

FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE [FOCEI]
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WOMEN AID COLLECTIVE [WACOL]
WITH SUPPORT FROM FORD FOUNDATION

POLICY BRIEF

Baseline Survey: Key Findings and Recommendations

PROJECT TITLE:

EMPOWERING CHRISTIAN WOMEN ANDCULTURAL LEADERS FOR GENDER EQUALITY, PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA.

WACOL

FOCEI

BASELINE SURVEY ON EMPOWERING CHRISTIAN WOMEN AND CULTURAL LEADERS FOR GENDER EQUALITY, PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN GOMBE PARTICULARLY IN LIJI AND ZAMBUK OF YAMALTU-DEBA LGA.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

WACOL

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Foundation for Community Empowerment Initiative (FOCEI), in partnership with Women Aid Collective (WACOL),
Zextends heartfelt appreciation to all individuals and institutions whose contributions made this baseline survey possible.

We are deeply grateful to the Ford Foundation for its generous support and commitment to advancing gender equality and
social transformation in Nigeria. Your partnership has been instrumental in enabling this important work.

Special thanks go to the community members of Liji and Zambuk in Yamaltu Deba Local Government Area, Gombe State,
for their openness, cooperation, and courage in sharing their experiences and perspectives. Your voices are the foundation of this project.

We acknowledge the invaluable insights provided by church leaders, traditional rulers, women fellowship leaders, youth representatives,
and local government officials during key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Your engagement has enriched our understanding of the cultural and religious dynamics shaping gender relations in your communities.

We appreciate the dedication of our enumerators, facilitators, and supervisors who conducted the fieldwork with professionalism,
sensitivity, and respect. Your commitment to ethical research practices and data integrity ensured the credibility of this report.

To the institutions that participated in the audits, we thank you for your cooperation and willingness to reflect on your structures and practices. Your openness lays the groundwork for meaningful reform.

Finally, we recognize the FOCEI and WACOL project teams for their tireless efforts in designing, implementing,
and analyzing this baseline study. Your vision and leadership continue to drive transformative change for women and girls across Nigeria.

Together, we move forward in building inclusive communities where gender equality and dignity are upheld for all.

WACOL

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

FOCEI	Foundation For Community Empowerment Iniative
WACOL	Women Aid Collective
KAP	Knowledge Attitude And Practice
GBV	Gender-based Violence
HHS	Household Survey
KII	Key Informant Interview
FGD	Focus Group Discussion

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION
Purpose and Objective

METHODOLOGY
Data Collection Design
- Household Survey
- Key Informant Interview [KII]
- Focus Group Discussion [FGD]
- Institutional Audit

Data Management and Analysis
Quality Control During Field Work
Ethical Considerations

FINDINGS
Household Survey
- Gender Roles & Perceptions
- Gender-Based Violence [GBV] Experience
- Awareness & Attitudes
- Access to Services

Key Informant Interview
- Cultural & Religious Influence
- Gender roles
- GBV awareness
- Change Potential

Focus Group Discussion
- Gender Roles and Cultural Expectations
- Experiences and Perceptions of GBV
- Awareness and Education
- Opportunities for Change

Institutional Audit
- Policy Gaps
- Capacity Deficits
- Training Needs
- Collaboration Weaknesses

RECOMMENDATION
Capacity Building
Cultural Engagement
Strengthen GBV Response Systems
Promote Women's Leadership
Policy and Advocacy



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This baseline report presents findings from a mixed-methods study conducted to inform the design and implementation of the WACOL–FOCEI project on ***Empowering Christian Women and Cultural Leaders for Gender Equality, Prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and Social Transformation in Nigeria***. The assessment was carried out in Liji and Zambuk communities of Yamaltu Deba LGA, Gombe State, selected for their strong cultural and religious institutions and reported prevalence of GBV.

The baseline aimed to establish the pre-intervention status of **knowledge, attitudes, and practices** regarding gender equality and GBV, while also mapping institutional structures, referral mechanisms, and leadership dynamics. Data collection combined household surveys (50 households), key informant interviews (8), focus group discussions (4), and institutional audits (6 institutions) to provide a holistic picture of community realities.

