impact of justice on survivors' wellbeing. Responses from this study shows that survivors feel disappointed and loss confidence in justice system when they do not get justice or when justice is delayed. This notion is vividly captured when a respondent said:

> *you can imagine how terrible I felt like, I mean look at how all the process of filling out the application at your office, taking her to Mirabel Mirabel centre, doing all of this things, only to now get to this place, to where the people that are supposed to serve justice or bring these guys to, they are now the one making the whole matter worse, I just felt like omo, let just, It's all good, I mean, is it not Nigeria, we are in Nigeria na, we know how it work here.*

This view is supported by another who concluded that seeking justice is a waste of time. In her words:

> *ah, after taking the steps and everything because everything just turn to waste of time and energy for me at the end of the day se you understand, because, ehn ehn, it's like a waste of time, taking of my time coming there, going to Alakuko police station, sending money there again, doing all these*

Survivors do experience long term trauma when justice is not served to offenders. This view was echoed when a respondent explained that:

> *yeah, I mean speaking for myself, I think I'm not just so certain that my child has gotten over that experience you know I think I probably feel this way because the person who did … is nowhere to be found right now you know, until I catch the person.*

Similarly, view was also shared by a respondent whose child is experiencing emotional 'torture' as a result of delay in getting justice after being sexually victimized at tender age. She lamented that:

DSVRT

> *Common on! this child was 14yrs old when this thing happen, she doesn't even what to remember the incident, she doesn't want to, I don't want to put her through the torture , you know every time I say ok let go to court for this matter o or we need to be around so that we be in court, she's like mummy please I don't want to even talk about this matter. it's just very sicken and annoying.*

The danger of not getting justice is that victims of domestic and/or sexual violence may stop reporting if they do not get justice. This is the view of a respondent who also called for psychological help for sexual offender. In her words:

> *Am not satisfied that what am seeing because if it keeps on repeating itself people will shy away from reporting. I mean the same person keeps on doing the same thing. And sometimes I don't know even that person who is doing it too needs a psychological therapy. The first time I heard he was doing it and I hear he has done it some years before I get to know I went to his family and told them I think he has psychological problem you need to assist him the reply they gave me was that maybe he could go and get help in a Christian way. The perpetrator must be assisted.*

However, when justice is served survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence seem to feel relieved psychologically. This view is evident when a responded stated that:

> *I feel good, at least the guy in question, I feel that he has learnt his lesson, because how, they didn't, they were not taking the matter serious as it was, because they felt it was a normal thing, even the mother was saying he didn't penetrate, which to me it sounds somehow, how will a mother that you know have a daughter be making that kind of comment, so at that point I was furious and that was, so when he was staying for almost a week and the mother herself was able to understand the gravity of what the boy, his son did. At least I was able to pass the message across to the guy and the mother that emm you can't just be taking undue advantage of people and you think you will go scour free, because I think in our society things like that are of, emm be taking like it the normal thing that happen.*

The notion above is also supported by a survivor of domestic violence who said:

> *I was very happy ooo at least that time because that time my family was in hell fire but now I thank god, I thank god, I really thank and I know god would perfect everything his work he started I thank god*

DSVRT

you can't use now to compare with that last time because there's great improvement. I thank god.

To further support this notion, a survivor stated that being help her cope better with her came of victimization

It was good and my voice was heard and this is what I want them to hope for better tomorrow

Another respondent also shared a similar view when she said:

I'm feeling better, am feeling better, I feel better because am not having any encounter like that again and I know that God is helping me

As one of the three participants of this research, we explored and examined the responses of Domestic Violence survivors on the impact of Justice on their wellbeing. Below are some of the responses of survivors when asked about it made them feel;

Even now I have a problem, I want him to take care of my child but he is not. Yes, but you know I told you that it is my fault. I caused it, if not I will be more okay now. Because I withdraw the case. Yes. but it is still my fault. And I am no longer in Lagos now. (Female, 32 years, Separated, Self- employed)

Filled with somewhat regret, this survivor responded;

As in, I do not even know. Maybe because they didn't push it the way I want them to. He was telling me when he beat me during the lockdown that I should go to any police station, ministry of justice. Can you imagine? It is because they did not threaten him enough. (Female, 31 years, Married and Unemployed)

After briefly feeling unsafe for taking the action of reporting to our office, a significant feeling of confidence kicked in after our intervention, this survivor said;

Well, I wouldn't lie, I felt unsafe. You know, undermining family values and going that far to report to the police had my emotion down and at a time I just had to brace up. What made it fine was because of work because every day I had to go to work and clear my mind. Yes, there is an improvement in both my side and mu spouse because it tells that I have a

DSVRT

voice while we both have a voice and it can be heard and if I'm not too good about what you're doing, there is a number I can call and all that. So far so good it is been good. (Male, 37 years, Married)

Without additional clarifications, this survivor responded and said;

No, it is fine. I felt very happy. (Male, 39 years, Married and Employed)

Speaking in Yoruba Language, this 33-year-old woman whose husband seldom performs his responsibilities to his children had this to say;

*E se dada. At least, a si wa lori oro mi. ti ese ba mi pe Baba awon omo mi mu inu mi dun. O da. Inu mi dun, sir. E ma binu sir, Mo ma pada wa because Baba awon omo mi o iti bere si n ma se eto re si awon omo wa. Subgbon, ise yin te mi lorun gan ni. {**You did well. At least, we are currently on my case. For you to call the father of my children made me happy. It is good. I'm happy with everything, sir. I will come back because the father of my children has not started performing his responsibilities to my children but I'm satisfied with your services**}.* (Female, 33 years, Married, Self- employed)

This 45-year-old man whose children where forcefully taken away from him as a result of his wife constant verbal and physical abuses towards him had this to say;

It made me feel a sense of belonging, believe that there is a justice system in Nigeria that will be able to help the needy especially the downthroding. That's how I feel and especially the ministry of justice, the way they organized themselves, they never demanded for a kobo and they swing into action, they did everything humanly possible within their capacity and I really really commend them there for their efforts. Yes, but I cannot say I am satisfied until I see my children back here with me in Nigeria. (Male, 45 years, Married and Employed)

With great measure of dissatisfaction, this 38-year-old woman whose experience after the involvement of our office felt worse and claimed our intervention made thing more difficult and had to accept her reality, said;

DSVRT

> Ah, what will I feel? Someone that is being. You know when you go to someone and the person does not give you the help that you needed. I just feel like I cannot do more than my capacity and just move on with my life. I didn't get you. Oh, it made it worse. I had to start all over again and I'm still struggling to stand till now. No no no, that is my own experience now. I am not satisfied at all. (Female, 38 years, Married and Self-employed)

With a degree of satisfaction, this 34-year-old single servant and a survivor of Domestic Violence had this to say;

> *I feel relieved. It is. It is. Yes, I am. Yes, I am. At least with the steps I have taken and where I am now, I'm satisfied.* (Female, 34 years, Single and Civil Servant)

Having a more than others to say with a sense of relief, accomplishment and security, this domestic violence survivor responded;

