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**Cultural Resistance and the Law: Assessing the Implementation of the
Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPPA) in Osun State**

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Abstract

This study examined the implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPPA) of 2015, focusing on how cultural resistance weakened its effectiveness. The implementation and domestication in 2021 in Osun State marked a new era in the fight against Gender-Based Violence. Despite domestication, entrenched institutional limitations, socio-cultural norms, and patriarchal traditions, its success is hindered. A qualitative desk review was adopted, drawing on primary data from policy documents, while media reports, supported by the extant literature, provided secondary data. Legal pluralism theory was adopted as a framework of analysis. Despite awareness of these harmful traditional norms, religious and traditional leaders continue to resolve issues through customary practices that contradict government provisions, making survivors face limited access to justice, inadequate support services, and stigma. At the same time, the law enforcement agency has limited training, and its campaign efforts for VAPPA remain low, especially in rural communities where its prevalence is high. Compared with other states in Nigeria, Osun State lags in its institutional and domestication efforts. It highlighted that culturally sensitive, diverse traditional strategies needed to be integrated with legal provisions to promote restorative justice. Recommended that both religious and traditional leaders be educated on the legal provisions, that indigenous research be conducted on harmful cultural practices, and that gender studies be incorporated into formal education. Government policy, integrated with community engagement and dialogue, creates meaningful and accessible justice amid cultural drift.

Keywords: Gender-based Violence, Cultural practices, statutory law, constitutionalism, domestic violence

Introduction

Globally, gender-based violence (GBV) has been a persistent and pervasive issue. Often, it is shielded by entrenched cultural norms, religious interpretations, and institutional inertia (Westminster Foundation for Democracy, 2022). Nigeria has seen increased momentum in implementing the Violence against Persons Prohibition Act of 2015, yet its efforts and effectiveness in Osun State remain limited. Media coverage of the VAPPA in Osun State primarily focuses on legislative milestones and advocacy campaigns, with limited coverage of survivors' experiences or case outcomes. The #JUSTICE4SGBV/SURVIVORS initiative, launched in Osogbo, received attention but failed to arouse sustained public discourse. A national survey conducted by Invictus Africa reported that only 49.3% of Nigerians had heard of the VAPP. Among them, just 29% understood its provisions, with awareness significantly lower among rural residents and

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those with limited education, indicating a critical gap in public knowledge and engagement (The Guardian, 2025).

The VAPP Act was designed to combat different forms of GBV/VAW, including harmful cultural practices such as female Genital Mutilation (FGM), harmful widowhood practices, and wife battery, and all other forms of abuse that affect women's psychological well-being (Anyogu & Okpalaobi, 2017). The enactment of legal provisions does not depend solely on their implementation provisions, but also on effective domestication, especially where there is little or no awareness. While the federal government sought VAPPA implementation across all 36 States of the federation, only 34 States, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), complied (Partners West Africa Nigeria, 2025). The enactment complemented existing laws, such as the Criminal Code Cap 34, Volume 2 of 2002, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Law of 2013, and the Child Rights Law of Osun State, 2007.

Osun State represents the compelling intersection between law, custom, and resistance, as communities view harmful cultural practices as essential components of the Yoruba identity. This perception undermined the implementation of VAPPA, as people prioritised cultural identity, beliefs, and norms over legal provisions. According to Ipas Nigeria (2024), Osun State is one of the states in Nigeria that struggles with domestication due to embedded traditional cultural norms and beliefs that hinder its successful implementation.

Research Problem

With the domestication of the VAPP Law in Osun state, entrenched cultural practices persist as a generational inheritance. Amid this persistence, the law continues to become ineffective. The conflict between statutory and customary law revealed a critical gap. Although VAPP Law exists, its implementation in local communities in Osun State is challenging. The constraints between customary law and statutory law need to be examined to understand how local law can be localised to accommodate fundamental human rights, while also identifying the barriers that hinder its effectiveness.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative literature review approach, using secondary data sources. The material reviewed includes academic journal publications,

books, relevant policy documents, archival materials, and newspaper reports that directly address gender-based violence and the VAPPA Law.