Key Findings

Household Survey (HHS): Most respondents (87%) had heard of gender equality, yet patriarchal norms remain strong, with about 21% agreeing or strongly agreeing that men should always be the main household decision-makers. A majority (73%) were aware of where survivors could seek help, yet church leaders (32%), health facilities (18%), and police (24%) were the most cited first points of support. Only a few mentioned NGOs or formal referral systems, reflecting weak institutional linkages.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): Church and traditional leaders acknowledged the existence of GBV but highlighted limited institutional policies and referral procedures. Leaders expressed mixed views on women's participation in leadership, with some recognizing women's roles in fellowships but few in decision-making positions. Barriers cited included cultural norms, lack of training, and absence of clear frameworks for women's leadership.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Women and youth emphasized that domestic violence, economic abuse, and denial of opportunities are common in the community. Social stigma and fear of reprisals prevent many survivors from reporting cases. Men in FGDs often justified traditional gender roles, though younger participants expressed growing openness to women's leadership if provided with skills and support.

Institutional Audits: Out of the audited churches and traditional councils, none had written GBV or gender equality policies, and only limited ad-hoc referral practices were observed. No institution had a structured record-keeping system for GBV cases, indicating a critical capacity and

Project Implementation Strategy

Based on these findings, the project will adopt a multi-pronged implementation strategy combining:

Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Mitigation through advocacy and community awareness campaigns.

Capacity building for Christian and cultural women leaders to strengthen their participation in governance and decision-making.

Engagement with cultural and religious gatekeepers to challenge harmful gender norms and promote inclusive practices.

Second chance education for women and girls excluded from formal opportunities, thereby building long-term agency.

Institutional reforms in churches and cultural councils, including the development of GBV referral directories and gender-sensitive policies.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen institutional frameworks by supporting churches and cultural councils to adopt written GBV policies and establish referral mechanisms.
2. Enhance leadership capacity of women through structured training, mentorship, and advocacy platforms.
3. Engage men and cultural leaders as allies in transforming gender norms and creating safer spaces for women and girls.
4. Build community-based support systems, linking survivors to legal, health, and psychosocial services.



INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The baseline survey represents the foundational phase of the FOCEI–WACOL–Ford Foundation intervention on Empowering Christian Women and Cultural Leaders for Gender Equality, Prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and Social Transformation in Nigeria. This initiative is strategically designed to address the persistent challenges of entrenched patriarchal norms, exclusion of women from leadership, and weak community-based mechanisms for GBV prevention and response. The project specifically targets Liji and Zambuk communities in Yamaltu Deba Local Government Area of Gombe State, both of which are characterized by strong religious and cultural structures that play a critical role in shaping community values, norms, and governance. By engaging Christian women and cultural leaders, the project seeks to transform these influential institutions into platforms for gender justice, women's empowerment, and collective social change. The baseline survey serves as an essential starting point to understand the current realities of gender equality and GBV in the target communities. It provides a clear picture of how community members perceive and practice gender roles, the extent to which women participate in leadership, and the institutional preparedness of churches and traditional councils to address GBV. The evidence generated from this study will guide project design, inform strategic interventions, and provide measurable indicators against which progress can be tracked throughout the project cycle.

Purpose and Objectives

The main purpose of the baseline survey is to provide a reliable evidence base and benchmark for measuring changes in knowledge, attitudes, practices, leadership dynamics, service availability, and institutional responsiveness to GBV during and after project implementation. Specifically, the survey sought to:

1. Assess knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) on gender equality and GBV among households and community leaders.

2. Map power dynamics and leadership structures within churches and traditional institutions, highlighting opportunities and barriers for women's participation.

3. Document available services, referral mechanisms, and institutional gaps for GBV prevention and response at the community level.