> *I feel relieved, I have my peace. I feel relieved. I have been living in fears while I was with him. Whenever I see him, I'm always scared, if there is a knock on the door im always scared like what is he going to do to me now and all of that kind of thoughts. But now, I am at peace. Yes, the only thing I'm bothered about is just the custody. Yes, I am satisfied because he is somebody that you know, he wanted to attack me, sending people to monitor my movement, you know there was an agreement that we signed; he doesn't need to stalk on me and I do not need to stalk on him. That if there is any bridge on that, necessary actions will be taken against the offender. That alone, that alone, gives me joy. Because whenever I go through the document, I see that, I just smile. Because if not, I have moved on, gotten my place, he would have come and caused a scene and the rest of that. That alone, I'm pleased with that.* (Female, 37 years, Divorced and Civil Servant)

Another Domestic Violence Survivor expressed are satisfaction and the feeling of "Hope for better tomorrow" said this when asked the same question;

> *It just, it was good and my voice was heard and this is what I want then to hope for better tomorrow. off cause now, I was okay and I have to hope for myself. I was satisfied with the justice yes, I was satisfied.* (Female, 35 years, Married and Self-employed)

DSVRT

In the same light as the previous objective, we explored as well, the responses of the Sexual assault Survivors on the Impact of Justice on Survivors' wellbeing; part of which we examined their emotional wellbeing as well as their satisfaction. Passionately speaking, this mother to a 13-year-old Sexual Assault Survivor had this to say;

> *Common on this child was 14yrs old when this thing happen, she doesn't even what to remember the incident, she doesn't want to, I don't want to put her through the torture , you know every time I say ok let to court for this matter o or we need to be around so that we be in court, she's like mummy please I don't want to even talk about this matter I just want it's just very sicken and annoying, she still she haven't seen those emm text messages o, is just the fact that the man was asking for her number and he was making such advances to her that is even making her sick, if she see the in-depth of text messages the man was sending how will she feel how will she feel, infant I don't know who's the victim anymore whether is me abi is my child. for me you know, I don't intend to press any civil charges against the man, I don't, it is to teach him a lesson and get him off the street and if possible you know the name and shame thing. I know this fellow, this is not the 1st time his probably done this, he's done it to other children and he probably feel doing it, he's still out there in the society we need to fish him out and get him some corrective attention, we need to fish him out, emmm we need to fish him out. Am a widow my husband died 13yrs ago, so I will do anything to protect my children and besides every other child is like a child to me every other child is like a child to me, am just waiting for this Covid to goo you know to completely die down, everything being back to normal and all of that. I will resurrect the matter even if your office doesn't follow through, I will still resurrect it, cause the man must leave the society, he must be put in some correctional institution, because I have a feeling that he's not mentally stable.* (Female, 40 years, Widow, Lawyer)

This particular Sexual assault Survivor expressing the fact that she intends to see through her case even though she feels better with the way the office has handle her case;

> *I'm feeling better, am feeling better, I feel better because am not having any encounter like that again and I know that God is helping me. ehn what they are doing, I am satisfied with the whole process but the gender the domestic violence have never hurt me in anyway. Have never gotten justices for it and I want justice for it.* (Female, 29 years, Single, Self-employed)

DSVRT

Extensively, another mother to a Sexual Assault Survivor displeased with the court process and the services of the police had this to say while expressing her emotional wellbeing;

> *ehn what they are doing, I am satisfied with the whole process but the gender the domestic violence have never hurt me in anyway. Have never gotten justices for it and I want justice for it. because that day at the court I left before them and the drama any many many things I went through so that was why I was asking the other man I said those boys are they still there, because is not about whether they are still there or not, if they have to rehabilitate them, counsel them and make them better people or whatever, it should be done because is very bad, is very bad very bad, I don't trust them, I don't know if they are still there or left them to be on the street because I and my daughter, my family as a whole we are, we get calls, threats, threatening calls, there was a time I forwarded the number to your boys but up till now the number is still not going, they are telling us to come, that when they are ready they will call us, that was why when your colleague called this morning I was inquisitive I was not ready to say anything until I get to the office, so that's is the reason. You guys are doing a good job but the police and the, in fact the court, a lot is happening o, a lot is happening ummm. I don't want this matter to get worse than how it is, that's all I want to say, so I don't want anyone to call me now to start afresh again.* (Female, 49 years, Victim's mother)

An aunt to a Sexual Assault Survivor had this to say when asked about how she feels as a result of the steps taken with the office- filled with a degree of regret, the Survivor's aunt had this to say;

> *ah, after taking the steps and everything because everything just turn to waste of time and energy for me at the end of the day se you understand, because, ehn ehn, it's like a waste of time, taking of my time coming there, going to Alakuko police station, sending money there again, doing all these, doing that, at the end of the day what I came for, the girl is stupid, there's nothing, se you understand, so, I just leave her that maybe that's the way she wants to leave her life.* (Female)

Focusing on a note that a perceived injustice and unsatisfied service delivery within the justice system, this brother to a Sexual Assault Survivor had this to say;

> *You can imagine how terrible I felt like, I mean look at how all the process of filling out the application at your office, taking her to Mirabel, Mirabel centre, doing all of this things, only to now get to this place, to where the people that are supposed to serve justice or bring*

DSVRI

these guys to, they are now the one making the whole matter worse, I just felt like omo, let just, it all good, I mean, is it not Nigeria, we are in Nigeria na, we know how it work here. (Male, 28 years, Single and Employed)

A 37-year-old male accountant who is the survivor's in-law with somewhat satisfaction with the justice he and the survivor wanted had this to say;

I feel good, at least the guy in question, I feel that he has learnt his lesson, because how, they didn't, they were not taking the matter serious as it was, because they felt it was a normal thing, even the mother was saying he didn't penetrate, which to me it sounds somehow, how will a mother that you know have a daughter be making that kind of comment, so at that point I was furious and that was, so when he was staying for almost a week and the mother herself was able to understand the gravity of what the boy, his son did. At least I was able to pass the message across to the guy and the mother that emm you can't just be taking undue advantage of people and you think you will go scour free, because I think in our society things like that are of, emm be taking like it the normal thing that happen. (Male, 37 years, Married and Employed)

Responses from this study shows that survivors feel disappointed and loss confidence in justice system when they do not get justice or when justice is delayed. This notion is vividly captured when a respondent said:

you can imagine how terrible I felt like, I mean look at how all the process of filling out the application at your office, taking her to Mirabel Mirabel centre, doing all of this things, only to now get to this place, to where the people that are supposed to serve justice or bring these guys to, they are now the one making the whole matter worse, I just felt like omo, let just, It's all good, I mean, is it not Nigeria, we are in Nigeria na, we know how it work here.

This view is supported by another who concluded that seeking justice is a waste of time. In her words:

ah, after taking the steps and everything because everything just turn to waste of time and energy for me at the end of the day se you understand, because, ehn ehn, it's like a waste of time, taking of my

DSVRT

time coming there, going to Alakuko police station, sending money there again, doing all these

Survivors do experience long term trauma when justice is not served to offenders. This view was echoed when a respondent explained that:

Yeah I mean speaking for myself, I think I'm not just so certain that my child has gotten over that experience you know I think I probably feel this way because the person who did … is nowhere to be found right now you know, until I catch the person.

