

**THE ROLE OF WOMEN RIGHTS LAWYER IN NIGERIA'S NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN LAWYER (FIDA)**

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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by Ekpojie Sherifat with Matriculation Number SSC1900662 of the Department of Public Administration in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor Degree (B.Sc.) in Public Administration, University of Benin.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God almighty for his grace towards my life and my academic pursuit and also to my family for their care, prayers and financial support.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Acknowledgement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Table of Contents	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	v
Abstract	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vi
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
1.3 Research Questions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1.4 Objectives of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
1.5 Scope of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
1.6 Significance of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
1.7 Conceptual Clarification of Terms and Concepts-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2.1 Conceptual Framework	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
2.1.1 Nigerian Customary Laws and Practices in Comparison with Statutory Provisions and International Conventions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
2.1.2 Judicial Pronouncements on Cultural Beliefs (Marriage and Inheritance Constituting Inequality and Discrimination)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
2.1.3. Marriage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
2.1.4. Child Marriage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
2.1.5 Peculiar Rights of Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19

2.1.3. Inheritance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
2.2 Women Right Lawyer Protect Women from Domestic Violence and Discrimination-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
2.2.1 Women Right Lawyer Contribute to Improving the Government’s Ability									27
2.2.2 Women Right Lawyer Promote the Rights and Well-Being of Women and Children	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32
2.2.3 Women Right Lawyer Advocates for gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38
2.3 Theoretical Framework	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>48</b>
3.1 Research Method	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
3.2 Research Instrument	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
3.3 Population of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50
3.5 Instrument of Data Collection				-	-	-	-	-	51
3.6 Method of Data Collection			-	-	-	-	-	-	52
3.7 Validity of the Instrument-			-	-	-	-	-	-	52
3.8 Reliability of the Instrument			-	-	-	-	-	-	52
3.9 Method of Data Analysis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	52
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA</b>	-	-							<b>54</b>
4.0 Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54
4.2 Analysis of Respondents Characteristics			-	-	-	-	-	-	54
4.3 Presentation and Analysis of Questionnaires			-	-	-	-	-	-	56
4.4 Discussion of Findings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>									
5.1 Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76

5.2 Summary of Findings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76
5.3 Conclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78
5.4 Recommendations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78
References	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80
Appendix	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	85

## **Abstract**

*This study examined the role of women rights lawyer in Nigeria's national development: A case study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA). The study adopted the survey design using questionnaire as research instrument. The data was analysed using percentage. The result showed that Women right Lawyers are able to protect women from domestic violence and discrimination through legislation in Nigeria. Women right Lawyer can contribute to improvement of government's ability to effectively strengthen the capacity of women in legal professionals. Women right Lawyer can promote and preserve the rights and well-being of women and children. Women right Lawyer can advocate for gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) of women in Nigeria. The study recommends that women right Lawyers should make their function and operations accessible to local women suffering from domestic violence and discrimination through legislation in Nigeria. Women right Lawyer should collaborate with government to improve the capacity of women in legal professionals. Women right Lawyer should liase with women affair ministry to preserve the rights and well-being of women and children. Women right Lawyer should be encourage to frequently advocate for gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) of women in Nigeria.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The right of every human being is very significant in all facets of life. Due to the fact that they are both human beings, men and women have an equal entitlement to the complete protection of their freedoms and rights. Though the extent of their subordination varies, it is clear that women as a social category are virtually always inferior to men (Imosemi, 2021). Women's subjugation existed before the cash economy, subsistence agriculture, and more advanced trade and industrial systems (Nwogu & Nwogu, 2023; Olubor, 2009). While many analyses of the subordination of women center on their roles in the economy, their subordination is also visible at the political and particularly at the ideological level, where it is reflected in symbol systems that link female/male with left/right, filth/cleanliness, evil/good, and other similar world-evolving dichotomies. Women's rights therefore cannot be anticipated to develop without changes in the political, intellectual, and economic spheres (Ekhaton, 2015).

The Federal Government of Nigeria is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Nigeria signed the convention on 23 April 1984 and, without any reservation, ratified the same on 13 June

1985 (Abimbola et al., 2023). The optional protocol to CEDAW was also signed and ratified by Nigeria in 2004. As a result, Nigeria is committed to building an egalitarian society where every Nigerian enjoys equal rights irrespective of age and sex. In spite of these improvements, some states in Nigeria have only passed portions of CEDAW into law due to cultural and religious considerations (Nwogu & Nwogu, 2023). This situation has limited the implementation of CEDAW and other international human rights conventions in Nigeria with respect to women's rights. This plurality of laws has remained a challenge to the enforcement of women's rights as prescribed by the Nigerian constitution and other international conventions (Njoku, 2023).

Nigeria's indigenous systems consist of cultural norms and societal beliefs that have gained widespread acceptance and recognition. This is referred to as customary law, where cultural perspectives are usually held on to tightly, so much so, that people in a community consider such norms mandatory (Abiona, 2019). In Nigeria, cultural perspectives are well recognized among the people, such that over time, the Nigerian courts have taken judicial notice of such customs and traditions (Abimbola et al., 2023). Moreover, frequently followed by the courts, for instance, in the case of *Akinnubi v Akinnubi*, the Supreme Court of Nigeria held that 'it is a well-settled principle of native law and custom of the Yoruba that a wife could not inherit her husband's property.' This presumes that the Supreme Court has taken judicial notice of this Yoruba customary law. However, the existence of customary law has to be proved before the court can act on it.

Thus, customary law is one of the recognized legal systems in Nigeria. It is defined as those rules of conduct which persons living in a particular locality have come to recognize as governing them in their relationships with one another (Kolajo, 2000).

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

Women's rights are the privileges and rights that women and girls around the world want. They served as the impetus for the feminist movement in the 20th century and the women's rights movement in the 19th century (Oniyinde, 2020). Women's rights are normally upheld by the law and occasionally by custom, but they are suppressed and disregarded in many African nations, including Nigeria. In general, women's rights include the freedom from sexual violence, the right to vote, the right to hold public office, the right to enter into contracts, the right to equal rights under family law, the right to work, the right to fair wages or equal pay, the right to own property, the right to have reproductive rights, and the right to an education (Ibe-Ojiluduorcid, 2022).

Thus, it is abundantly evident that women's rights are complex and all-encompassing, and they encompass the general well-being and dignity of womanhood. It is important to acknowledge that women's rights are distinct from more general concepts of human rights due to the assertion that there is a deep-rooted historical and cultural prejudice that prevents women and girls from exercising their rights, favoring males and boys (Njoku, 2023). This history informs the comprehensive examination of women's

rights in the contemporary paradigm and the legislative structure governing them in this research (Bhuller et al., 2022).

According to Siemieniuk et al., (2010), verbal, physical, religious, economic, or monetary abuse or threats thereof, as well as sexual, emotional, controlling, dominating, intimidating, stalking, passive/covert abuse (such as neglect), and economic hardship are all considered as domestic violence. Domestic abuse is a complex issue that has been defined and understood differently across time and in different cultures. As a result of societal acceptance, domestic violence is widespread in modern nations yet seldom reported. Although widely acknowledged, the societal issue of domestic abuse is often clouded by secrecy and silence. Both men and women are capable of perpetrating acts of domestic abuse. Men and women are equally capable of engaging in bullying behaviour. This means that both men and women may become victims of domestic abuse. On the other side, females are more often the targets of violence. Many women have severe health problems as a direct consequence of the psychological and/or physical abuse they experience in their intimate relationships and immediate social contexts.

Sadly, women have always been marginalized in every aspect of life, including political leadership, the economy and social life. The 2014 report from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) conveys a clear message: One in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 since sexual violence has been experienced by one in 10 women since the age of 15, and one in 20 women has been

raped. Over one in five women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from either a current or a previous partner, and this is a significant number. While 43% of women have had some form of psychologically abusive and/or controlling behaviour while in a relationship (Hahnkamper-Vandenbulcke & Bacian, 2022).

Many bad outcomes have resulted from Nigeria's ongoing war, including sluggish economic growth and development (Onifade et al., 2013). For instance, a study conducted by Hum Angle in 2022 indicates that Nigeria recorded 335 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) cases from January to April 2022. Thus, About 335 persons have experienced different forms of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in the first four months of 2022 across Nigeria. The 335 victims experience different types of violence: sexual abuse, physical abuse, and spousal abuse between January and April 2022. While the Northeast and Southeast regions have the lowest report on SGBV, the other zones have high records of SGBV. Leading the geopolitical zones in the reports of SGBV so far in 2022 is the Northwest with 266 persons, followed by the South-south with 50 persons, Southwest with 12, Southeast with four, and North-central with three. However, only the Northeast recorded one incident (Adedigba, 2022).

Given the above, "Nigeria was placed 139th out of 153 nations in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index for 2021, the lowest level since 2006" (Adedigba, 2022). One way to reduce the threat of VSS in Nigeria is to domesticate the Violence Against Persons Act, 2015 (ban), which aims to eradicate all forms of violence

in both the private and public spheres and which includes the right to housing and other social assistance to the victims of violence.

In Edo State, the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) has remained resolute in the fight against domestic violence against women. For instance, recently FIDA raised concerns about the increasing number of cases of teacher sexual abuse of their students in Rivers State. The Chairperson of FIDA in Rivers State, Iryn Omorogiwa disclosed that the Acting Chief Judge of Edo State Judiciary, Hon. Justice Joe Acha has enjoined members of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Edo State Chapter not to limit their services to women and children, but should, as mothers, extend it to all, especially the vulnerable men in the society as vulnerability had, in recent times, also been recorded among the male gender. Hon. Justice Acha, who made this call while receiving members of the Association on a courtesy visit to his office, also remarked that he was quite familiar with FIDA and its activities as he has had the privilege of working with some of the members (Nwine, 2022). He further acknowledged FIDA's recognition in aspiring to make him a patron while also assuring the association of his unflinching support at all times. The Acting Chief Judge also urged FIDA to continue with the good work they had been well known for, while appreciating them for the visit and well wishes (Nwine, 2022).

This year alone, we have had more than 50 defilement issues. All the matters of children being defiled by their teachers have been charged to court (Naku, 2022). The

previous report from the Human Development Index for the states in the Niger Delta, states that Rivers State is 0.392, although it is 0.70 and 0.78 for other oil-producing states like Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, respectively (UNDP, 2015). Domestic violence has several root causes, some of the most prominent being instability, poverty, imbalance, ignorance, terrorism, conflict, and domestic hardship. Edo State has been underdeveloped due to persistent damage and violence, government apathy, failed policies, and general negligence. From the foregoing, this study fill gap in literature by examining the role of women rights lawyer in Nigeria’s national development: A case study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA).

### **1.3 Research Questions**

From the forgoing, the following research questions were raised to guide the course of the study.

1. How does women right Lawyer protect women from domestic violence and discrimination through legislation in Nigeria?
2. To what extent does women right Lawyer contribute to improving the government’s ability to effectively strengthen the capacity of women in legal professionals?
3. Does women right Lawyer promote, protect and preserve the rights and well-being of women and children?
4. To what extent do women right Lawyer advocates for gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria?