4. Establish baseline benchmarks to enable monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes over time.

In sum, the baseline study provides the evidence required to design context-specific strategies that empower women and cultural leaders, strengthen community-based institutions, and promote sustainable gender



METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

Given the objectives of the baseline survey, a mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to generate a holistic understanding of gender equality and GBV dynamics in the target communities. This approach ensured that statistical evidence from households was complemented by in-depth perspectives from community leaders, women, men, and youth, as well as institutional assessments of churches and traditional councils.

Data Collection Design

Four main methods were employed: household surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and institutional audits. Data collection instruments were carefully designed to be gender-sensitive and contextually appropriate, then reviewed and validated by the project supervisors in collaboration with the implementation team. Enumerators and facilitators received training on ethical considerations, GBV sensitivity, confidentiality, and informed consent prior to fieldwork.

Household Survey

A structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 50 households drawn from Liji and Zambuk communities using a stratified random sampling technique. The survey explored key domains including awareness and perceptions of gender equality, understanding of GBV, attitudes toward women's leadership, decision-making patterns within households, and knowledge of available support services. Data were collected digitally to ensure quality control and minimize errors.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

A total of 10 KIIs were conducted with purposively selected stakeholders, including church leaders, traditional leaders, women fellowship leaders, and representatives from local government and security agencies. The interviews explored leadership roles and structures, prevailing cultural and religious norms, institutional responses to GBV, and perceptions of barriers to women's participation in governance. Probing questions were used to generate detailed insights into institutional practices and potential entry points

METHODOLOGY

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
To capture diverse community perspectives, 10 FGDs were conducted in each community, disaggregated by Christian women, men, and youth. Each discussion brought together 8–10 participants in a safe and moderated environment. The FGDs examined community understandings of gender roles, social norms that sustain GBV, barriers to reporting violence, and the perceived influence of religious and cultural institutions on gender relations. Discussions also provided an opportunity to explore community-driven ideas for change and reactions to potential project interventions.

InstitutionalAudit
An institutional assessment was carried out using a standardized checklist across four churches and two traditional councils in the study communities. The audit focused on governance structures, gender composition of leadership, existence of written gender or GBV policies, availability of reporting and referral systems, training programs, and institutional readiness to adopt gender-sensitive reforms. This component helped identify critical institutional gaps and opportunities for strengthening community-based GBV response mechanisms.

Data Management and Analysis
Data from household surveys were entered into SPSS for statistical analysis, generating descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations disaggregated by sex, age, and leadership status. Qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs were transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically using NVivo, allowing for the identification of patterns, narratives, and community voices. Institutional audit results were compiled into profiles and compared across institutions to highlight strengths, weaknesses, and reform opportunities. By triangulating findings from these complementary methods, the baseline survey provides a robust evidence base for project design, ensuring interventions are grounded in the lived experiences of community members and aligned with institutional realities in Liji and Zambuk.

METHODOLOGY

Analysis

Findings across tools consistently point to the need for integrated interventions that address both cultural and religious dimensions of gender inequality. While household surveys provide quantitative benchmarks, KIIs and FGDs offer rich context for understanding resistance and opportunities for transformation. Institutional audits confirm systemic gaps in response mechanisms.

Quality Control during Field Survey

Quality control during field work was closely monitored to enhance integrity of the data. The process of data management started in the field where the enumerators ensured that they collected quality data by following all the quality procedures taught during the training. The supervisors ensured they were physically present in at least 20% of the interviews. During this time they checked for accuracy in administration of the interviews. This accompaniment was done on a purely random basis.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to undertaking the household survey and focus group discussions, the research team met with community leaders to inform them of the survey, its goals, and the desire to conduct the interviews in their community. A thorough consent procedure was conducted with all prospective participants prior to recruitment and questioning for the household survey, Key Informant Interview, the focus group discussions and international audit. Participation in the study was contingent upon a respondent's verbal agreement to participate in the survey.