Similarly, view was also shared by a respondent whose child is experiencing emotional 'torture' as a result of delay in getting justice after being sexually victimized at tender age. She lamented that:

Common on! this child was 14yrs old when this thing happen, she doesn't even what to remember the incident, she doesn't want to, I don't want to put her through the torture , you know every time I say ok let go to court for this matter o or we need to be around so that we be in court, she's like mummy please I don't want to even talk about this matter. it's just very sicken and annoying.

The danger of not getting justice is that victims of domestic and/or sexual violence may stop reporting if they do not get justice. This is the view of a respondent who also called for psychological help for sexual offender. In her words:

Am not satisfied that what am seeing because if it keeps on repeating itself people will shy away from reporting. I mean the same person keeps on doing the same thing. And sometimes I don't know even that person who is doing it too needs a psychological therapy. The first time I heard he was doing it and I hear he has done it some years before I get to know I went to his family and told them I think he has psychological problem you need to assist him the reply they gave me was that maybe he could go and get help in a Christian way. The perpetrator must be assisted.

However, when justice is served survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence seem to feel relieved psychologically. This view is evident when a responded stated that:

I feel good, at least the guy in question, I feel that he has learnt his lesson, because how, they didn't, they were not taking the matter

DSVRT

serious as it was, because they felt it was a normal thing, even the mother was saying he didn't penetrate, which to me it sounds somehow, how will a mother that you know have a daughter be making that kind of comment, so at that point I was furious and that was, so when he was staying for almost a week and the mother herself was able to understand the gravity of what the boy, his son did. At least I was able to pass the message across to the guy and the mother that emm you can't just be taking undue advantage of people and you think you will go scour free, because I think in our society things like that are of, emm be taking like it the normal thing that happen.

The notion above is also supported by a survivor of domestic violence who said:

I was very happy ooo at least that time because that time my family was in hell fire but now I thank god, I thank god, I really thank and I know god would perfect everything his work he started I thank god you can't use now to compare with that last time because there's great improvement. I thank god.

To further support this notion, a survivor stated that being help her cope better with her came of victimization

It was good and my voice was heard and this is what I want them to hope for better tomorrow

Another respondent also shared a similar view when she said:

I'm feeling better, am feeling better, I feel better because am not having any encounter like that again and I know that God is helping me

As in the structure, this researched also examined the experience of Mandated Reporters on the field otherwise referred to as Bystanders. One of the Bystanders had this to say about the impact of justice on the wellbeing of survivors;

Yes, something was done, something like advising the person. Sometimes they see counsellor... Am not satisfied that what am saying because if it keeps on repeating itself people will shy away from reporting. I mean the same person keeps on doing the same thing. And sometimes I don't know even that person who is doing it too needs a phycological therapy. The first time I heard he was doing it and I hear he has done it some years before I get to know I went to his family and told them I think he has psychological problem you need to assist him the reply they gave me was that maybe he could go and

DSVRT

get help in a Christian way. The perpetrator must be assisted. (Male, 57 years, Married and Employed)

Speaking in few words and having a different thought on the approach of the impact of justice on the wellbeing of survivors, this Mandated reporter had this to say;

No nothing nothing. No, not at all. It would be in my own way because I would rather do the justice myself. (Male, 37 years, Married and Employed)

With a sense of fulfilment this female mandated reporter had this to say;

for the successful ones, I feel fulfilled, why? If something is happening to your neighbour and you think that is because is your neighbour or is happening to somebody elsewhere like cases of domestic violence again that's against the women, because both the victim and the children of the victim always end up, they suffer it most. So, when you are able to make sure that the victim gets justice, I feel fulfilled because I feel like I have saved many nation. What do I mean by saving many nation? The children that are involved they are getting justice as much as the victim. So, in future, they too seeing what they go through, because most of these children that we think they are small they are that they are very wise. So, they too have one thing or the other to learn. And then you now try to as in you are educating both victim and the person that actually perpetrated the act. That no, the government is against it, minus the government is against it, how do you know if you are in the position of that person, so these are the areas. (Female)

1.4.3 **Objective Three:** Investigate the timeline for justice perceived by survivors

For Public Services such as the Services of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team, Duration of case management and prompt responses to reports is one of the essentials in crises management. Thus, this study investigated the perception of survivors on timeline for justice. Respondents seem to have varying experience concerning timeline for justice. Some of the respondents consider the timeline for justice to be fast. This notion is captured in the expression of a respondent who explained that:

I think it was almost immediately, because, emmm the, they told me that emmm somebody will call me and emm they will attend, they will take up the case as soon as we charge the case to court, they kept on following up with me on whether the case was already in court and emmm, even as to the point when we are, we agreed on settling out

DSVRT

of court, somebody still called me and I think even before now have received like emm, about two(2) or three(3) times, so I was even surprised when I got another one today, cause the thing happen some years back, like about 2 or more than a year now.

A similar experience was also shared by a respondent who said:

Immediately, when we got there, immediately, yeah, immediately. They gave us a letter ehn ehn as a referring ehn ehn to go the police station and they handled the case there.

Another respondent who was referred to another agency is also of the view that the timeline is prompt enough. In her words:

It didn't take too long, it is a thing of process, from your place [DVRT office], they referred me to Mirabel centre. I think it was that same day or the following day that they did the tests.

Similarly, a respondent narrated her experience thus:

I came that day and they attended to me that day, yes they attended to me

A victim of domestic violence also corroborated the view above when she stated that

when I reported the case, hmmmm I think the day I brought the letter it was within a day when she was called (DV)

However, some respondents seem to have contrary experience as they experience delay in response to cases of domestic and/or sexual violence. This is vividly captured when a respondent shared her experience thus:

I think this matter started in emmm August last year August last year, one would have expected that by December the trail would have been completed and the man would have been given a sentence or judgement against him and all of that but unfortunately they kept adjourning the case over and over and over and over again not until April 29th.

A victim of sexual violence whose case was adjourned also narrated her experience of delay this way

DSVRT

I never got a call from your office to follow-up not until yesterday when your colleague called me, so the matter was adjourn to April 29th again [cough] this year but unfortunately the COVID, I don't know where the matter is right now.

A respondent became confused as a result of delay in justice timeline. She shared her narrated her ordeal this way:

well from SARS to gender[department, gender almost one, two week or so, I think, yes, there about, your office was calling that time, I was in a very confuse state but I know it's not a week, it was more than a week, is more than a week getting to two or so, because your office was calling then, the woman then told them that emm ok that this time soon, cause she's looking for those boys, because I don't know what happen whether they release those boys, so that was what delayed, they were six boys even in the court that day they were only three that came, only three came, one was the victim, one raped her, the other ones where the ones holding weapon and emm phone to snap my daughter, the six of them, among the six of them due to what happen at adijo SARS and the transfer because they release some of them but when they say your office has taken charge, they started looking for those boys, so that thing delayed, even at the court that day it was only three of them that came and when I left I don't know whether they still release them

Another respondent seems to have low expectation of getting justice because of delay. When she was asked whether she has gotten justice for sexual victimization, she simply said:

No, not at all, maybe next year

As with the preceding objectives, we also examined the perception of Domestic Violence Survivors on the timeline of Justice. As with the Sexual Assault Survivors, Domestic Violence Survivors had different experience and perception on the timeline of justice. One of the Domestic Violence Survivors had this to say;

Within one week. They asked us to go for counselling but the man refused. And even the after they gave us the paper that say he will not beat me again but he tore it. (Female, 32 years, Separated and Self-employed)