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the Role of Women Rights Lawyer in Nigeria's National Development: A Case Study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA), the specific objectives are to:

1. Examine if women right Lawyer protect women from domestic violence and discrimination through legislation in Nigeria.
2. Evaluate whether women right Lawyer contribute to improving the government's ability to effectively strengthen the capacity of women in legal professionals.
3. To determine if women right Lawyer promote, protect and preserve the rights and well-being of women and children.
4. To ascertain whether women right Lawyer can advocate for gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the Role of Women Rights Lawyer in Nigeria's National Development: A Case Study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA). The study is limited to Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA), Edo State Branch.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study explored Role of Women Rights Lawyer in Nigeria's National Development: A Case Study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA), Edo State, Nigeria, hence its relevance in information of gender equality. Though the scope of the study was limited to the main importance of this study is that it will provide policy recommendations to Academia and policy-makers on ways to improve women welfare packages. Literature on FIDA is nongovernmental organisations that promote and protect the rights of women and children; gives free legal services through counselling. There is insufficient data on the factors affecting women's equality and involvement in all spheres of life. It is hoped that the data gathered from this study would lead to new affirmative action policies that will enhance gender mainstreaming and equal participation in all leadership and development processes. The study is also relevant to the potential local and National as well as existing politicians. The study will be a relevant and significant document for further study in particular the social work students and sociological students.

### **1.7 Conceptual Clarification of Terms and Concepts**

The following terms and concepts will not only be frequently used in the study but also form the basis around which most of the discussion will revolve. For purposes of this research, the following terms and concepts are used as defined hereunder:

**Women Right Lawyer:** This refers to the right to advocate for women equality, life free from violence and slavery; the right to be educated; the right to earn a fair and equal wage; the right to own property; the right to expression and freedom to vote. Women's rights to education, to health, to land and productive assets, and rights of participation, decision-making and leadership in village or community matters are strongly linked to women's security.

**Protect Women:** This refers to the process where women must feel secure mentally, emotionally, spiritually, financially, and physically. Personally, I believe that safeguarding her spiritually is the most crucial. She has to believe that when she goes out into the world, her boyfriend has her back. Women need to realize that wherever they are weak, you can make them stronger.

**Domestic Violence:** Domestic abuse, often known as "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence," refers to a pattern of behavior employed in any relationship to establish or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Domestic violence is defined as violence or other forms of abuse that occur inside a domestic setting, such as a marriage or cohabitation. Domestic violence is frequently used as a synonym for intimate partner violence, which is done by one of the people in an intimate relationship against the other, and can occur in relationships or between former spouses or partners. In its fullest sense, domestic violence includes aggression against children, parents, and the elderly.

**Gender discrimination:** Discrimination is the process of making unfair or prejudicial distinctions between people based on the groups, classes, or other categories to which they belong or are perceived to belong, such as race, gender, age, religion, physical attractiveness or sexual orientation. Discrimination typically leads to groups being unfairly treated on the basis of perceived statuses based on ethnic, racial, gender or religious categories. It involves depriving members of one group of opportunities or privileges that are available to members of another group.

**Legal Professionals:** Legal professionals study, develop, and apply the law. Typically, women considering a career in law must first pass a bar examination after earning a law degree or other type of legal education, such as an apprenticeship with a law firm.

**Well-Being of Women and children:** Well-being refers to the variables that influence a child's quality of life, stimulate growth and development, and increase a child's sense of enjoyment and satisfaction with life.

**Gender Equity:** Gender equality, often known as sexual equality or equality of the sexes, refers to the state of having equal access to resources and opportunities, including economic participation and decision-making. It is also the state of placing equal value on various behaviors, desires, and demands, regardless of gender.

**Social Inclusion:** Gender and Inclusion (PGI) describes the IFRC's approach and way of working to address the causes, risks and consequences of violence, discrimination and

exclusion in an integrated way. People affected by disasters can have very different experiences.

**Rights of Children, Women and Minorities:** This discussion is to be premised on why rights of women are given special attention, while rights of men are not. The rights of women started with the beginning of the world. The Geneva Convention has a few articles relating to women. They were however found to be centered on reproductive rights of the women. As such, the objectification of women still existed.

**Religious Factor:** Religion is also a powerful factor that militates and mitigates women's participation and involvement in Nigeria's political process. Orthodox Christianity, Islam and most traditional religions in Nigeria preach women's submissiveness to their husbands, and highly support men's rulership over their families, clans, villages, states and country. The truth is that if at all women were to get involved in politics, these religions note that their involvement should not go beyond holding peripheral political positions. Hence, Bolanle (2018) asserted that the two major religions in the country (Christianity and Islam) preach that women should be submissive and by implication are not expected to be leaders, further enhancing their political marginalization.

**Fund or Economic Factor:** Politics generally is very costly, but it's "costlier" in Nigeria. Vying for political offices in Nigeria is like climbing Kilimanjaro for men talk more of women. In other words, contesting for political offices in the country is mountainous and

a herculean task for men who are deemed more financially buoyant than their women counterparts.

**Violence:** Violence characterizes Nigerian politics. The rate of violence and brutality in Nigerian politics is too high that not every woman can withstand it. In support of this assertion, Bolenle (2018) remarked that Nigerian politics is marred by political violence and intimidation of both voters and candidates during elections, further hindering women's participation.

**Biological Roles:** The demands imposed by women's biological roles of child bearing and rearing might also inhibit their participation in politics. Moreover, when they do venture into politics, they are likely to avoid elective positions that are time consuming and prefer to provide logistical support.

**Dual Nativity:** The Nigerian Constitution grants women dual nativity. This means that they have equal rights in both their place of birth and those of their husbands. Although some are of the opinion that this gives women an edge in politics, in reality, it is a hindrance because women do not know where they truly belong. In her place of birth, her kinsmen might not vote for her due to the cultural belief that she ceases to be part of them as soon as her bride price is paid. Equally, her husband's kinsmen might not recognize her as one of them.

**Stigmatization of Women in Politics:** Given the political environment in Nigeria, many believe that politicians have no regard for human rights. The fact that politics is male

dominated leads to misconceptions that the few women in their midst can only make headway if they compromise their virtue. Hence, they are regarded as being of easy virtue and culturally rebellious, among other things.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

Federacion Internationalé De Abogadas (FIDA) was formally established in Mexico in 1944. The name translates to the International Federation of Women Lawyers. In 1964 Ambassador Aduke Alakija established the Nigerian branch of the organization, FIDA Nigeria. FIDA Nigeria is a non-profit, non-political, voluntary association of women called to the practice of law in Nigeria. FIDA Nigeria's primary role is to protect, promote and preserve the rights of women and children in Nigeria. Its core values are transparency, accountability, teamwork, integrity, mutual respect, commitment, service and we are non-partisan. Its main objectives are to: promote the principles and aims of the United Nations in its legal and social aspects; establish friendly international relations on a basis of equality and mutual respect for all peoples; promote the study of comparative law; proffer advice to Government in cases relating to women and children (Bolanle, 2018).

FIDA Nigeria actualizes its objectives through free legal representation for indigent women and children, advocacy and policy campaigns, education and training, mediation and counseling services, and publishing information resources. FIDA Nigeria has formally inaugurated branches in 36 states of the federation as well as the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. These branches are headed by duly elected State Officers and

overseen by the National Executive Officers and staff of the National Secretariat (Bolanle, 2018).

### **Mission**

FIDA Nigeria's mission is to promote, protect and preserve the rights, interests and well-being of women and children through the use of legal framework to ensure that they live free from all forms of discrimination, violence and abuse in the society.

### **Vision**

A just, peaceful and equitable Nigerian society where women and children's rights, interests are guaranteed, in which they have the freedom to choose and live their own future.

### **2.1.1 Nigerian Customary Laws and Practices in Comparison with Statutory Provisions and International Conventions**

Perceptions and beliefs about women in Nigeria, which result in hardship and contravention of their rights as human beings, are usually tackled through judicial intervention and domestic legislation (Abimbola et al., 2023). The contradiction between customary laws/practices and statutory provisions in Nigeria arises when a law has been enacted or a provision is made in the Constitution, which addresses and denounces a cultural practice. The definition of customary law stated above expresses the fact that when a practice has attained some level of notoriety or popularity, it is usually difficult to change the mindset of the people seeking to enforce it. Hence, Nigerian children,

especially the girl-child, are vulnerable to a wide range of abuse and harmful traditional practices (Bolanle, 2018).

The national legal framework for child protection is the Child Rights Act 2003. To date, however, only 23 out of 36 states in Nigeria have adopted the Act. Implementation is patchy, with many local authority bodies unaware of their duties under the law. A national survey in 2014 found that 6 out of 10 children reported having suffered one or more forms of violence before reaching 18 years of age, with 70 per cent of them experiencing multiple incidents of violence. The country has the largest number of child brides in Africa: 23 million girls and women were married as children.

At 27 percent, the prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) among girls and women aged 15–49 years is lower than in many countries where the practice is carried out. Nonetheless, Nigeria has the third highest absolute number of women and girls (19.9 million) who have undergone FGM/C worldwide. It is more commonly practiced in the south, pushed by grandmothers and mothers-in-law, aiming to curb promiscuity, prepare girls for marriage, and conform to tradition. These issues will be examined in three ways: firstly, by having judicial pronouncements on cultural beliefs, marriage, and inheritance; secondly, relating provisions of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution and legislative enactments to customary law and practices; and thirdly, making international conventions binding on Nigeria in addressing cultural/discriminatory practices.

## **2.1.2 Judicial Pronouncements on Cultural Beliefs (Marriage and Inheritance Constituting Inequality and Discrimination)**

### **2.1.3. Marriage**

Marriages in Nigeria are contracted under three basic systems of marriage. These are: marriage under the Marriage Act (civil marriage), marriage under Customary Law, and Islamic law marriage. Marriage under the Marriage Act refers to a marriage contracted pursuant to the Marriage Act, which is an English Act first enacted in Nigeria as a British colony on the 31st of December 1914. Marriage under customary law and Islamic law permit monogamous and polygamous marriages respectively. Conflicts arise when a woman is married to a man under the Marriage Act but their marriage affairs are carried out according to customary law. For instance, the Administration of Estates Law of the various states in Nigeria (one of the statutes now regulating inheritance rights in Nigerian societies), protects a wife who is married under the Marriage Act by ensuring that the wife is entitled to at least one-third of her husband's property upon death. In certain cases, the wife can be co-administrator of her late husband's estate. This provision is in conflict with most customs in Nigeria.

Therefore, the status of the Nigerian woman and girl-child in the family is not sufficiently protected, and several inequalities, mainly due to tradition, remain. Another dimension is the common knowledge that polygamy is prohibited in civil marriages but allowed under customary and Islamic laws (Bolanle, 2018). The practice is widespread,

with more than one-third of Nigerian women in polygamous unions, even where the first marriage is contracted under the Marriage Act. This happens even though bigamy is an offence in the Nigerian criminal code. This disregard of statutory enactments, in furtherance of cultural beliefs, subjugates women under customary law, making them dependent on a system that treats them as less deserving of basic social and economic rights.