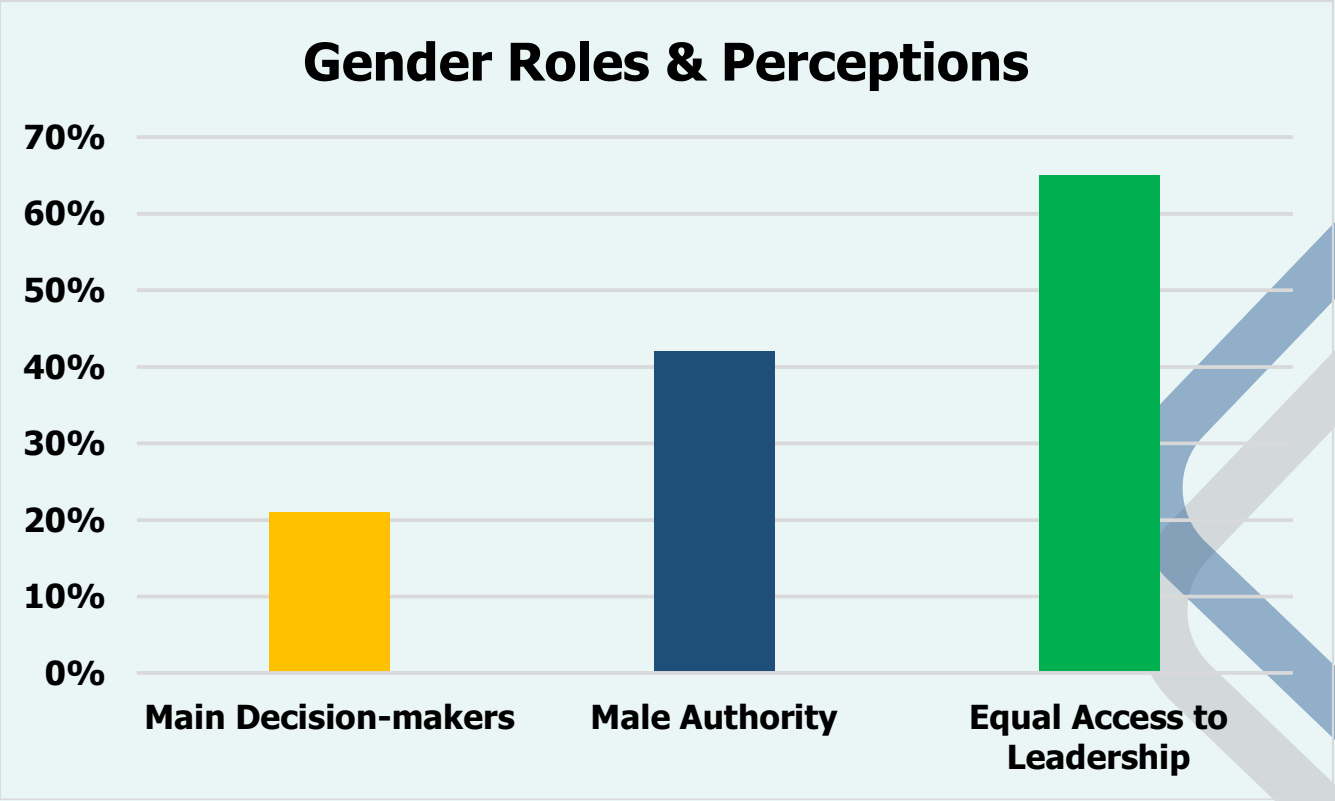
KEY FINDINGS

FINDINGS

Household Survey

Gender Roles & Perceptions

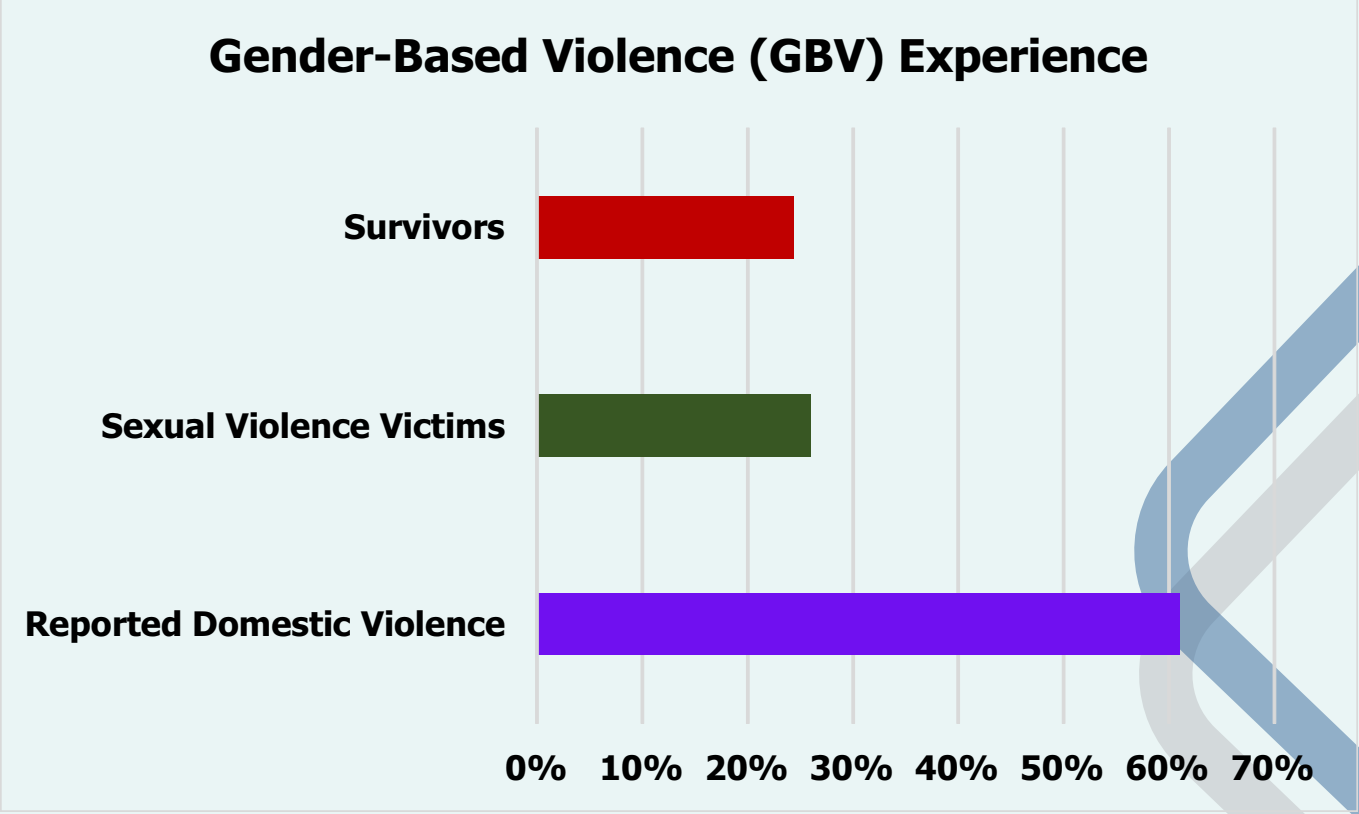
21% of respondents believe men should be the head of the household (main decision-makers). **42%** agree that women should not challenge male authority in public. **65%** think women should have equal access to leadership roles in religious institutions.



