

**VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION IN UYO LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA, AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA (2015-2020)**

IBOK, SAMUEL BASSEY

Matriculation Number: 19PAH01950

B.A, History and International Studies, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

SEPTEMBER, 2021

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER
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COLLEGE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, COVENANT UNIVERSITY,
OTA, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA.**

SEPTEMBER, 2021

ACCEPTANCE

This is to attest that this dissertation is accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Science (M.Sc.) in International Relations in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, College of Leadership Development Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria.

Mr. John A. Philip

(Secretary, School of Postgraduate Studies)

Signature and Date

Prof. Akan B. Williams

(Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies)

Signature and Date

DECLARATION

I, IBOK, SAMUEL BASSEY (19PAH01950) declare that this research was carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Faith O. Olanrewaju of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, College of Leadership Development Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. I attest that this dissertation has not been presented either wholly or partially for the award of any degree elsewhere. All sources of data, scholarly information used in this dissertation are duly acknowledged.

IBOK, SAMUEL BASSEY

Signature and Date

CERTIFICATION

We certify that this dissertation titled **Violence against Children and Child Protection in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria (2015-2020)** is an original research carried out by **IBOK, SAMUEL BASSEY (19PAH01950)** in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, College of Leadership Development Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria under the supervision of Dr. Faith O. Olanrewaju. We have examined and found this work acceptable as part of the requirements for the award of Master of Science (M.Sc.) in International Relations.

Dr. Faith O. Olanrewaju

Supervisor

Signature and Date

Prof. Daniel E. Gberevbie

Head of Department, Political Science and International relations

Signature and Date

Dr. Augustine N. Eneanya

External Examiner

Signature and Date

Prof. Akan B. Williams

Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies

Signature and Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the Almighty God for his protection, provision, guidance, love, mercies, and great favour throughout my academic programme.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFCRWC	The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AFCRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome
CAC	Child Advocacy Centres
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
CPA	Child Physical Abuse
CPS	Child Protective Services
CRA	Child Rights Act
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CWA	Child Welfare Act
CYPA	Children and Young Person’s Act
DRC	Declaration on the Rights of the Child
DSD	Department of Social Development
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FLSA	Fair Labour Standard Act
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
MCA	Matrimonial Causes Act
NAPCL	National Action Plan on Child Labour
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USA	United States of America

USCDPC	US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
VAC	Violence against Children
VAPPL	Violence Against Persons and Prohibition Law
VVF	Vesicovaginal Fistula
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

Violence against children (VAC) is a violation of the rights of a child and is detrimental to the health of a child and has lasting effects. Since 2015, the Akwa Ibom State government has emphasised its commitment to policies and programs that encourage and protect the welfare of children. However, despite the growing condemnation of violence against children by the Akwa Ibom State government, children still experience physical and sexual violence in the State. Thus, the study examined Physical and Sexual Violence against Children and child protection in Uyo local government area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria between 2015 and 2020. Also, the study focused on the socio-cultural and economic factors driving physical and sexual VAC in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. It examined the effects of physical and sexual VAC on the physical and psychological development of children, how underreporting fosters the prevalence of violence against children as well as the efforts made by the Akwa Ibom State government to protect children from violence. The study is anchored on the Social Bonding Theory which proposed that there are certain factors in the context of family life such as poverty can interfere with a parent's ability to care for their children. The study adopted the qualitative research method and utilised the descriptive research design. For this study, primary data is retrieved through interviews and secondary data was retrieved from already-published works such as academic journals, books, newspapers, reports, and online materials. The study employed thematic analysis as the method of data analysis. Findings of the study revealed the conflict of cultural, and societal expectations with the rights of the child. Physical and Sexual VAC is a violation of Article 19, 34, and 35 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Similarly, the study observed that economic factors such as poverty expose children to violence. The study also found that underreporting of cases of VAC stems from fear of stigmatization, fear of being called a liar, lack of trust in the Nigerian Police Force, and the fact that parents keep silent when the perpetrator is a family member to protect the family's name. The study revealed the ineffectiveness of government institutions in addressing violence against children. It is therefore recommended that the Akwa Ibom State Government should enlighten the indigenes and settlers especially parents on the negative effects of violence against children and the government should reinforce the Child Rights Act 2008, through legislation that will put in place punitive actions to be taken against offenders. Furthermore, an Inter-sectoral partnership between Non-Governmental Organizations, schools, civil society groups, and community-based organizations must be forged in the state to reinforce prevention strategies on violence against children in homes, schools, and religious centres, and provide a broader avenue for rehabilitation of victims of violence in the communities. The study concluded that the existing and situational evidence of the state of violence against children clearly shows the mismatch in the policy objectives of the Child Rights Act of 2003 and policy implementation.

Keywords: Child abuse, child right, physical violence, sexual violence, underreporting