#### **2.1.4. Child Marriage**

Child-marriage is another harmful discriminatory custom against women and girls. In some regions of northern Nigeria, customary law permits girls to marry from the age of nine years. Records show that Nigeria has 40 percent of global child marriages, with 76 percent of adolescent girls married in the North-West, 68 percent in the North-East, and 35 percent, in the North-Central region, where incidentally, poverty is highest (Uwais, 2017). However, the age of majority under the Nigerian Child Rights' Act is 18 years. The Act prohibits child marriage by providing that 'no person under the age of eighteen years is capable of contracting a valid marriage, and accordingly, a marriage so contracted is null and void and of no effect whatsoever.' The Act further states that 'no parent, guardian or any other person shall betroth a child to any person.' Even though the Act criminalizes child marriage in Section 23, child marriage is still a cultural practice that has continued unchecked (Fayokun 2015).

Several communities, in a bid to justify the practice, claim that child marriage will ensure that child brides do not engage in sexual relations until puberty. On the contrary, early marriage itself often means a pre-mature entry into sexual activity. This can result in exposure to sexually transmitted diseases like HIV, as well as actual physical harm, and the high health risks of early pregnancy by a yet-to-mature girl. This clearly violates the rights to health and education. For instance, in a study carried out by (Adedokun et al. 2016), data revealed that respondents commenced child bearing between 14 and 18 years of age, and 71% had experienced at least one serious pregnancy, or birth-related health problem, which include excessive bleeding during labor (19.0%), obstructed and/or prolonged labor (49.0%), frequent miscarriage (12.0%), and prolonged sickness after childbirth (20%). The same study revealed the comments of a nurse in Gombi General Hospital in Adamawa state, Nigeria, where young married girls presented for medical attention: “Most of the cases we witness in the health facilities are prolonged labor, Vesicovaginal fistula (VVF), and excessive bleeding. Some of these women are too young for child bearing but because of our culture and religion there is nothing we can do; we are educating them, but we still have new cases every day”.

### **2.1.5 Peculiar Rights of Women**

Human rights are, as is commonly noted, the rights of women. The concept of women's rights is composed of several interrelated ideas. Natural rights, job possibilities, the right to vote (political rights), property rights, rights against discrimination, the right

to health, the right to education, the right to procreate, and the absence of violence are a few of these ideas. Women are entitled to all legal rights, both national and international. For example, women in Nigeria are entitled to all the constitutional rights outlined in Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution Chapter IV. Women are also granted rights under many international legal documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Rights and the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights. Nonetheless, women have some fundamental rights that are essential to their existence; these rights consist of the following:

### **2.1.3. Inheritance**

The disagreement in the three types of laws poses problems for inheritance matters. Women again are on the receiving end. Hence, the Nigerian superior courts have, through their decisions, set aside customs and traditions that have caused difficulties for women and widows. In terms of structure, the Nigerian legal system of court administration and hierarchy operates at three levels. At the apex, is the Supreme Court, which receives cases on appeal from the various Courts of Appeal divisions located all over the country. Whereas the Court of Appeal is also a federal court, it also has divisions located all over the country for administrative convenience. The lower-level courts are the High Courts of the various states in Nigeria (these are State courts, and they are at the apex of the State Courts, Nigeria being a Federation of States under the 1999 Constitution). These three tiers of courts are generally called Superior Courts of Record

in contra-distinction to other lower-level courts not created by the Constitution, but by lesser statutes (for example, Magistrate Courts, Area Courts and Customary Courts).

Some cases have been decided by the Superior Courts declaring customs discriminatory. For instance, in the case of *Anekwe v Nweke*, the respondent, a widow, who had six daughters with her late husband, was ordered by the first appellant (her late husband's nephew) to vacate the matrimonial home she shared with her late husband because she did not bear any male child in that marriage. The appellant's claim was based on the Awka custom that discriminates against daughters and widows from inheriting under intestacy. The appellant's claim was dismissed unanimously, and the Supreme Court declared that "the custom of Awka people of Anambra state to the effect that a married woman without a male issue cannot inherit the landed property of her late husband, pleaded and relied on by the appellants in the instant case, is barbaric and repugnant to natural justice, equity, and good conscience, and ought to be abolished" (Abimbola et al., 2023).

In addition, the enactment of statutes can protect the inheritance rights of a widow. Therefore, if a deceased person was not legally married according to the terms of the Marriage Act, customary law may control how his inheritance is divided when he passes away intestate. However, if the marriage was performed in accordance with the Marriage Act, the deceased person's assets may be dispersed in accordance with the law, which only recognizes marriages performed according to the provisions of the Act. The

Administration of Estates Law of 1959 governs the intestate succession of a person married under the Marriage Act during the deceased's lifetime in the South-Western states. Nonetheless, most states in Nigeria have enacted this law at different times and thus have more recent versions of it. It is significant to remember that the 1959 law's requirements do not apply in situations where customary law controls how an estate is distributed, inherited, and succeeded. This is so because, in accordance with the Administration of Estates Law of 1959, marriages that follow the Marriage Act are the only circumstances in which the distribution of an intestate estate is applicable. Real and personal property are distributed in detail under Section 49 in the event of intestacy. According to Section 49 (5):

Where any person who is subject to customary law contracts a marriage in accordance with the provisions of the Marriage Ordinance and such person dies intestate after the commencement of this law, leaving a widow or husband or any issue of such marriage, any property of which the said intestate might have disposed by will shall be distributed in accordance with the provisions of this law, any customary law to the contrary notwithstanding (Bolanle, 2018).

Therefore, it has been established from the above provision of the law that under the statutory laws of succession, a woman married to a man under the Act has every right to inherit his property with his children. The Administration of Estates Law of Oyo State acknowledges this in similar terms. This ensures that a widow does not necessarily have

to suffer the negative effects of customary law of succession, once it can be proved that she married under the Act. Thus, in the case of *Obusez v Obusez*, the deceased died intestate in 1988, leaving behind his wife, whom he married under the Marriage Act in 1972, and five children. The widow applied for letters of administration to administer the deceased's estate. It was granted to her and the children. The plaintiff, the twin brother of the deceased, challenged the decision, but lost at the Court of Appeal. On further appeal to the Supreme Court, it was held that 'it is not disputed that the deceased and his wife were married under the Marriage Act, but that prior to that marriage, both parties were subject to customary law.' Therefore, it follows that by virtue of the said marriage and upon the death of the deceased intestate, the provisions of the Administration of Estates Law of Lagos State (the deceased's domicile) become applicable. It is very clear from Section 49 (5) of the said law, that the intention of the law maker was that customary law be excluded in relation to the estate of persons in which the sub-section applies as explained above.

## **2.2 Women Right Lawyer Protect Women from Domestic Violence and Discrimination**

In Nigeria, women's rights lawyers play a crucial role in protecting women from domestic violence and discrimination through legal advocacy, representation, and pushing for legislative reforms. These lawyers are engaged in both the judicial system and activism to ensure that laws are properly enforced and that women have access to

justice. Women's rights lawyers are active in advocating for the creation and strengthening of laws that protect women from domestic violence and gender-based discrimination (Njoku, 2023; Oziegbe-Anozie, 2020). This includes pushing for laws that explicitly criminalize domestic violence and discrimination in all forms (physical, emotional, economic, and sexual).

The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 (VAPP Act), this law criminalizes domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. It also mandates measures for the protection of survivors, such as restraining orders and medical treatment. The Child Rights Act, 2003, this act protects the rights of children, including female children, from exploitation and abuse (Ekhaton, 2015). The Nigerian Constitution, provisions of the Constitution prohibit discrimination based on sex, gender, and other grounds (e.g., section 42, which guarantees the right to freedom from discrimination). Women's rights lawyers often advocate for improved enforcement of these laws, lobbying for governments to allocate resources for women's protection, and pushing for amendments to address any gaps in the legislation (Njoku, 2023).

Women's rights lawyers provide free or low-cost legal representation to survivors of domestic violence and discrimination, helping them seek justice in court. They assist with filing complaints, obtaining protection orders, and ensuring that survivors have access to compensation or other legal remedies. They often work closely with NGOs and civil society organizations that offer legal support to survivors of gender-based violence

(Nwogu & Nwogu, 2023). Lawyers representing women's rights challenge discriminatory laws or practices in Nigerian courts. For example, they have been involved in cases where women are denied inheritance rights, forced into marriage, or subjected to harmful cultural practices like female genital mutilation (FGM). Litigation can also involve challenging discriminatory policies in workplaces, where women face harassment, unequal pay, or denial of promotions based on their gender (Abiona, 2019).

Women's rights lawyers work to raise awareness about the legal rights of women under Nigerian law. Through public campaigns, workshops, and media appearances, they educate women on their rights and the available legal mechanisms for seeking help. By doing so, they empower women to recognize when their rights are being violated and inform them about the legal recourse they have (Bolanle, 2018). Lawyers work with police, prosecutors, and government agencies to ensure that women's rights are protected, especially in cases of domestic violence. They advocate for training law enforcement officers on how to handle cases of gender-based violence and ensure that victims are treated with respect and care. Many women's rights lawyers also work with policymakers to ensure that laws protecting women are adequately enforced and that the police, courts, and other authorities take gender-based violence seriously (Abimbola et al., 2023).

Women's rights lawyers are especially committed to helping marginalized women, such as those living in rural areas, low-income communities, and those from minority ethnic or religious groups. They help ensure that women in these communities have

access to justice, despite the challenges posed by geographical location, poverty, or social norms. They may also work with international organizations to address women's rights issues in Nigeria, bringing global attention to local issues and advocating for international support for women's legal empowerment.

However, despite their critical role, women's rights lawyers face significant challenges, including; Deep-seated cultural norms in Nigeria often undermine women's rights. These include patriarchal traditions that prioritize male authority, stigmatize survivors of domestic violence, or endorse harmful practices like child marriage. Even when strong laws are in place, enforcement can be inconsistent (Bolanle, 2018). Many cases of domestic violence go unreported, and even when cases are reported, law enforcement and judicial officers may lack the training or will to act effectively. Lawyers may encounter bureaucratic hurdles or corruption in the judicial system that impedes timely justice for women. In addition to individual lawyers, there are numerous organizations working alongside them to protect women's rights in Nigeria. Some prominent ones include:

**The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria:** A major force in advancing women's legal rights, FIDA provides legal assistance to women in need, especially in cases of gender-based violence and discrimination (Nwogu & Nwogu, 2023).  
**The Nigerian Women's Trust Fund (NWTF):** Works to promote women's participation in governance and advocates for policies that improve women's social and economic well-

being. The Women's Aid Collective (WACOL): Focuses on ending violence against women, particularly domestic violence, through legal aid, counseling, and advocacy.