FINDINGS

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Experience

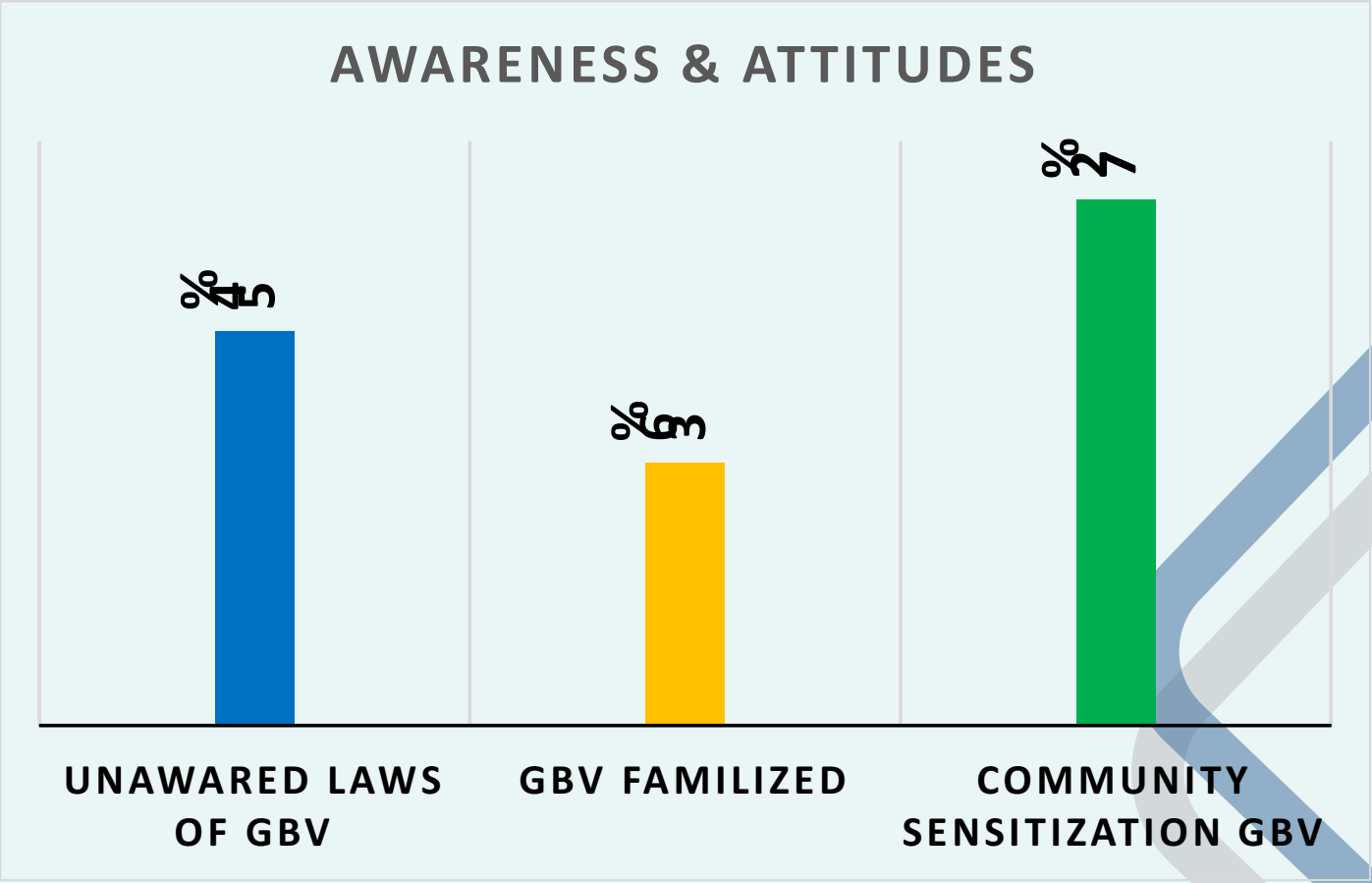
61% of women reported experiencing some form of domestic violence.
26% of respondents know someone who has experienced sexual violence.
24.3% of survivors sought help from formal institutions (police, health centers, etc.).