DSVRT

Some of the responses of the survivors on this objective shows that they experienced quick response from the agency and case management was to up to 30 days. This 31-year-old fashion designer had this to say;

> *May be like three weeks, You know I was working then. But I called after that but nobody answered and I thought maybe this thing was scam and I was like let me do it on my own.* (Female, 31 years, Married and Self-employed)

This particular Domestic Violence Survivor who received a response from the office immediately had this to say about the timeline of justice;

> *Okay, how long did I get a response? It was immediately. Because when I filed the case and they found out that spouse had already reported the case and it has been moved to the commissioner of police and all that.* (Male, 27 years, Married)

One of the Survivors whose wife was called immediately had this to say about the timeline for justice;

> *No, I said the next day. The first day I made the complaint, immediately they called my wife.* (Male, 39 years, Married and Employed)

Speaking in Yoruba Language, a 33-year-old self-employed woman had this to say;

> *Ko ma pe, sir. Ojo yen nani. Ti mo ye de office yin bayi, ni won se fun mi ni 'we lati mu lo si welfare. Ki Corona to sele. {**It didn't take long sir, As I got to your office, that was when they gave me a document to take to welfare before Corona started**}.* (Female, 33 years, Married and Self-employed)

Putting it simple quite a different experience from the aforementioned responses, this domestic violence survivor said this;

> *I think it was four months. Yes, four months.* (Female, 38 years, Married and Self-employed)

With some measure of satisfaction, this domestic violence was at please with the timeline and grateful for the actions and prompt response of the office and the police;

> *I think, they promptly answered me and that very day they gave me a letter to the police and I went to the police that day but it was already late so I went on the Monday of the next week. So, I went to them on Monday and by Friday of that week my wife and daughter came back home to me. I do not know how the police did it.*

This domestic violence survivor spoke with great elation on her experience of the timeline for justice. Adding that the response was the same day of reporting and actions were executed immediately;

DSVRT

That same day. It was very very fast. I actually loved them for it. I'm not saying this to patronize them. It was a good service. I went there on Wednesday and I was asked to call on Monday to tell them I was out of the house and on Tuesday, we had our mediation for like 3 hours. Even my uncle that came with me was really impressed. (Female, 34 years, Married and Self-employed)

Some of the responded received quick response when they got to our office and were referred to the police because of the nature and current situation of their case. This was captured in this Domestic Violence Survivor's response;

It is always immediately. Yes, it was immediately. I was given the ACP number immediately. (Female, 34 years, Single and Civil Servant)

A Domestic Violence Survivor with few words had this to say;

ah, I went like three weeks. (Female, 33 years old, Separated and Business Woman)

Some had a delayed intervention in the timeline for justice as their spouse/ partner were unavailable due to many reasons. Sharing his experience on the timeline for justice, this male domestic violence survivor said;

There services, well, it was fast. Yes, what happened was that, they waited for her to respond. They called her but they did not, they called her but she gave them a time. I think she gave them I think three weeks or two weeks before she responded and that didn't help me. Because when an event happens, I expected that they are meant to call so they can handle the event so that there will not be other subsequent ones, damages that will come up. Because during the process there was other damages that came up and all that delay didn't work. (Male, 38 years old, Divorced and Teacher)

As in the structure, this researched also examined the experience of Mandated Reporters on the field otherwise referred to as Bystanders. One of the Bystanders had this to say about the timeline for justice;

okay eeh so so I said okay let me meet my sister we are LASU Ikeja for 3month and see her well being first until she see the work because so so that's how she. (Male, 37-year-old, Married, Employed)

Recalling a case of defilement as he experienced a delay with the police, this female mandated reporter had this to say about the timeline of justice;

mmmn not really, when we start , because when we start when police don't want to act, you know, when we see cases of defilement our first step is to go, let me talk about a process

DSVRT

among them, I went to DSVRT, reported the case I was given a letter to Mirabel Centre to ascertain the fact, after ascertaining the fact Mirabel wrote their own report which I took back to DSVRT office. Now they will now give me a letter to Alausa, I mean they will now give me a letter to state Command, so from state command all other processes take place, it depends on how they reply contacts earlier. (Female)

1.4.4 **Objective Four:** Investigate the processes of seeking justice for survivors

The process of seeking justice for many years have been perceived as an hinderance to the obtaining justice in Nigeria. With the objective so as to uncover the true experience of survivors, this research sought to examine the process of seeking justice for survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Lagos State. During our interviews with a number of Domestic and Sexual Assault Survivors, one of the Domestic Violence Survivor had this experience to share on the process;

I went to domestic violence, in that place In Lagos now at secretariat. They called him on phone but he refused to come so they gave me a letter to the police station in my area. That Meiran side. So, they invited him there and he came. The DPO asked him what is the problem between you and your wife and he said he is not going to talk unless he sees my father. So, the DPO got angry and asked him to answer her question but he still refused and she put him over the counter and he slept there overnight. So later his twin brother came and they begged me all these and that and I thought that he will change and everything is okay. So, we went to the secretariat because they said we should go and report back to the secretariat. So, I met Aunty Lola and told her I am going to go back to him that he has begged and all that. Aunty Lola gave me a warning that these men, they don't change ooh. I said let me go that he has change so I went back with him but soon he started again so I decided to go back to my parents and since then, I am living alone with my child. I called one of the NGOs around and it was the woman that told me about DSVRT. (Female, 32 years, Separated and Self-employed)

Another respondent had this to say;

Actually, like when we got in to the matter with the police, it was a wow experience because we were told like this was something we could settle and make amends the right way and believe justice will actually be served and you guys suggested a counsellor and all that because I was really surprised that you went to the police instead of a counsellor. At the end of the day, the police even did the job served as a counsellor and allowed us air our views. They actually understood what really went wrong. So, it was just like everybody, this was where you are wrong and this was where you did not do well and all that. You know I didn't come back to your office so, I think it ended there and there was

DSVRT

an undertaking, no more fighting and no more raising your hands and that's all. (Male, 27 years, Married)

One of the survivors who cleared the fog and strain between himself and his spouse as a result of our initial call had thus to say about the process;

> *They attended to me very well and they called my wife also and we were supposed to make a visit the next day. So, we settled it amongst ourselves before the next day and a call was placed on both of us and we told them it has been resolved.* (Male, 39 years, Married and Employed)

Speaking in Yoruba Language, a 33-year-old self-employed woman had this to say;

> *E fun w ani pe time, pe ka pada wa. Mo da wa ni sir. Ni gba ti moti kuro lodo won yen, mo wa get another one room, o tun wa bami, iyen baba awon yen, o wa bami otun lu mi ni be. So e fun w ani time pe ka pada wa ni time ti Corona wa bere. {**You gave us time to come back to your office and I came alone that first day, sir. After I moved out of the house, I got another one room apartment, and he came there to meet me again, that's the father of my children, he beat me there again. So you gave us time to come back and it was when Corona started***}* (Female, 33 years, Married and Self-employed)

Some responses show that survivors have been to a number of agencies with no result. This response captures the foregoing as this 45-year-old man talks about his experience and the processes he went through;