Women's rights lawyers in Nigeria are at the forefront of efforts to combat domestic violence and gender discrimination. By pushing for stronger laws, providing legal representation, challenging discriminatory practices, and educating the public, these legal professionals are vital to improving the legal and social standing of women in Nigeria (Njoku, 2023). However, they continue to face significant obstacles, particularly in terms of cultural attitudes and enforcement of laws, requiring sustained efforts and collaboration with government, civil society, and international organization.

### **2.2.1 Women Right Lawyer Contribute to Improving the Government's Ability**

Women's rights lawyers in Nigeria are key contributors to improving the government's ability to strengthen the capacity of women in the legal profession. Their contributions take various forms, focusing on advocacy, mentorship, policy change, and increasing awareness about the challenges and opportunities for women in the legal field. Here's how women's rights lawyers help improve the legal profession and empower women in the legal sector (Agunbiade, 2021): Women's rights lawyers often advocate for policies that ensure gender equality in legal education and career advancement. They push for reforms that address systemic barriers preventing women from accessing legal training or excelling in the legal profession, such as gender biases in hiring, promotions, and recognition of work. They may also advocate for scholarships, grants, and funding

opportunities specifically for women pursuing legal education, ensuring more women can afford law school and receive quality legal training (Oniyinde, 2020). This advocacy helps address the financial barriers that often deter women from entering the legal profession, especially in resource-limited environments.

Many women's rights lawyers play an active role in mentorship programs designed to guide young women lawyers. These programs help women navigate the challenges of the legal profession, build professional networks, and develop their skills in specialized areas of law, such as human rights, family law, or corporate law (Bhuller et al., 2022). Women's rights lawyers organize and participate in networking events, workshops, and conferences where women in law can connect with senior legal professionals, share knowledge, and discuss ways to overcome the challenges they face in their careers (Newman, 2018). These platforms also provide opportunities for women to take on leadership roles in legal associations, bar associations, or legal reforms, fostering a stronger presence of women in leadership positions (Bolanle, 2018).

Women's rights lawyers advocate for reforms that promote the representation of women in key areas of the legal profession, such as judicial appointments, law firm leadership, and academic positions in law schools. This advocacy includes pushing for the implementation of gender quotas, affirmative action policies, or other strategies that ensure women's equal participation in the legal profession. They also contribute to developing legal frameworks that protect women lawyers from harassment and

discrimination in the workplace. These laws can address issues like sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and discrimination based on pregnancy or maternity leave, helping create a more supportive environment for women in the legal field. Women's rights lawyers contribute to strengthening legal reforms in ways that make the justice system more gender-sensitive, which directly impacts women working in and interacting with the legal system (Ibe-Ojiluduorcid, 2022). They work to incorporate gender sensitivity and awareness into the curriculum of law schools, ensuring that the next generation of legal professionals understands and respects women's rights. Gender-sensitive legal education can also help women lawyers better advocate for the needs of female clients, particularly in areas like family law, domestic violence, and reproductive rights.

Women lawyers play a crucial role in pushing for laws that protect not only the rights of women as individuals but also ensure a more equitable and inclusive legal environment. Examples include advocating for the strengthening and enforcement of laws like the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP Act) or working to eliminate discriminatory provisions in Nigerian law (Bhuller et al., 2022). Many women's rights lawyers assume leadership positions within Nigerian legal associations, such as the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) or International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria. In these positions, they can influence policy and create opportunities for other women in the profession. These organizations play a significant

role in shaping the future of the legal profession by promoting gender equality and addressing issues that hinder the professional development of women. Women's rights lawyers often design leadership development programs within these associations to equip young women lawyers with the skills and knowledge they need to take on leadership roles, whether in private practice, government, or civil society.

Women's rights lawyers engage in legal research and writing, producing publications that highlight the challenges women face in the legal profession and advocate for institutional reforms. This can include research on the underrepresentation of women in the judiciary, barriers to legal education for women, or the impact of gender discrimination on women in the legal sector. Through research, publications, and public campaigns, women's rights lawyers contribute to raising awareness of gender inequality in the legal profession. They also use these platforms to advocate for public policies that will increase opportunities for women in law, including efforts to reduce gender-based violence or discrimination in the workplace (Ibe-Ojiluduorcid, 2022). Women's rights lawyers also contribute to building a supportive and inclusive work environment for women in the legal profession by addressing issues like workplace discrimination, unequal pay, and harassment. Many women's rights lawyers engage in advocacy for policies that promote work-life balance, including maternity leave, flexible working hours, and child care facilities, which can make it easier for women lawyers to manage both their careers and family responsibilities (Njoku, 2023).

By fighting for laws that protect women's rights and advocating for more women to be represented in the legal profession, women's rights lawyers help to ensure that the legal system becomes more responsive to women's needs. Women in legal professions, particularly in areas like family law, human rights, and domestic violence, are crucial to providing justice for women who face legal challenges due to gender-based violence, economic inequality, and discrimination. They engage in public education campaigns, helping women in marginalized communities understand their legal rights and the resources available to them. This increases the demand for female lawyers who are equipped to provide legal representation to women in areas that affect their daily lives, like domestic violence, inheritance, and land rights (Siemieniuk et al., 2010).

Women's rights lawyers also advocate for greater access to legal services for women in rural and underserved communities. They push for more female representation in rural legal practices and help develop initiatives that make legal services more accessible to women in remote areas. Many women's rights lawyers take on pro bono cases or work with legal aid organizations to ensure that low-income women, especially in rural communities, have access to legal representation. Women's rights lawyers are essential in improving the capacity of women in the legal profession in Nigeria by advocating for policies that promote gender equality, mentoring younger female lawyers, and creating supportive networks (Oniyinde, 2020). Through their work in legal reform, education, mentorship, and advocacy, they not only strengthen the legal profession as a

whole but also help to create a more equitable legal system in which women can thrive. By addressing both systemic barriers and the practical challenges women face, they contribute significantly to creating a legal environment where women can succeed and achieve leadership roles in the field of law.

### **2.2.2 Women Right Lawyer Promote the Rights and Well-Being of Women and Children**

Women’s rights lawyers in Nigeria (and around the world) play a vital role in promoting, protecting, and preserving the rights and well-being of women and children. Their work focuses on legal advocacy, representation, policy reform, and public education to ensure that women and children can live free from violence, discrimination, and exploitation, and that their legal rights are upheld (UNICEF, 2018). Women’s rights lawyers are instrumental in promoting the creation, strengthening, and effective implementation of laws that protect the rights of women and children. These protections encompass a range of legal issues, from domestic violence and sexual harassment to child rights and inheritance. Women’s rights lawyers push for the enactment of new laws or amendments to existing ones that protect the rights of women and children. For instance, they may advocate for laws that provide stronger penalties for domestic violence, ensure equal rights in marriage and inheritance, and protect women and children from human trafficking and child marriage (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act) (2015) is a landmark legislation in Nigeria that criminalizes various forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and harmful traditional practices. Women's rights lawyers help promote the enforcement of this law to ensure that victims have access to justice (Onifade et al., 2013). The Child Rights Act (2003) ensures that children (including girls) are protected from abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Lawyers advocate for the full implementation of this Act work to prevent child labor, early marriage, and other harmful practices affecting children, especially girls. Women's rights lawyers also refer to international treaties and conventions that Nigeria has ratified, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). They hold governments accountable for their obligations under international law and advocate for the incorporation of international human rights standards into national legislation (Adedigba, 2022).

One of the most critical areas where women's rights lawyers make a significant impact is in protecting women and children from gender-based violence (GBV). GBV includes domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM), and child marriage. Women's rights lawyers work directly with survivors of domestic violence, providing legal representation, securing protection orders, and advocating for criminal charges against abusers. In some cases, they help survivors gain access to

shelters, medical care, and psychological support (Nwine, 2022). Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), lawyers play an essential role in representing survivors of sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault. They help survivors navigate the legal system to secure justice, whether through criminal prosecution or civil claims for compensation.

Lawyers also represent children in cases involving child abuse, exploitation, or neglect, ensuring that children's rights to protection, safety, and dignity are upheld. They help secure the prosecution of perpetrators and provide legal avenues for children to be placed in safe environments. Women's rights lawyers also advocate for better training for law enforcement officers, judges, and social workers to recognize and address gender-based violence effectively (Naku, 2022). They promote changes in police procedures and the judicial system to ensure that survivors are treated with respect, dignity, and empathy. Legal representation is a cornerstone of women's rights advocacy. Many women, particularly in marginalized communities, face significant barriers to accessing legal services. These barriers include a lack of financial resources, legal knowledge, or support networks. Women's rights lawyers often take on pro bono (free) cases to provide legal services to women and children who cannot afford them. They represent survivors of violence, victims of child trafficking, and those seeking redress for discrimination or rights violations (Oniyinde, 2020). This ensures that those who would otherwise be unable to afford a lawyer can still have their cases heard in court.

Women's rights lawyers also help women and children seek justice through civil lawsuits. For instance, they can assist survivors of gender-based violence in claiming compensation from perpetrators or institutions (e.g., workplaces, hospitals) that have failed to protect them. Many lawyers also work with non-governmental organizations, to offer legal literacy programs, ensuring that women and children know their rights and understand how to access justice (Oniyinde, 2020). These programs might include workshops, informational pamphlets, and outreach campaigns. Beyond legal protections, women's rights lawyers also advocate for the broader social and economic rights of women and children, particularly in areas where women face inequality or marginalization.

Lawyers in this field advocate for women's reproductive rights, ensuring that women have access to maternal healthcare, family planning, and safe abortion services where permitted by law. They fight against laws or cultural practices that restrict women's autonomy over their reproductive choices. They work on laws that address unequal pay, workplace discrimination, and barriers to women's economic participation, such as inheritance rights. Lawyers push for the enforcement of existing laws and the creation of new ones to ensure that women and children can achieve economic independence. Women's rights lawyers advocate for girls' education and push for policies that ensure equal access to education for girls and boys (Bhuller et al., 2022). They may

work on issues related to child labor and child marriage, where girls are often disproportionately affected.

Women's rights lawyers advocate for the enforcement of laws protecting children from exploitation, including child labor, trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation. They work with law enforcement and civil society groups to rescue children from exploitative situations and prosecute offenders. In many parts of Nigeria, child marriage remains prevalent, with devastating consequences for young girls. Women's rights lawyers play a pivotal role in challenging child marriage laws and working to raise the legal age of marriage, as well as representing young girls who are forced into marriage (Olubor, 2009). Lawyers also work to ensure children have access to healthcare and protection from neglect or abuse. They might take action in cases where children's welfare is at risk due to inadequate care or unsafe living conditions.