FINDINGS

Awareness & Attitudes

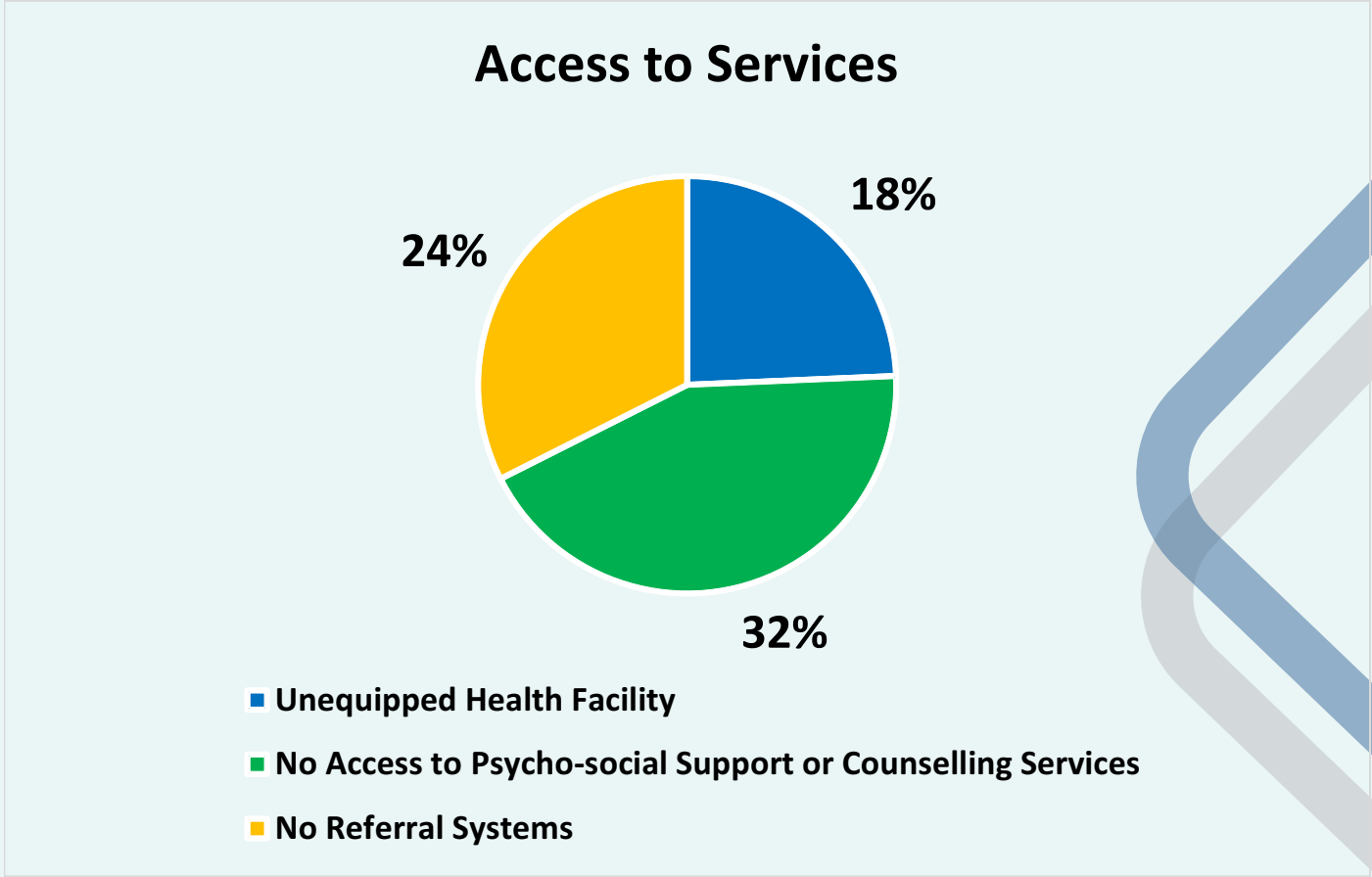
54% are unaware of laws protecting women from GBV. **36%** believe GBV is a private family matter and should not be discussed publicly. **72%** support community sensitization on gender equality and GBV prevention.



FINDINGS

Access to Services

18% say health facilities near them are not equipped to handle GBV cases. **32%** report no access to psycho-social support or counseling services. **24%** have heard of any referral system for GBV survivors.



FINDINGS

Key Informant Interview

Cultural and Religious Influence: Religious and traditional leaders hold significant sway over community norms. Many still uphold patriarchal views, though some are open to change.
Gender Roles: Women are largely excluded from leadership and decision-making spaces, especially in religious and cultural institutions.
GBV Awareness: While leaders acknowledge the existence of GBV, many lack the tools or training to address it effectively
Change Potential: There's a willingness among some leaders to support gender equality if guided and equipped appropriately.