> *I have been to so many place, I have been to the office of public defender, I have been to commissioner of police, Lagos State, I have been to welfare, I have been to your office, I have been to ministry of justice, I have been to so many place. Ehn, is it not when you see somebody, you're fighting with you will be able to demand for justice? Though, she is in the U.S now with my kids so I believe it is beyond whatever anybody can do there can do, you know.* (Male, 45 years old, Married, Employed)

Escalation seems to be the ideal process in the case of this 38-year-old woman as she said;

> *Yes, I came here, that was the first step I took because I wanted justice and I do not want it to happen again. So, they called my husband and gave me a letter to the police because they have been calling him and he did not want to come and you people were saying you cannot force him, you cannot force him.* (Female, 38 years, Married and Self-employed)

With satisfaction, this domestic violence survivor had this to say;

> *They gave me a letter to police command and they took it up. I returned the other copy back, it was around 4pm the next day that They attended to me very well in your office. It was really good and fast.*

DSVRT

Spending most of her experience with the police where she was referred to from our office, this 34-year-old civil servant and Domestic Violence Survivor shared her experience of the process;

> *It was not like my husband usually beat me and behave the way he did that day but he did all those things, he beat me and chased me and my children out of the house. So, I moved out of the house to my own house with my kids with the help of the police officers the ACP gave me. So, he was staying on his own and I was staying on my own until he came one day to cause trouble here in my house where I called the ACP and his men arrested him and warmed him not to repeat such again and he signed some things and since then its been peaceful.* (Female, 34 years, Single and Civil Servant)

With all of his experience in the office of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response team, this 38-year-old Male Survivor shared his experience of the process of getting justice;

> *Yes, it was because of what I said happened that was why I came to report at the agency sir. They called my wife, they invited her directly to the office. Well, initially what I choose, because when I got to the agency I spoke the matter to a desk officer there, and everything around me shows that the woman just want to go back to her parents' house and I have good records on ground to that. But really, I was, and now picked separation and maintenance. So, when I got home back, I thought of so many things and I wrote back to the agency if they should go into reconciliation for me and that they should communicate that with her. The agency took that up, remember, they discussed about reconciliation with her. That was how my wife rejected reconciliation and said she wants to go*. (Male, 38 years old, Divorced and Teacher)

We explored as well, the responses of the Sexual assault Survivors on the process of seeking Justice for Survivors; an interview with the father to a sexually defiled girl of 14 years had this to say;

> *When the incident happen I went to where they directed us, the police people then take us to cost court at emm C.M.S, so from there we na they na direct us again to Surulere, court 2 Surulere, so from there we just be going to the court every day, they give us time them give us, so the one of the organization there na give me you guys address at Alahusa, then I na come there for the complain that I don't the case to just go like that without not do anything. So that is the reason why I come to there, and the lady that we meet there that very day after when we submit the everything, I na go come back to there about 2ice to ask, so up till today have not heard anything from them.* (Male, 62-year-old, Married, Chef, Child's father)

Extensively, this mother to a sexually assaulted daughter of 12 years had this to say about her experience on the process of seeking justice;

DSVRT

You know and I reported the matter that in fact the 1st day you know that he started chatting I reported the matter to a friend of mine who is the senior officer in the police and she said you know what, this is a predator you will need to get this man off the street, you need to if please work with us to lead him on, until we have enough evidence against him, you know ,so you know I tried to keep up the conversation to see how I can get enough to emm nail him but my children emm stopped attending the program because they were scared, yes they said they didn't want to attend the program anymore but I made them go one day just to let the man know that nothing is happening you know he wasn't going to be there that day but so I knew he was not going to be there so they went but it was that day, that day he they went the police gave me an officer to accompany the children there, emm to accompany the children there, so if he if if he came or just to accompany the children there but he didn't come that day so we asked him emmm we called him and asked him that ah you are not here, he said no he wasn't there he was somewhere else so we went there he wasn't in that other place, so emm we asked him if he was coming the next day, he said yes he was coming the next day but my kids couldn't go so that was the day the police rounded him up and emm took him to the police station at Ikeja. I have all the ermm, I did screenshot of all the chats and all of that, photocopy, printed them out and submitted at the police station, the police also told me that I should emmm go and make a report of all of these the at your office , yes I did I showed the lady the ermm screenshot of all emm chats and all of that and she emm did a referral ,yeah she did a referral and emm I took the referral to the police station and emm yeah they started working on it and emmm they started working on it, they charged him and detained him, question him, took his statement, called my daughter, you know took her statement and they they emm, yeah like I said they charged him, then emm you know took the matter for emm charge the matter to court, so the matter was now before the magistrate court in Ogba. (Female, 40 years, Widow, Lawyer and Survivor's Mother)

Also, this survivor's father had this to say;

umm, normally I took the guy to the police station, later the family started to beg me ummm and my daughter myself my daughter said she will kill herself if I didn't release the the boy and I don't want to lose my baby my daughter ummm, yeah. (Male, Survivor's Father).

One of the survivor's mother that participated in this study had this to share about her experience on the process;

we went to SARS first and the matter was there for almost three almost two weeks or three, yes yes, more than two weeks in fact, about three weeks before we now transfer it to emm, before that three weeks, before it was transferred I came to your office, somebody referred me to your office, cause I told somebody that this matter now, they want it to die like that. (Female, 49 years, Survivor's mother)

DSVRT

speaking with details of every step, a survivor's aunt had this to say about the process she and her family experienced in obtaining justice;

> *I mean I got to your office and I mean it was I, with how things went at your office I was very happy, I felt like this matter will be put, justice will be serve, cause you guys were very professional, I won't even lie, you guys were very helpful, you guys were really helpful, but then emmm, you, I don't know how the relationship between your office and the police. You guys gave me assurance like your, I even spoke to one of your bosses at your office, that, I came to your office a couple of time and then I was giving assurance that justice will be serve, only for me to be transfer, because this thing happen somewhere around Ikorodu and then I was transferred to the domestic violence of at emm, I can't remember the name of the station, but I think it on your, on your, on the file there, somewhere inside Ikorodu, now I got there and this people were, they were a mess, unprofessional, I don't even know the word to use, the woman, this is a woman, somebody that supposed to relate to this situation being a woman that she is. I mean this crime was done on a small girl but it was almost as though this woman was trying, initially she was, were I first(1st) knew I had come to the wrong place, she didn't know, I mean she has looked at our name, she saw it was Ibo name right, she didn't know I understood Yoruba, this one is not the matter of hiding anybody identity, now am saying I can even come forward if you guys decide to take this up. This woman didn't, she didn't know I understood Yoruba very well, cause my mom is Yoruba actually and she was telling her, whoever the other woman was to her I don't know, but she was telling the other lady in Yoruba that, that how they do, saying all sort of rubbish, like as if we planned that o my sister should. She was telling the other lady that ehn by the time they do this investigation that they will discover that he's her boyfriend outhit he's her boyfriend o, she has gone to, because they caught her now that she's has gone to her boyfriend's place, that how now she now tries to claim rape. She has not even ask this small girl any questions o, that was the first thing she has in her head and I lost my cool, that how our problem started, I lost my cool, that how can you as a woman say this kind of thing, it got to a point when we were thinking she was going to arrest me, I was like arrest me for what, what crime have I committed, I bring this case to you, you went, you went through everything, you didn't bother to ask any question, the next thing you open your your stupid mouth to say is that emm maybe it's her boyfriend, I mean she was telling the other lady, just watch o, by the time we investigate this now, you will see that it's her boyfriend, that emm, maybe they caught her that she went to her boyfriend place, that why she want to turn it to rape. So, immediately I knew we can't get justice here, that was how I leave. So, when the whole back and forth while it was going on, I mean other officers got involve and then they even ask me, somebody even, one of the police officers told me to go to the D.P.O, because she was saying she wasn't going to do anything again on this case, that I should take it and go, so I went to the D. P. O, ok now, she still mention something about money, honestly I really remember, I mean it a long time now, I can't really remember what she said about money, but she mention something about money to me, like*