Women's rights lawyers are active in advocating for the reform of discriminatory laws that negatively affect women and children. This includes challenging laws that perpetuate gender inequality in inheritance, marriage, and family matters. Many women's rights lawyers are involved in international advocacy, participating in global efforts to promote women's rights through forums like the (United Nations, African Union, and ECOWAS 2020). They work to ensure that international human rights laws are implemented domestically and that women and children are protected from cross-border trafficking and exploitation. Women's rights lawyers play an important role in raising

awareness about women's and children's rights. By conducting workshops, seminars, and media campaigns, they educate the public about gender equality, the rights of women and children, and how to seek legal redress for violations. Lawyers often engage in grassroots activism, particularly in rural or underserved communities, where cultural and traditional practices may be in conflict with the rights of women and children. By providing information on legal rights, they help empower communities to stand up against abuse and discrimination.

Many women's rights lawyers collaborate with CSOs, NGOs, and international organizations to advocate for systemic change. These partnerships help amplify the voices of women and children and foster a more robust legal and social framework for protecting their rights. Women's rights lawyers are at the forefront of efforts to promote, protect, and preserve the rights and well-being of women and children (Oniyinde, 2020). Their legal expertise, advocacy, and commitment to social justice play a critical role in challenging harmful practices, ensuring legal protections, and securing justice for survivors of violence and discrimination. By promoting legal reform, providing representation, and empowering communities, these lawyers help create a more equitable society where women and children can live free from fear, violence, and exploitation.

### **2.2.3 Women Right Lawyer Advocates for gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria**

Women’s rights lawyers in Nigeria play a pivotal role in advocating for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI), which involves promoting equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender, and ensuring that marginalized groups, particularly women, children, and other vulnerable populations, are included in all aspects of social, economic, and political life. This advocacy is essential in challenging and dismantling gender-based discrimination and marginalization in Nigerian society (Otive-Igbuzor, 2024). Women’s rights lawyers are actively involved in pushing for and supporting the development of gender-sensitive laws that promote gender equity (equal treatment and opportunity regardless of gender). They advocate for legal reforms that challenge discriminatory laws and practices in areas such as inheritance, marriage, divorce, property ownership, and inheritance rights, where women are often disadvantaged.

Lawyers work on promoting and advocating for the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act), the Child Rights Act, the Equal Rights for Women in Marriage Bill, and the National Gender Policy—all of which aim to protect women and children from violence, abuse, and discrimination while promoting gender equality in various spheres of society. They also push for reforms to ensure that women have equal access to legal resources and protection (John, 2024). Lawyers in Nigeria advocate for the implementation of international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), and the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights (UDHR), urging the government to fully integrate international gender equality standards into national laws and policies.

Women's rights lawyers fight against gender-based discrimination in the workplace, such as unequal pay, sexual harassment, and lack of career advancement opportunities for women. They work with labor unions, civil society organizations, and the government to promote gender equity in employment practices, including advocating for equal pay for equal work, maternity leave, and support for women in leadership positions (Thomas-Odia, 2023). Lawyers advocate for equal access to education for girls and women, especially in rural and underserved areas where traditional norms often hinder girls' education. They push for legal reforms that eliminate barriers to education, such as child marriage, early pregnancy, and unsafe school environments. They also work on campaigns that challenge cultural norms which prioritize boys' education over girls' education.

Gender equity is not only about equal opportunities but also about social inclusion ensuring that marginalized groups are fully included in the economic, social, and political processes of society. Women's rights lawyers push for policies that remove barriers to social inclusion, such as discrimination in healthcare, housing, and access to government services. Lawyers actively work to promote the political inclusion of women, advocating for increased women's participation in governance and decision-making processes (Akinkunmi, 2024). They support the implementation of gender quotas, affirmative

action policies, and other measures that ensure women are represented in political offices, legislative bodies, and leadership positions. Women's rights lawyers challenge the structural and cultural barriers that prevent women from participating fully in politics, such as violence against women in politics, gender-based violence, and political discrimination. They also support policies aimed at ensuring the safety and security of women in politics, and in advocating for legal reforms that ensure women have the freedom to run for office without facing gender-specific obstacles.

Women's rights lawyers provide free legal services to women and marginalized groups, particularly those who cannot afford legal representation. This includes legal aid for survivors of domestic violence, sexual harassment, and exploitation, as well as representation for women seeking access to their property rights, inheritance, or divorce settlements (Abimbola et al., 2023). Lawyers work with other stakeholders (government, civil society, and international organizations) to improve the legal frameworks that address gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination. For example, they work to ensure that laws like the Domestic Violence Law, Sexual Harassment Prohibition Law, and Child Protection Laws are implemented effectively to protect women and children from violence and exploitation.

Women's rights lawyers are deeply involved in campaigning against harmful traditional practices that affect women and children, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, and forced marriage. They work to change public attitudes

toward these practices by raising awareness and advocating for stricter penalties for perpetrators. One of the critical issues in Nigeria is the prevalence of child marriage, which disproportionately affects girls. Lawyers advocate for the enforcement of laws that prevent child marriage and work to raise the legal age of marriage to 18 years, in line with international human rights standards (John, 2024). Lawyers also address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including rape, domestic violence, and human trafficking. They work with survivors to ensure they have access to legal justice, healthcare, and social services. In addition, they help push for legal reforms to improve the criminal justice system's response to SGBV cases.

Women's rights lawyers often collaborate with civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs to amplify their advocacy for gender equity and social inclusion. These partnerships allow for more extensive grassroots campaigns, community outreach, and legal support for women and marginalized groups. Women's rights lawyers often engage in international advocacy, presenting cases at international platforms, such as the United Nations and the African Union, to highlight the gender inequality issues facing women and children in Nigeria (Uwais, 2017). This international pressure helps push for domestic reforms and increases accountability for gender equality commitments made by the Nigerian government.

Women's rights lawyers work tirelessly to educate the public on gender equality and social inclusion through media campaigns, community-based workshops, and public

forums. They focus on educating both men and women about their rights and responsibilities under Nigerian law and international human rights frameworks. Women's rights lawyers promote legal literacy, especially for marginalized women in rural areas, by teaching women about their legal rights, how to access legal support, and the available avenues for seeking justice when their rights are violated. They also work to increase understanding of women's rights under Nigerian laws, such as the rights to inheritance, access to property, and protection from violence (Abimbola et al., 2023).

Women's rights lawyers support laws and policies that ensure women have equal access to economic resources such as land, credit, and employment. They work to challenge laws and practices that prevent women from owning land or inheriting property and advocate for stronger protections for women in the workforce, particularly in industries where they are underrepresented or face discrimination (Adedokun et al., 2016). Lawyers advocate for gender-sensitive policies that support women's entrepreneurship, particularly in small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). They push for access to credit, financial literacy programs, and policies that remove barriers to women's participation in the economy, such as ensuring that women can inherit family businesses or access business loans without gender-based discrimination.

Women's rights lawyers are essential advocates for gender equity and social inclusion in Nigeria. Their work helps dismantle entrenched gender inequalities, protect the rights of women and children, and promote the full participation of marginalized

groups in society. Through legal reforms, public education, legal representation, and collaboration with civil society and international organizations, they strive to create a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone, regardless of gender or background, can enjoy equal rights and opportunities (Howard-Hassmann, 2004). Women's rights lawyers remain central to Nigeria's ongoing efforts to promote gender equality, social justice, and human dignity for all.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The structural-functional theory is a framework that sees society as a complex system, whose parts work together for unity and solidarity. It is otherwise known as functionalism. It addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent element (norms, customs, traditions, and institutions). Merton argues that contrary to the assumption of functionalists on the functional unity of society, where there are alternatives to structural organs, the organ becomes dispensable (Ala & Olutayo, 2023). Until it is established that functional unity exists, functional autonomy should be considered and viewed. Thus, a change in a particular institution may have little or no effect on others. Merton also debunked the assumption of universal functionalism; that is, that all standardized social or cultural forms have positive functions. He argues that thinking should go beyond the fact that any part of society is functional, dysfunctional, or non-functional. He suggests that the postulate should be replaced by "the provisional

assumption that it should be subjected to 'relativity'. Finally, on structural/functional assumption that certain institutional or social arrangements are indispensable to society, Merton avers that there is no justification for assuming that any institution is indispensable; more so, some societies do not have them as part of their societal structure.

Merton also notes that there may be functional alternatives to the institutions and structures currently fulfilling the functions of society. This means that the institutions that currently exist are not indispensable to society. Merton states that "just as the same item may have multiple functions, so may the same function be diversely fulfilled by alternative items" cited in (Holmwood, 2005). This notion of functional alternatives is important because it reduces the tendency of functionalism to imply approval of the status quo.

The second is the Frustration-Aggression theory propounded by John Dollard (1939) with his research associates and later developed by scholars like Leonard Berkowitz (1962) and Aubrey Yates (1962). It best explains the violent reactions that emanate from unmet needs. The "want-get ratio" of what people feel they want or deserve to what they get, Feierabend's, (1969: 256-7) and the difference between "expected need satisfaction" and "actual need satisfaction" Davies, (1962:6). Where expectation does not meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions. The major explanation of the frustration-aggression is that aggression is not just undertaken as a natural reaction or instinct as

realists and biological theorists assume, but that it is the outcome of frustration and that in a situation where the legitimate desires of an individual are denied either directly or by the indirect consequences of the way the society is structured, the feeling of disappointment may lead such a person to express his anger through violence that will be directed at those he holds (Ala & Olutayo, 2023).

The study, however, identifies with the perspective of Merton by using Structural-Functional Theory to understand the mechanisms of intervention in the marital conflict by non-state organizations (NGOs), knowing that no institution of the society such as the state is indispensable. Corroborating Merton (1948) and contrary to Comte, society would not always be at equilibrium. For instance, institutions such as marriage are dysfunctional and have attracted the intervention of NGOs because state institutions (courts) have been inefficient. While other theorists have viewed the theory from a macro level of society, this study looks at it from the micro-level of marriage and the influence of NGOs. This is because the institution known as the family is a product of marriage, which (family) also, is a part of the constituents that make up the society as the theory posits.

Marriage is conducted and influenced by various cultural components (norms, customs, and traditions) and institutions that vary from society to society. Hence, any mechanism to resolve the marital conflict would bother on the identification and understanding of whichever of these cultural components from which the conflict has

arisen. It could be as a result of a misunderstanding due to varying ideologies and values, as a result of a difference in cultural tradition on the side of the parties. It could also be a result of an action or inaction of any of the other institutions of the society (government, religious institutions, the economy, educational institutions, and others). For instance, a marital conflict could arise from religious differences between the parties (Ala & Olutayo, 2023). The study juxtaposed Structural-Functional Theory with the mechanisms for intervention in the marital conflict by NGOs. Non-governmental organizations were seen as alternatives to the failure of the government as an institution of society. The institution of marriage from which the family, a part of the body of the society, is produced is seemingly abstract, yet integral. Therefore, this study is focused on how FIDA deploys intervention mechanisms for the management and resolution of marital conflicts. Following the Frustration-Aggression theories, when needs are not adequately met, the tendency is for people to confront those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions and become violent. The findings of the study established that most of the time, the complainants obtain the desired result from ADR options.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Method**

This chapter discusses the method that was used in this study. The data for this study was obtained through field survey and desk research which consist of textbooks, journals, newspapers, internet as well as government publications and books from libraries that are relevant to the research.