Institutional Audit

Policy Gaps: Most institutions lack formal policies or frameworks to address GBV or promote gender equality.
Capacity Deficits: Religious and cultural institutions have limited capacity to respond to GBV cases or support survivors.
Training Needs: Staff and leaders are not trained on gender-sensitive approaches or survivor-centered care.
Collaboration Weaknesses: Institutions rarely collaborate with legal, health, or social services, limiting their effectiveness.

FINDINGS

Focus Group Discussions

1. **Gender Roles and Cultural Expectations**
Women are expected to be submissive and defer to male authority in both household and community settings.
Leadership roles are male-dominated, with women often relegated to support functions.

"Even if a woman has a good idea, she must wait for her husband to speak first."
— *Female participant, Zambuk.*

2. **Experiences and Perceptions of GBV**
Domestic violence is common, but rarely reported due to fear, shame, and cultural silence.
Sexual violence against girls is acknowledged but often minimized or blamed on the victims.

"My neighbor beats his wife often. People say it's their private matter."
— *Female participant, Zambuk*
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"Some say the girl was asking for it because of how she dressed. That's not right."
— *Youth participant, Liji.*

3. **Awareness and Education**
Limited awareness of GBV laws and rights, especially among rural women and youth. Desire for education and sensitization, especially through churches and z

"I didn't know there's a law against beating your wife. We need to be taught."
— *Female participant, Zambuk*
"If our pastors talk about it, people will listen."
— *Male participant, Lij*
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4. **Opportunities for Change**
Women's groups and youth fellowships are active and willing to engage.
Religious platforms are powerful tools for shifting norms and promoting equality.
"If the church starts preaching equality, things will change."
— *Youth participant, Liji*

FINDINGS

Demographic information for Household Survey

In Liji, majority of the respondents interviewed were females 60% though most of the households were headed by males (90%). This implies that the majority of the people interviewed in Liji are women. 48% were males and 52%were females in Zambuk. Respondents with disability (physical, visual or hearing) were 3% in Liji and 6% in Zambuk Majority of the respondents in these communities were married, for instance 78% in Liji were married and 67% in Zambuk. Respondent's education differed in the two communities, however in Liji and Zambuk, majority had primary education 64% and 55% respectively. 26% had college /University education and 52% had secondary education.

Challenges and Lesson Learned

During the field work, some the challenges encountered were in the aspect of cooperation and convenience in the sense that some the respondents were not comfortable and free to give a credible and valid information due to fear and sometimes low self-esteem and off course some of the institutions audited did not cooperate with the interview, those that cooperated couldn't give a complete information saying it's confidential. However, the Lessons learned from those tough experience is simply respecting other people's decisions and also the need to follow procedure as to when and how to approach the authority and the citizens as a whole regarding social issue as such.



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

Capacity Building
- Train Christian women leaders in advocacy, counseling, and community mobilization.
- Develop gender-sensitive theological resources for faith leaders.

Cultural Engagement
- Facilitate dialogue with cultural leaders to reinterpret harmful norms.
- Support community-led campaigns that promote positive masculinity and gender equity.

Strengthen GBV Response Systems
- Establish GBV reporting and referral protocols in churches and community centers.
- Train staff on survivor-centered approaches and confidentiality.

Promote Women's Leadership
- Create mentorship networks for emerging women leaders.
- Advocate for inclusive decision-making structures in religious and cultural institutions.

Policy and Advocacy
- Collaborate with local governments to enforce GBV laws and support survivors.
- Launch public awareness campaigns using faith-based and cultural messaging.

CONCLUSION

The baseline study underscores the urgent need for culturally and religiously grounded approaches to gender equality and GBV prevention. Empowering Christian Women and engaging cultural leaders offers a strategic pathway for sustainable Social Transformation in Nigeria.