DSVRT

am going to bring money or something, I can't really remember that, but what I know is I got to the D.P.O and I told the D.P.O everything and I mention this money part, there was somebody again with the D.P.O, one man that ring, he's a police officer, he ring, all the time I was going there he's always on native, he never wear uniform, that man was now telling the D.P.O that it has been this woman, that's her module operandi, people will bring cases to her, sexual abuse and all that and the first(1st) thing she wants to talk about is money. D.P.O now sent that they should call her, now the D.P.O said that they should call her and I should wait outside, now everything that they were discussing, cause I was waiting at the reception and everything they were discussing I was hearing from the reception, D.P.O really warn her warn and warn and then they called me in and we settle everything, now we settled everything and then the D.P.O ask me to go back to her that we will sort this whole thing out. Now this woman was just, I mean she was angry of cause that it got to the D.P.O and all everything, so she started just acting very funny, like the charge they made out of the whole situation, I got tired of everything, but I was still following up, following through, then the day were suppose to go arrest, make the arrest, she said I will have to go and chatter a taxi, this was after they called me o and I went there with my sister, getting there, she said I should go chatter a taxi that they cannot use their EiioX, am like why, we started that agreement again, I left her and I went to D.P.O to explain, and D.P.O said if we must use the eliox I will have to pay for fuel, long story short, I agreed, I accepted and I paid for fuel, we bought fuel and we went, now getting to the place, by the time we were reaching the area where this thing happen, we have not gotten to the house, we are still around, getting to the area, the police guys that went with me, apparently they are her people, the woman people, I don't know what they must have discussed, even throughout that journey sef they were being hostile, but I don't care, these guys were now treating me like I was the criminal, asin, do you understand, am supposed to be the victim here. Ok we went to the place, when we got to the area, they started saying, ah, this place na bad place o, na bad boy full this place o, if they know, they for no come o, like what police officer says thing like this I beg, they were sha complaining, complaining. It was almost like, I almost felt like telling them you know what let's turn back, am done, am tired, because I don't understand how you policemen with gun and everything telling me, emm this place is a bad place o, if have known they wouldn't have come, it a very dangerous place, Anyways we go to the place and I mean, am also a barrack person, I leave all my life in the barracks, in the army barrack, and am, I saw how this guys do this thing, you don't go to arrest a criminal and you go the way you dress, this guys went without, those boys, the boy in question or how do I say it, the boy in question, he was in the midst of his friends, they saw us from miles away coming with the noise this guys came in, they put on their siren, how do you put on your siren when you are coming to a place like this, they put on their siren in there, what they are trying to say there then was that we are here to chase bad boys away, am like this particular boy is going to be among them, anyways long story short, those guys they started running, the whole place

DSVRT

went rowdy, everybody started running and everything, then, we sha do everything we did, started asking question there and then, they said they even told them that one of the boys, the person we are looking for was among these boys that ran away, cause they were smoking, that particular place they were smoking weed, so they all ran away and they said the boy was among them, the boy we are looking for is among them, and then we have to turn back and that was it for now, I just felt like omo, cause the next time we want to go again they will say we should come and buy fuel again, I just said them let's forget it no problem, I never went back. (Female, Survivor's Aunt)

With some form of perceived obstruction because of the state she resides in and place of occurrence of the abuse, this sexual abuse survivor had this to say about the process she went through in the pursuit of justice;

I came to the office then, what they told me the office then is that my place is Ogun state that here was Lagos, that Ogun and ehn, that they can come Lagos, they can't leave Lagos state and come to Ogun state, that I should go and contact the one in Ogun state, so that why I na waited at the, the one in police station in Ogun state there. Ehn presently what happen is that we have taken him to the police station in Ogun state, they, he was been threaten there and he write a statement that it will not re-occur and since then there's nothing like that again, that's the situation presently, am still under his roof presently as am talking to you.(Female, Sexual Assault Survivor)

After presuming a foul play, this 47-year-old widow shared this experience on her process of obtaining justice;

What I did next was that when I saw that they wanted to silence the case, I now went through a close relation to get the audience of the commissioner of police (Lagos state) not this present odumosu, the one before him. So he now investigated the case, he assigned another set of police group to investigate ,the woman went to interview the guy (the boy child), called his father and told him that this boy is intelligent and he knows what he is saying o so that was just the end of it but along the line, he went to do a DNA test because it was forceful attempt, I told him that he was the father of the child and then he didn't believe so his brother asked him to go and do a test (DNA) and he took the..he filed for a paternity whatever, I have forgotten the name they call it and the result of the DNA test confirmed that he is the father of the child that his own gene in the boy is 99.9%. he is the father of the child so, it was in 2018 that the molestation of the child happened, since then up to date, June no dime, no dime, he has not paid anything and when the magistrate was to read the result of the dna test, I made them to know that he has not being paying anything before he saw result of the dna test, when he heard of the test, he told the magistrate that he was going to pay for all the outstanding only for..he just changed things with his lawyer and all manner of things came up and he said he should have the child but I said I cant agree, I told him we can only meet in an eatery , excuse them but still in the eatery may be

DSVRT

just a few miles away, not even miles, distance, a little distance….because the boy was taken to MIRABEL and they interviewed him there. All our results there, they did not want the police to intervene you know, the thing has been there like that, I have been the one footing the bills although along the line, the man came and told me that what is going to happen is that hence forth he was going to be paying half, school fees would be half, he will be doing half of the fees for maintenance which was for 15000, he will be doing half pending the time I will give him full access because now he doesn't have access, he doesn't have custody. And because the police people advised him to avoid seeing the child and just allow what this woman wants..now because of the boys testimony againt you, so up till now, nothing happened. He asked his lawyer to get back to me to see if I can give him access, and I said I can't give him full access and I don't have money to get a lawyer, the lawyer the ministry of justice gave to me left me.. left me since last year, he said I have to go and bring money. But I don't have the empowerment, the capacity to get money. And he said that if I can't \, then he left me. And he was the one that directed me on all what I did so I was asking, the ministry of justice asked me that I should follow, I should not argue with my lawyer, whatever he asked me to do, and I followed suit. Only for him to leave me at the mercy of myself so up till now, I'm the one managing, struggling to take care of the child alone and I'm not pleased. (Female, 47-year-old, Widow and Self-employed)

Having a different experience than the foregoing, this 47-year-old father to a survivor had this experience to share on the process of seeking justice;