#### **3.2 Research Instrument**

The major research instrument for this study was designed questionnaire which comprises of introductory part section 'A' and section 'B'. The introductory part gave a brief description of the respondents. The section B of the questionnaire was made up of the items themselves. Section 'A' contained demographic information of the respondents such as sex or gender, Age and educational qualification. Section 'B' was be designed to measure "the role of Women Rights Lawyer in Nigeria's National Development: A case study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA)". It contains 15 closed-ended questions.

#### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The study population covers all population of Edo State, particularly adults in the three senatorial districts (Edo south (949,556), Edo Central (418,994) and Edo north

(562,254) in Edo State (NPC, 2006). The total population selected from three senatorial districts, is (1,930,804) as displayed in the table below:

**The table below displays the population of the three senatorial districts:**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Edo North Senatorial District</b>	<b>Population</b>
1	Akoko-Edo	163,151
2	Etsako Central	54,158
3	Etsako East	80,922
4	Owan East	88,073
5	Owan West	57,670
6	Etsako West	118,280
	<b>Total</b>	<b>562,254</b>
	<b>Edo Central Senatorial District</b>	
1	Esan Central	60,604
2	Esan West	80,010
3	Esan South-East	95,873
4	Esan North-East	71,562
5	Igueben	40,509
6	Uhunmwode	70,436
	<b>Total</b>	<b>418,994</b>
	<b>Edo South Senatorial District</b>	
1	Egor	209,715
2	Ikpoba-Okha	221,364
3	Oredo	237,188
4	Orhionmwon	105,807
5	Ovia North-East	95,828
6	Ovia South-West	79,654
	<b>Total</b>	<b>949,556</b>

National Population Commission 2021

Authors Compilations

Taro Yamane formula;  $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Where: n=signifies the sample size

N=signifies the population under study

e=signifies the margin error= 0.05

Thus,

$$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$$

$$n=34547/1+34547 (0.05)^2$$

$$n=34547/1+34547 (0.0025)$$

$$n=34547/1+86.37$$

$$n=34547/87.37$$

$$n=395.41$$

$$\approx 400$$

The above table shows the population of the 18 local government areas as represented in the senatorial districts. However, this study did a survey in the three senatorial districts namely Edo south, Edo Central and Edo north senatorial districts.

### 3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study adopted the simple random and convenience sampling techniques. The table below shows the sample population of the three senatorial districts

S/N	Local government	Youth population	Sample size
	Edo North Senatorial District	562,254	105
	Edo Central Senatorial District	418,994	85
	Edo South Senatorial District	949,556	210
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,930,804</b>	<b>400</b>

Given the population in Edo State, which is made up of three senatorial districts as selected in the above table: A sample of 400 is selected from the population.

As a result, four hundred (400) copies of questionnaires were administered across the senatorial districts using purposive and simple random technique with emphasis on the role of Women Rights Lawyer In Nigeria's National Development: A case study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA) Samples were drawn from three senatorial districts as mentioned above based on the sample 210 respondent in Edo south, 85 respondents Edo Central and 105 respondent Edo north using Taro Yamane.

### **3.5 Instrument of Data Collection**

The research instrument was used in this study is the questionnaire. Which is a well-constructed and self-develop structured questionnaire titled "the role of Women Rights Lawyer in Nigeria's National Development: A case study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA) Questionnaire (TWLNNDFIWLQ)" is use to get the desire information from the students. The questionnaire will be divided into two sections (A and B). Section A was for collection of information on personal data of respondents while Section B consisted of questions that elicited responses from the respondents with response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UN), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D).

### **3.6 Method of Data Collection**

The study adopted personal administration of the research instrument which was a structured questionnaire to source data from targeted respondents' selected from senatorial region. The study adopts a one-time survey method where questionnaire was shared and collected on the spot.

### **3.7 Validity of the Instrument**

The word validity means to cross check how useful the instrument is to the study or work. Face validity were employed in this study, face validity were done by the supervisor through cross checking of the instrument if it was well-structured with respect to the research objectives and questions in chapter one.

### **3.8 Reliability of the Instrument**

Reliability is to check if the instrument used is reliable. Reliability checks were done by submitting a sample of the research instrument to the supervisor for perusing to add input as expert contribution on the questionnaires.

### **3.9 Method of Data Analysis**

The research adopted the use of simple percentage, frequency tables of analysis to analyze data collected. Chi-square was used to test the relationship between the variables,

so that the population of the study was given an unbiased estimation of the data. This method is complimented by the instrument such as the questionnaire, to source the data for this study.

$$\text{Simple Percentage (\%)} = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

$$\text{Chi square } X^2 = \frac{(c-1)(r-1)}{2 \times 1}$$

This Implies that:

$$X^2 = \frac{n(ad-bc)}{(a+b)(c+d)(a+c)(b+d)}$$

Where: a, b, c, d = Observed Frequency

The Statistical Formula

$$X^2 = \sum_i^{n=1} \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$X^2$  = Chi-Square symbol

$f_o$  = Actual frequency

$f_e$  = Frequency expected

$$\sum_i^{n=1} = \text{Summation}$$

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter is an empirical research presentation and analysis of data sourced from the survey administration of questionnaires to targeted participants. This study is aimed at “the role of Women Rights Lawyer in Nigeria’s National Development: A case study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA)”. This chapter is concerned with analytical representation of result in a readable form. During the survey, four (400) hundred and fifty questionnaires were administered to the respondents and three hundred and ninety seven were returned.

The presentation of the results is tabulated below.

#### 4.1 Analysis of Respondents Characteristics

**Table 4.1 Genders Of Respondents**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	259	65.24
Female	138	34.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2024**

Table 4.1 Shows that 65.24%, which translated to 259 respondents', are male, while 34.76%, which translated to 138 respondents were female. This indicates that the male was more represented than females.

**Table 4.2 Age of Respondents**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Under 30 years	167	42.06
31-35 years	109	27.45
36-40 years	67	16.88
41-45 years	29	7.31
Others	25	6.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2024**

Table 4.2 above shows that 167 respondents representing 42.06% were under 30 years, 109 respondents representing 27.45% were 31-35 years, 67 respondents representing 16.88% were 36-40 years, while 29 respondents representing 7.31% were 41-45 years, while 25 respondents representing 6.30% were older than 45 years. This implies that all the respondents fall within the youthful age group.

**Table 4.3: Respondents Educational Qualification**

<b>Educational qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Primary/O'Level	78	19.65
B.A/BSC	156	39.30
Masters	163	41.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2024**

Table 4.3 shows that 78 respondents representing 19.65% had Primary/O’level qualification, 156 respondents representing 39.30% had B.A/BSC, 163 respondents representing 41.05% had Masters respectively.

**Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Religion**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Christian	299	75.31
Muslim	24	6.05
African Traditional Religion	45	11.34
Others	29	7.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, (2024)*

Table 4.4 above, shows that (75.31%, which translated to 299 respondents) were Christians, (6.05%, which translated to 24 respondents) were Muslims, (11.34%, which translated to 45 respondents) were African traditional religion, while (7.31%, which translated to 29 respondents) were practicing other forms of religion.

## **4.2 Presentation and Analysis of Questionnaires**

**Research Question 1: How does Women Right Lawyer Protect Women from Domestic Violence and Discrimination through Legislation in Nigeria?**

**Table 4.6: Question 1: Women’s rights lawyers are key advocates for the creation and enforcement of laws that criminalize domestic violence and provide protection to victims.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	195	49.12

A	132	33.25
UN	20	5.04
SD	35	8.82
D	15	3.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

From Table 6 above, (49.12%, which translated to 195 respondents) strongly agreed, (33.25%, which translated to 132 respondents) agreed, (5.04%, which translated to 20 respondents) were undecided, (8.82%, which translated to 35 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (3.77%, which translated to 15 respondents) disagreed that women’s rights lawyers are key advocates for the creation and enforcement of laws that criminalize domestic violence and provide protection to victims.

**Table 4.7: Question 2: Lawyers also push for stronger legal frameworks to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace, schools, and other public spaces.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	168	42.33
A	129	32.49
UN	18	4.53
SD	60	15.11
D	22	5.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

From Table 7 above shows that, (42.33%, which translated to 168 respondents) strongly agreed, (32.49%, which translated to 129 respondents) agreed, (4.53%, which translated to 18 respondents) undecided, (15.11%, which translated to 60 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) disagreed that

lawyers also push for stronger legal frameworks to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace, schools, and other public spaces.

**Table 4.8: Question 3: Women’s rights lawyers often advocate for reforms in family law that ensure women’s rights to property, child custody, and inheritance are upheld.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	195	49.12
A	109	27.46
UN	33	8.31
SD	21	5.29
D	39	9.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 8 above revealed that (49.12%, which translated to 195 respondents) strongly agreed, (27.46%, which translated to 109 respondents) agreed, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) undecided, (5.29%, which translated to 21 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (9.82%, which translated to 39 respondents) disagreed that women’s rights lawyers often advocate for reforms in family law that ensure women’s rights to property, child custody, and inheritance are upheld.

**Table 4.9: Question 4: Women’s rights lawyers play a critical role in the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence and other forms of abuse.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	149	37.53
A	140	35.26

UN	25	6.30
SD	43	10.83
D	40	10.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The table 9 above shows that (37.53%, which translated to 149 respondents) strongly agreed, (35.26%, which translated to 140 respondents) agreed, (6.30%, which translated to 25 respondents) undecided, (10.83%, which translated to 43 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (10.08%, which translated to 40 respondents) disagreed that women’s rights lawyers play a critical role in the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence and other forms of abuse

**Table 4.10: Question 5: Women’s rights lawyers assist victims of domestic violence in obtaining protection orders or restraining orders from the courts.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	249	62.72
A	102	25.69
UN	Nil	Nil
SD	33	8.31
D	13	3.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 10 above shows that (62.72%, which translated to 249 respondents) strongly agreed, (25.69%, which translated to 102 respondents) agreed, no respondent is undecided, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagreed, (3.28%, which translated

to 13 respondents) disagreed that women’s rights lawyers assist victims of domestic violence in obtaining protection orders or restraining orders from the courts.

**Research Question Two: To what Extent does Women Right Lawyer Contribute to Improving the Government’s Ability to Effectively Strengthen the Capacity of Women in Legal Professionals?**

**Table 4.11: Question 6: Women’s rights lawyers contribute to policies that address gender bias, discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities for women in law.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	279	70.28
A	70	17.63
UN	15	3.77
SD	14	3.53
D	19	4.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

From the Table 11 above shows that, (70.28%, which translated to 279 respondents) strongly agreed, (17.63%, which translated to 70 respondents) agreed, (3.77%, which translated to 15 respondents) were undecided, (3.53%, which translated to 14 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (4.79%, which translated to 19 respondents) disagreed that women’s rights lawyers contribute to policies that address gender bias, discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities for women in law.

**Table 4.12: Question 7: Women’s rights lawyers contribute to capacity-building by organizing and participating in training programs, workshops.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	205	51.64
A	131	32.99
UN	19	4.79

SD	32	8.06
D	10	2.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 12 above revealed that (51.64%, which translated to 205 respondents) strongly agreed, (32.99%, which translated to 131 respondents) agreed, (4.79%, which translated to 19 respondents) were undecided, (8.06%, which translated to 32 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (2.52%, which translated to 10 respondents) disagreed, that women’s rights lawyers contribute to capacity-building by organizing and participating in training programs, workshops.

**Table 4.13: Question 8: Women’s rights lawyers support initiatives that focus on developing leadership skills in women legal professionals.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	185	46.60
A	129	32.49
UN	13	3.27
SD	30	7.56
D	40	10.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 13 shows that (46.60%, which translated to 185 respondents) strongly agreed, (32.49%, which translated to 129 respondents) agreed, (3.27%, which translated to 13 respondents) were undecided, (7.56%, which translated to 30 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (10.08%, which translated to 40 respondents) disagreed that women’s

rights lawyers support initiatives that focus on developing leadership skills in women legal professionals.

**Table 4.14: Question 9: Women’s rights lawyers ensure that all legal professionals male and female understand the importance of gender equality in Women’s rights lawyers support legal practice and are equipped to address gender-based discrimination.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	215	54.16
A	109	27.46
UN	28	7.05
SD	33	8.31
D	12	3.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 14 shows that (54.16%, which translated to 215 respondents) strongly agreed, (27.46%, which translated to 109 respondents) agreed, (7.05%, which translated to 28 respondents) were undecided, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagree, while (3.02%, which translated to 12 respondents) disagreed that women’s rights lawyers ensure that all legal professionals male and female understand the importance of gender equality in Women’s rights lawyers support legal practice and are equipped to address gender-based discrimination.

**Table 4.15: Question 10: Women’s rights lawyers work with the government to ensure that there are state-sponsored programs for the training and development of women legal professionals.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------

SA	278	70.03
A	93	23.43
UN	10	2.52
SD	9	2.26
D	7	1.76
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

From result in Table 15 above, (70.03%, which translated to 278 respondents) strongly agreed, no response from undecided, (23.43%, which translated to 93 respondents) agreed, (2.52%, which translated to 10 respondents) were undecided, (2.26%, which translated to 9 respondents) strongly disagree, while (1.76%, which translated to 7 respondents) disagreed that women’s rights lawyers work with the government to ensure that there are state-sponsored programs for the training and development of women legal professionals

**Research Question Three: Does Women Right Lawyer Promote and Preserve the Rights and well-Being of Women and Children?**

**Table 4.16: Question 11: Women's rights lawyers often work to raise awareness about gender-based discrimination.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	265	66.75
A	83	20.90
UN	40	10.08
SD	09	2.27
D	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 16 above shows that (66.75%, which translated to 265 respondents) strongly agreed, (20.90%, which translated to 83 respondents) agreed, (10.08%, which translated to 40 respondents) were undecided, (2.27%, which translated to 9 respondents) strongly disagreed, while no respondents representing disagreed that women's rights lawyers often work to raise awareness about gender-based discrimination.

**Table 4.17: Question 12: Women right lawyers promote gender equality, protect women's rights, and address child welfare.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	136	34.26
A	190	47.86
UN	16	4.03
SD	33	8.31
D	22	5.54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 17 above shows that (34.26%, which translated to 136 respondents) strongly agreed, (47.86%, which translated to 190 respondents) agreed, (4.03%, which translated to 16 respondents) were undecided, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) disagreed that women right lawyers promote gender equality, protect women's rights, and address child welfare.

**Table 4.18: Question 13: Women's rights lawyers represent clients in court, ensuring that women and children who are victims of discrimination, abuse, or exploitation have their cases heard and that their rights are defended.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	191	48.11
A	98	24.68
UN	27	6.80
SD	56	14.11
D	25	6.30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 18 above shows that (48.11%, which translated to 191 respondents) strongly agreed, (24.68%, which translated to 98 respondents) agreed, (6.80%, which translated to 27 respondents) were undecided, (14.11%, which translated to 56 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (6.30%, which translated to 25 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers represent clients in court, ensuring that women and children who are victims of discrimination, abuse, or exploitation have their cases heard and that their rights are defended.

**Table 4.19: Question 14: Women's rights lawyers defend women's rights to access healthcare, including reproductive healthcare.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	164	41.31
A	125	31.49
UN	33	8.31
SD	57	14.36
D	18	4.53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 19 shows that (41.31%, which translated to 164 respondents) strongly agreed, (31.49%, which translated to 125 respondents) agreed, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) were undecided, (14.36%, which translated to 57 respondents)

strongly disagree, while (4.53%, which translated to 18 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers defend women's rights to access healthcare, including reproductive healthcare.

**Table 4.20: Question 15: Women's rights lawyers may also be involved in cases of child protection, working to ensure that children's rights are upheld in family.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	217	54.66
A	110	27.71
UN	22	5.54
SD	33	8.31
D	15	3.78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 20 above shows that (54.66%, which translated to 217 respondents) strongly agreed, (27.71%, which translated to 110 respondents) agreed, (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) were undecided (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (3.78%, which translated to 15 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers may also be involved in cases of child protection, working to ensure that children's rights are upheld in family.

**Research Question Four: To what Extent do Women Right Lawyer Advocates for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria?**

**Table 4.21: Question 16: Lawyers advocate for inclusive policies that provide equal access to education, employment, healthcare, and social services.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	260	65.49

A	88	22.17
UN	38	9.57
SD	11	2.77
D	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 21 above shows that (65.49%, which translated to 260 respondents) strongly agreed, (22.17%, which translated to 88 respondents) agreed, (9.57%, which translated to 38 respondents) were undecided, (2.77%, which translated to 11 respondents) strongly disagreed, while no respondents representing disagreed that lawyers advocate for inclusive policies that provide equal access to education, employment, healthcare, and social services

**Table 4.22: Question 17: Advocating for women’s access to reproductive health services, including maternal care, safe abortion services (where legally allowed), and family planning.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	145	36.52
A	172	43.32
UN	14	3.53
SD	30	7.56
D	36	9.07
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 22 above shows that (34.26%, which translated to 136 respondents) strongly agreed, (47.86%, which translated to 190 respondents) agreed, (4.03%, which translated to 16 respondents) were undecided, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents)

strongly disagreed, while (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) disagreed that advocating for women’s access to reproductive health services, including maternal care, safe abortion services (where legally allowed), and family planning.

**Table 4.23: Question 18: Women’s rights lawyers push for policies that ensure women’s access to land, credit, and other economic resources**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	199	50.13
A	90	22.67
UN	30	7.56
SD	53	13.35
D	25	6.30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 4.23 above shows that (50.13%, which translated to 199 respondents) strongly agreed, (22.67%, which translated to 90 respondents) agreed, (7.57%, which translated to 30 respondents) were undecided, (13.35%, which translated to 53 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (6.30%, which translated to 25 respondents) disagreed that women’s rights lawyers push for policies that ensure women’s access to land, credit, and other economic resources.

**Table 4.23: Question 19: Promoting women’s entrepreneurship is another area of focus ensuring that women have access to funds, capital, and markets**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	189	47.61
A	100	25.19
UN	40	10.08
SD	50	12.59
D	18	4.53

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>
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*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 4.23 shows that (47.61%, which translated to 189 respondents) strongly agreed, (25.19%, which translated to 100 respondents) agreed, (10.08%, which translated to 40 respondents) were undecided, (12.59%, which translated to 50 respondents) strongly disagree, while (4.53%, which translated to 18 respondents) disagreed that promoting women’s entrepreneurship is another area of focus ensuring that women have access to funds, capital, and markets.

**Table 4.24: Question 20: Women’s rights lawyers advocating for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria are integral to advancing women’s rights, combating gender-based violence, and ensuring the social inclusion of all marginalized groups.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
SA	210	52.89
A	117	29.47
UN	22	5.54
SD	33	8.31
D	15	3.78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 20 above shows that (52.89%, which translated to 210 respondents) strongly agreed, (29.47%, which translated to 117 respondents) agreed, (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) were undecided (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (3.78%, which translated to 15 respondents) disagreed that women’s rights lawyers advocating for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria are

integral to advancing women's rights, combating gender-based violence, and ensuring the social inclusion of all marginalized groups.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

The test of research question one revealed that (49.12%, which translated to 195 respondents) strongly agreed, (33.25%, which translated to 132 respondents) agreed, (5.04%, which translated to 20 respondents) were undecided, (8.82%, which translated to 35 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (3.77%, which translated to 15 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers are key advocates for the creation and enforcement of laws that criminalize domestic violence and provide protection to victims.

The results shows that, (42.33%, which translated to 168 respondents) strongly agreed, (32.49%, which translated to 129 respondents) agreed, (4.53%, which translated to 18 respondents) undecided, (15.11%, which translated to 60 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) disagreed that lawyers also push for stronger legal frameworks to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace, schools, and other public spaces. The result also revealed that (49.12%, which translated to 195 respondents) strongly agreed, (27.46%, which translated to 109 respondents) agreed, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) undecided, (5.29%, which translated to 21 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (9.82%, which translated to

39 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers often advocate for reforms in family law that ensure women's rights to property, child custody, and inheritance are upheld. The result shows that (37.53%, which translated to 149 respondents) strongly agreed, (35.26%, which translated to 140 respondents) agreed, (6.30%, which translated to 25 respondents) undecided, (10.83%, which translated to 43 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (10.08%, which translated to 40 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers play a critical role in the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence and other forms of abuse.

The result further showed that (62.72%, which translated to 249 respondents) strongly agreed, (25.69%, which translated to 102 respondents) agreed, no respondent is undecided, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagreed, (3.28%, which translated to 13 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers assist victims of domestic violence in obtaining protection orders or restraining orders from the courts.

The responses to research question two showed that, (70.28%, which translated to 279 respondents) strongly agreed, (17.63%, which translated to 70 respondents) agreed, (3.77%, which translated to 15 respondents) were undecided, (3.53%, which translated to 14 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (4.79%, which translated to 19 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers contribute to policies that address gender bias, discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities for women in law. The result showed revealed that (51.64%, which translated to 205 respondents) strongly agreed, (32.99%,

which translated to 131 respondents) agreed, (4.79%, which translated to 19 respondents) were undecided, (8.06%, which translated to 32 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (2.52%, which translated to 10 respondents) disagreed, that women's rights lawyers contribute to capacity-building by organizing and participating in training programs, workshops. The result showed that (46.60%, which translated to 185 respondents) strongly agreed, (32.49%, which translated to 129 respondents) agreed, (3.27%, which translated to 13 respondents) were undecided, (7.56%, which translated to 30 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (10.08%, which translated to 40 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers support initiatives that focus on developing leadership skills in women legal professionals.