I took my baby to the hospital, and they treated her but the matter is in the court alredy like I said. They ran a test at general hospital in Ikorodu, we waited for some results, when we got the result, we went to meet some of the doctors, they now said we should buy some drugs and the people who sell drugs will direct us according to the instructions we have as to how the baby will be taking the drugs..so we went to health centre, there was a doctor there that wrote the last report …..(06:40) was directing her on some other things to do so but after it reach a month, the baby is okay. (Male, 42 years old, Married and Trader)

A number of Sexual Assault Survivors had been to other agencies and institutions before contacting the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team. This Survivor had this to share;

Actually there was a place took the case to (before contacting dsvrt) and it wasn't really handled in the proper way, the elder brother to the man in question threatened the life of my family so and he made effort on bringing him out, of which he succeeded then the matter got to the human right, then from the human rights to the commissioner of police so the commissioner of police took the matter up himself then, the matter came to your office. (Female,38 years old, Married and Self Employed)

DSVRT

As in the structure, this researched also examined the experience of Mandated Reporters on the field otherwise referred to as Bystanders. One of the Bystanders mentioned that his case was a sensitive one and stopped the process as a result of his assumption of a possible referral;

> *I didn't do anything again, because I even thought even if I come back to MOJ it is still going to be referral and the case that I reported is a very sensitive case.* (Male, 57 years old, Married and Employed)

With many words qualifying his experience with the process of obtaining justice, with satisfaction, this 37-year-old Mandated Reporter added;

> *It was fine, it was normal, it was sweet, everything was is okay and normal. The referral agency is the problem which the police, I want to believe ask, is the referral agency ity it the police? That's the problem.* (Male, 37-year-old, Married, Employed)

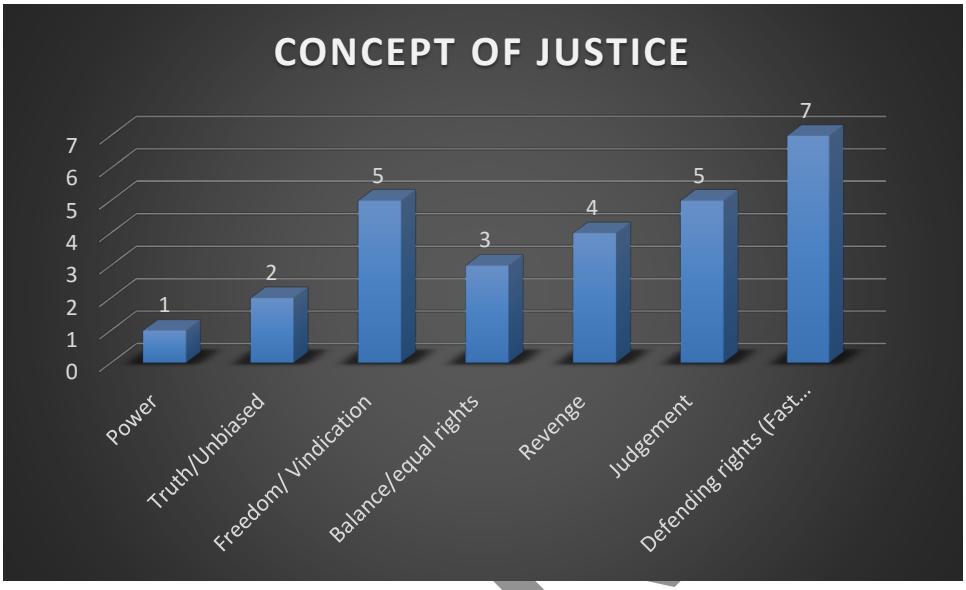
1.5 Discussion of Findings

This study was carried out on Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors as well as Mandated This study was carried out on Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors as well as Mandated Reporters otherwise referred to as Bystanders discussing the concept of justice and impact of justice on the wellbeing of survivors as well as survivors' processes and timeline of seeking justice in Lagos State, Nigeria involving 50 participants of the aforementioned categories.

The results from the responses of participants show that majority of participants in this study are of the perspective that justice means defending their rights and stated that any other meaning

DSVRT

attached herewith is not significant. From the figure below, it is observed that following the most concept of justice by survivors, the next in line is freedom/Vindication; this category of survivors believe that justice is the state of being free from oppression, violence and most of all, ability to prove their innocence and protect themselves from any violent situation through dialog and facts. It is important to note that majority of the domestic violence survivors hold this understanding. Also, a significant number of participants believe that justice to them is Judgement i.e., having to judge their abusers for their actions. furthermore, a number of respondents are of the opinion/ belief that revenge and equal rights is what they mean when they demand for justice. This category of respondents constitutes majority of Sexual Assault Survivors who participated in this study; this result corroborates earlier studies where Sexual Assault Survivors go through more intense pain (emotional and psychological trauma) than any other survivor of violence. Lastly, the least appeared perception of domestic and sexual violence survivors as well as bystanders are "Power and Truth/Unbiased" i.e. these categories of survivors believe that justice connotes power and the concept of truth. survivors here believe that justice brings power to them and once this power is not within their grasp, then there is no justice. In furtherance, the ability to uncover the truth and being unbiased at dialogs connotes justice to these categories of domestic and sexual violence survivors. Noteworthy is the responses of Mandated reporters viz-a-viz Bystanders who participated in this study corroborates the concepts of justice of the domestic and sexual assault as majority of the Bystanders conceptualise the concept of justice as defending people's right especially the rights of the vulnerable/ less privileged.



The study also examined the process of seeking justice from the experiences of domestic and sexual violence survivors in Lagos State. Conducting the survey on the aforementioned categories

of survivors, majority of the domestic violence survivors experience a lot of hinderances from the point at which they have reported and left the office of the domestic and sexual violence team to the police stations. Majority of the domestic violence survivors experienced series of challenges at the police stations where they claimed that their experiences were gender centred and bribery, informed by the existence of the institution of patriarchy and continued culture of silence and notions of masculinity in the police and welfare offices, especially domestic violence survivors, whose cases involved mediation on their children's welfare. However, there are a few participants in this study whose experiences on the process of seeking justice were good and full of elated gratitude.

Furthermore, sexual assault survivors buttressed these experiences as they face stronger hinderances and challenges with not just the police but the court as the majority of them experienced delay in court proceedings, probation officers truncating evidence and threats from perpetrators' families. This experience in the process was supported by the bystanders as they gave the same account of ***hinderance with little successful cases handled*** (A few survivors shared successful handling of their cases and were satisfied with the process of seeking justice in Lagos State).



In summary, the process of seeking justice by survivors in Lagos State is littered with hinderances/ challenges between the police, welfare institutions and the court processes. However, some of the survivors mentioned the ***lack in the use of force*** by the office of Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response team which they had so much expectation from and the belief that the

VRT

office would have made their process of seeking justice easier and more realistic if the office had applied force on their partners/perpetrators ***especially for the domestic violence survivors.***

One of the core objectives of this study is to examine the impact of justice on the wellbeing of survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Lagos State. Results from this objective indicate that a number of participants felt relieved and happy with the intervention of the office and all other agencies involved in their individual experiences on the impact of justice or the process of seeking justice on their wellbeing (emotionally and psychologically). However, a section of participants added that they somewhat experienced a feeling of ***lack of safety and stress*** during ***the early stages (first reportage) and at the middle stages*** of their cases which can be related to the fact of having to do something new and challenging to the norms in their family of orientation, culture and religion as well as the perceived -inadequacy of the police and social welfare institutions for domestic violence survivors and especially the sexual assault survivors.