The result also showed that (54.16%, which translated to 215 respondents) strongly agreed, (27.46%, which translated to 109 respondents) agreed, (7.05%, which translated to 28 respondents) were undecided, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagree, while (3.02%, which translated to 12 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers ensure that all legal professionals male and female understand the importance of gender equality in Women's rights lawyers support legal practice and are equipped to address gender-based discrimination. The result again showed (70.03%, which translated to 278 respondents) strongly agreed, no response from undecided, (23.43%, which translated to 93 respondents) agreed, (2.52%, which translated to 10 respondents) were undecided, (2.26%, which translated to 9 respondents) strongly

disagree, while (1.76%, which translated to 7 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers work with the government to ensure that there are state-sponsored programs for the training and development of women legal professionals.

The responses to research questions three revealed that (66.75%, which translated to 265 respondents) strongly agreed, (20.90%, which translated to 83 respondents) agreed, (10.08%, which translated to 40 respondents) were undecided, (2.27%, which translated to 9 respondents) strongly disagreed, while no respondents representing disagreed that women's rights lawyers often work to raise awareness about gender-based discrimination.

The result showed that (34.26%, which translated to 136 respondents) strongly agreed, (47.86%, which translated to 190 respondents) agreed, (4.03%, which translated to 16 respondents) were undecided, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) disagreed that women right lawyers promote gender equality, protect women's rights, and address child welfare. The result showed that (48.11%, which translated to 191 respondents) strongly agreed, (24.68%, which translated to 98 respondents) agreed, (6.80%, which translated to 27 respondents) were undecided, (14.11%, which translated to 56 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (6.30%, which translated to 25 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers represent clients in court, ensuring that women and children who are victims of discrimination, abuse, or exploitation have their cases heard and that their rights are defended. The result showed that (41.31%, which translated to 164 respondents)

strongly agreed, (31.49%, which translated to 125 respondents) agreed, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) were undecided, (14.36%, which translated to 57 respondents) strongly disagree, while (4.53%, which translated to 18 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers defend women's rights to access healthcare, including reproductive healthcare. The also showed that (54.66%, which translated to 217 respondents) strongly agreed, (27.71%, which translated to 110 respondents) agreed, (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) were undecided (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (3.78%, which translated to 15 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers may also be involved in cases of child protection, working to ensure that children's rights are upheld in family.

The responses to research question four showed that (65.49%, which translated to 260 respondents) strongly agreed, (22.17%, which translated to 88 respondents) agreed, (9.57%, which translated to 38 respondents) were undecided, (2.77%, which translated to 11 respondents) strongly disagreed, while no respondents representing disagreed that lawyers advocate for inclusive policies that provide equal access to education, employment, healthcare, and social services. The result showed that (34.26%, which translated to 136 respondents) strongly agreed, (47.86%, which translated to 190 respondents) agreed, (4.03%, which translated to 16 respondents) were undecided, (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) disagreed that advocating for women's access to

reproductive health services, including maternal care, safe abortion services (where legally allowed), and family planning. The result showed that (50.13%, which translated to 199 respondents) strongly agreed, (22.67%, which translated to 90 respondents) agreed, (7.57%, which translated to 30 respondents) were undecided, (13.35%, which translated to 53 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (6.30%, which translated to 25 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers push for policies that ensure women's access to land, credit, and other economic resources.

The result showed that (47.61%, which translated to 189 respondents) strongly agreed, (25.19%, which translated to 100 respondents) agreed, (10.08%, which translated to 40 respondents) were undecided, (12.59%, which translated to 50 respondents) strongly disagree, while (4.53%, which translated to 18 respondents) disagreed that promoting women's entrepreneurship is another area of focus ensuring that women have access to funds, capital, and markets. The result showed that (52.89%, which translated to 210 respondents) strongly agreed, (29.47%, which translated to 117 respondents) agreed, (5.54%, which translated to 22 respondents) were undecided (8.31%, which translated to 33 respondents) strongly disagreed, while (3.78%, which translated to 15 respondents) disagreed that women's rights lawyers advocating for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria are integral to advancing women's rights, combating gender-based violence, and ensuring the social inclusion of all marginalized groups.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.2 Introduction

This chapter intends to provide the summary of finding, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

The findings from research question one showed that women's rights lawyers are key advocates for the creation and enforcement of laws that criminalize domestic violence and provide protection to victims. The result revealed that women lawyers also push for stronger legal frameworks to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace, schools, and other public spaces and that women's rights lawyers often advocate for reforms in family law that ensure women's rights to property, child custody, and inheritance are upheld. The result showed that women's rights lawyers play a critical role in the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence and other forms of abuse and that women's rights lawyers assist victims of domestic violence in obtaining protection orders or restraining orders from the courts.

The findings from research question two revealed that women's rights lawyers contribute to policies that address gender bias, discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities for women in law and that women's rights lawyers contribute to capacity-

building by organizing and participating in training programs, workshops. The result also revealed that women's rights lawyers support initiatives that focus on developing leadership skills in women legal professionals and that women's rights lawyers ensure that all legal professionals male and female understand the importance of gender equality in women's rights lawyers support legal practice and are equipped to address gender-based discrimination. The result showed that women's rights lawyers work with the government to ensure that there are state-sponsored programs for the training and development of women legal professionals.

The findings from research question three demonstrated that women's rights lawyers often work to raise awareness about gender-based discrimination and that women right lawyers promote gender equality, protect women's rights, and address child welfare. The result showed that women's rights lawyers represent clients in court, ensuring that women and children who are victims of discrimination, abuse, or exploitation have their cases heard and that their rights are defended and that women's rights lawyers defend women's rights to access healthcare, including reproductive healthcare. The result also showed that women's rights lawyers may also be involved in cases of child protection, working to ensure that children's rights are upheld in family.

The findings from research question four revealed that lawyers advocate for inclusive policies that provide equal access to education, employment, healthcare, and social services and advocating for women's access to reproductive health services,

including maternal care, safe abortion services (where legally allowed), and family planning. The result showed that women's rights lawyers push for policies that ensure women's access to land, credit, and other economic resources and that promoting women's entrepreneurship is another area of focus ensuring that women have access to funds, capital, and markets. The result further showed that women's rights lawyers advocating for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria are integral to advancing women's rights, combating gender-based violence, and ensuring the social inclusion of all marginalized groups.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made;

1. Women right Lawyers are able to protect women from domestic violence and discrimination through legislation in Nigeria.
2. Women right Lawyer can contribute to improvement of government's ability to effectively strengthen the capacity of women in legal professionals.
3. Women right Lawyer can promote and preserve the rights and well-being of women and children.
4. Women right Lawyer can advocate for gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) of women in Nigeria.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations where made;

1. Women right Lawyers should make their function and operations accessible to local women suffering from domestic violence and discrimination through legislation in Nigeria.
2. Women right Lawyer should collaborate with government to improve the capacity of women in legal professionals.
3. Women right Lawyer should liase with women affair ministry to preserve the rights and well-being of women and children.
4. Women right Lawyer should be encourage to frequently advocate for gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) of women in Nigeria.

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## APPENDIX

**RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**  
Department of Public Administration,  
Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Benin,  
Benin City.

13th November, 2024.

Dear Sir/Madam,

### REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am of the above department student, undergoing a B.Sc. programme in the University of Benin. I am currently on a study: “**the role of Women Rights Lawyer In Nigeria’s National Development: A case study of Federation of International Women Lawyer (FIDA)**”.

I wish to appeal to you to assist by kindly sparing a few minutes to complete this questionnaire as honestly as you can. Your opinion or information supplied will be used purely for academic purposes and such information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

**EKPOJIE SHERIFAT**

*Researcher*

## SECTION A

Part A: Personal Data Please tick (✓) the option that is applicable to you.

1. Gender: a. male ( ) b. female ( ).
2. Age: a. under 30 ( ) b. 31-40 ( ) c. 41-50 ( ) d. 50-60 ( ) e. above 60 ( ).
3. Educational qualification: a. Primary/O' level ( ), b. B.A/BSC ( ) c. M.Sc. and Above ( ), d. Learned Trade ( ).
4. Years in service: a. 1-10 years ( ) b. 11-20 years ( ) c. above 30years ( )

Part B: Local – State Government Relation and Issue of Autonomy

## SECTION B

S/N	Section 1	Responses			
	<b>How does Women Right Lawyer Protect Women from Domestic Violence and Discrimination through Legislation in Nigeria?</b>	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Women's rights lawyers are key advocates for the creation and enforcement of laws that criminalize domestic violence and provide protection to victims				
2.	Lawyers also push for stronger legal frameworks to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace, schools, and other public spaces				
3.	Women's rights lawyers often advocate for reforms in family law that ensure women's rights to property, child custody, and inheritance are upheld				
4.	Women's rights lawyers play a critical role in the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence and other forms of abuse				
5.	Women's rights lawyers assist victims of domestic violence in obtaining protection orders or restraining orders from the courts				

	<b>Section 2</b>				
	<b>To what Extent does Women Right Lawyer Contribute to Improving the Government’s Ability to Effectively Strengthen the Capacity of Women in Legal Professionals?</b>				
1.	Women’s rights lawyers contribute to policies that address gender bias, discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities for women in law				
2.	Women’s rights lawyers contribute to capacity-building by organizing and participating in training programs, workshops				
3.	Women’s rights lawyers support initiatives that focus on developing leadership skills in women legal professionals				
4.	efforts ensure that all legal professionals male and female understand the importance of gender equality in Women’s rights lawyers support legal practice and are equipped to address gender-based discrimination				
5.	Women’s rights lawyers work with the government to ensure that there are state-sponsored programs for the training and development of women legal professionals				
	<b>Does Women Right Lawyer Promote and Preserve the Rights and well-Being of Women and Children?</b>				
1.	Women's rights lawyers often work to raise awareness about gender-based discrimination				
2.	Women right lawyers promote gender equality, protect women's rights, and address child welfare				
3.	Women's rights lawyers represent clients in court, ensuring that women and children who are victims of discrimination, abuse, or exploitation have their cases heard and that their rights are defended				
4.	Women's rights lawyers defend women’s rights to access healthcare, including reproductive healthcare				
5.	Women's rights lawyers may also be involved in cases of child protection, working to ensure that children’s rights are upheld in family				
	<b>To what Extent do Women Right Lawyer Advocates for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria</b>				
1.	Lawyers advocate for inclusive policies that provide equal				

	access to education, employment, healthcare, and social services				
2.	Advocating for women’s access to reproductive health services, including maternal care, safe abortion services (where legally allowed), and family planning				
3.	Women’s rights lawyers push for policies that ensure women’s access to land, credit, and other economic resources				
4.	Promoting women’s entrepreneurship is another area of focus ensuring that women have access to funds, capital, and markets				
5.	Women’s rights lawyers advocating for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nigeria are integral to advancing women’s rights, combating gender-based violence, and ensuring the social inclusion of all marginalized groups.				