Furthermore, sexual assault survivors and bystanders' experiences, when shared, concluded that these survivors' mental, emotional and physical wellbeing improve at the point of contacting the office of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team as a result of the prompt and professional service delivery by the professionals who attended to them and the case management process of their case managers at the office. Nonetheless, this improvement faces a huge decline after a referral has been made as the office of DSVRT cannot handle a case in isolation based on the principle of inter-agency referral protocol and specification of functions. Consequently, a significant number of domestic and sexual violent survivors ***face ridicule and prejudice from the police*** who shared that they experienced prejudice from officers of the law regarding their decisions/ actions of reporting their husbands to the law, as well as family members applying pressure on them to "drop the case". This result corroborates the findings of some earlier studies such as Fattah's (1997) submission that legal involvement of crime victims may impair their mental health or even increase the psychological trauma experienced in the criminal assault. Also, Mental health professionals frequently believe that contact with the legal system may be psychologically harmful for victims (Campbell & Raja, 1999), and Herman (2003) characterize the legal system, with special regard to the U.S. system, as a "high-risk environment for victims". In addition, sexual assault survivors face this same experience with a greater degree as the police station they are referred to tend to change the narrative of their case (reducing the count charge or

DSVRT

modifying the charge sheet). Noteworthy is one of the ***sexual assault survivors (rape)*** who shared her bitter experience of how the police changed the narrative of her experience and this singular act has destabilized her emotional and mental wellbeing as she shared her experience with tears and courses. The bystanders shared the same experience with the primary focus on the mental health and wellbeing of survivors seeking justice at the point of contact with the police in Lagos State. Although many of the participants had different experiences, of note is one domestic violence survivor who was deeply satisfied and felt relieved with the involvement of the police in Ogun State after the office escalated. Notably, the degree of the perpetrator's remorsefulness is important for some of the survivors. For instance, one of the Sexual Assault Survivor's assessment of their future security is only partly based on the sentence (i.e., length of imprisonment) and is also based on whether the perpetrator showed remorse and acknowledged the wrongdoing of the assault.

From the responses above, majority of the survivors experience a fast timeline in their quests for justice, most especially cases handled independently in the office of domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team. Cases that require mediation and not escalation or referral to the social welfare or other agencies depending on the uniqueness or nature of each individual case. According to responses from all participants involved in this study (Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors and Bystanders/ Mandated reporters), the timeline for response at the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual violence Response Team (DSVRT) is between 30 minutes and 48 hours (taking into consideration the experience of survivors who added that there were slight delays in getting a response and letters based on electricity issues and over the calls reports). However, the overall timeline for justice as shared by majority of survivors is three weeks on the average and four months; including the time spent at the police, court and social welfare institutions for cases involving children). As mentioned earlier, majority of the survivors' face hinderance/ challenges in their course of seeking justice, and this delay tends to prolong the time spent on getting justice.

The foregoing results revalidates the objective being discussed because till the date of this study, a number of the survivors who participated in this study still have ***opened/ unresolved*** cases in the ***social welfare institutions/court/police station***. One of the reasons for delay is the ***Corona Virus*** pandemic which forced a nation-wide lockdown in Nigeria as well as other factors such as ***police mal-adequacies, social welfare officers' ill-prowess.***

DSVRT

1.6 Conclusion

Domestic and Sexual violence occurs throughout the world. Although in Nigeria, there has been no research conducted on justice from lens of the survivor. Available data suggest that domestic and sexual violence has a profound impact on physical and mental health as well as the justice system not adequately meeting the desire for justice not just from the law but from the perspective of survivors. Not only does this cause psychological/emotional injury, it is associated with an increased risk of dent in the state and country's image.

The study discovered that majority of domestic and sexual assault survivors have individual definitions of justice of which defending rights, freedom, judgement and revenge top the list of concepts of justice by survivors. Again, the study revealed that a significant section of survivors faces a lot of challenges/ difficulties pursuing justice with the police and social welfare institutions (reasons for these were discussed in the foregoing section and recommendations are stated therein). Also, the study discovered that the impact of justice on the wellbeing of survivors is delicate and influences not just their wellbeing, but survivors' behavior and conclusion of the world around them. Similarly, survivors have been unsatisfied with the justice system and a number of them face family and societal prejudice for reporting their spouses (this is a lifelong trauma). Lastly, the timeline for seeking justice in Lagos State by survivors of domestic and sexual assault is between 48 hours and four months. The highest recorded by one of the survivors involved in this study is six months due to several influencing factors.

1.7 Recommendation

This study focused on an aspect of domestic violence justice system that is often neglected by scholarship on spousal violence, that is justice from the lenses of survivors. From the results of the study, the following recommendations are put forward for proper policy making and implementation of decisions to enhance the justice system for survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence in Lagos State, Nigeria, and to better handle cases by professionals in the welfare, court and police institutions. below are the recommendations from survivors who participated in this study:

DSVRT

1. **Punishment/imprisonment of offender**

Punishment/imprisonment of offender is a global practice and it is considered as a deterrent, not just for offenders, but also for other people who may want to commit the act. Imprisonment and other forms of punishment are seen as effective way of discouraging people from committing sexual and domestic offence.

2. **Creation of awareness on channels for reporting domestic and sexual violence**

Over the years, government, law enforcement agencies and some non-governmental organizations have established communication channels through which domestic and sexual violence can be reported. However, it seems there is little awareness of these channels among the general public. Hence, it is imperative to create channels for reporting these offences. noteworthy, a respondent also called for active and responsive social medial handle to report domestic and sexual violence.

3. **Police should be more effective in handling domestic and sexual violence-related cases**

Police as law enforcement agent has a very significant role to play to help survivor get justice and get offenders punished. As such, they need to be effective in handling cases of domestic and/or sexual violence. Noteworthy, a survivor said she had to bribe police officer to get them intervened

4. **Training of Social welfare officers in handling Domestic Violence cases involving the Maintenance of Children**

Due to the frequency of reports by the survivors involved in this study, it is recommended that the social welfare officers in Lagos state family welfare should be trained on their authority/ powers given by the state, the law and their ministry so as to intervene successfully with cases that involve children and maintenance;

5. **Financial support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence**

Damages suffered from domestic and sexual violence can result in financial loss or support. As such some respondents called for financial support.

DSVRT

References

Herman, J (2005) Justice from the victim's perspective. Violence Against Women 11(5): 571–602.

Vidmar, N., & Miller, D. T. (1980). Social psychological processes underlying attitudes toward legal punishment. *Law and Society Review, 14*, 565-602.

Walker, S. P., & Louw, D. (2005). The court for sexual offences: Perceptions of the victims of sexual offences. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, 28*, 231-245.

Wemmers, J. A., van der Leeden, R., & Steensma, H. (1995). What is procedural justice: Criteria used by Dutch victims to assess the fairness of criminal justice procedures. *Social Justice Research, 8*, 329-350.

Westmarland, N, McGlynn, C, Evans, J (2014) Educational Empowerment Action Research: The Rape Justice Project. In: paper presented at transformative feminist methods conference, 10 September 2014, Durham University, UK.

DSVRT