Cultural Resistance: Concept and Manifestation

Cultural resistance is the way people push back against any legal provision that seeks to challenge their beliefs (Merry, 1995; Haastrup, 2025). It is the conscious or unconscious opposition that challenges legal, political, or ideological reforms intended to dismantle harmful cultural practices (Jegede, 2025). Resistance may be obvious or subtle, and may be expressed through non-compliance with the law, selective case and enforcement, the raging of public voices, and the reinterpretation or deliberate misinformation of such acts. Ipas Nigeria (2024) reported that community and religious leaders, as well as some government officials, doubted the applicability of the VAPP Law due to the perception that it erodes indigenous traditions and cultures. The deeply embedded cultural practices and resistance to the legal provision posed a critical question about the relationships between law and society. Omoniyi (2020) and Aragbuwa and Omotunde (2022) note that these cultural practices are deeply embedded in the community, part of Yoruba identity, and culturally normalised. These practices conflict with the legal provisions of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPPA), weakening its effectiveness and efficiency, as cultural allegiance undermines the law enforcement agency's efficacy.

For instance, despite the campaigns against FGM, it remains a stark phenomenon in Osun State, with its prevalence primarily in rural communities. Izevbizua and Omoruyi (2024) have noted that weak law, systemic failure, and the handling of perpetrators influenced the continuous and persistent nature of FGM. Similarly, Fitchett (2024) argues that harmful practices like wife battery, widowhood rites, and forced marriage are seen as a normal obligation of tradition, making it difficult for victims and survivors to seek support. Thus, entrenched patriarchal culture will hamper the effective implementation of VAPPA due to the widespread acceptance of these norms (Olademo, 2022; Idowu et al., 2023).

Silva et al. (2024) observe that harmful practices are prevalent, as indigenous traditions and displacement pressures result in a hybrid form of resistance that complicates enforcement. The authors emphasised that as people from the South-west migrated, they continued to uphold their culture. However, community leaders' respect for culture outweighs the Statutory law. Chinagorom et al. (2024) have noted that despite Nigeria ratifying various

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legislative frameworks, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), implementation remains weak due to cultural resistance and pushback.

Theoretical Framework

The study used the Legal Pluralism framework as its foundation. The theory recognises the coexistence of different legal systems, statutory, customary, religious, and informal, within a single socio-political space (Mukaddam, 2024; Hariri & Babussalam, 2024). Legal pluralism is not aligned with a singular authority of law but appreciates multiple authorities and acknowledges a normative order (Seminario, 2024). This framework aligns with the Nigerian context, where the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015, intersects with cultural and religious traditions, making its existence difficult to accept.

The foundational proponent of Legal Pluralism is Eugen Ehrlich, whose seminal work emphasised the concept of “*living law*”, the norms that govern everyday life outside the formal legal system (Ehrlich & Ziegert, 2017). The authors argued that the most acceptable known laws are not those codified by the state but those deeply entrenched and accepted by the community through practices and social institutions. In Osun State, the religious and traditional rulers are deeply embedded in customary law and have authority within their cultural jurisdictions to address harmful cultural practices and GBV, thereby sidelining the VAPPA Law and weakening its effectiveness and legitimacy.

Building on Ehrlich’s foundation, Sally Engle Merry expanded Legal Pluralism into the realm of human rights and gender justice, exploring how some laws are resisted and rejected at the international level due to embedded cultural practices. However, the global human rights framework is embedded in the national framework but is mostly resisted, reshaped, and interpreted in practice by local communities (Merry, 1988; 2006a; 2006b; 2024). This relates to the case of Osun State, where the domestication of the VAPPA represents an attempt to localise global norms in the fight against all forms of harmful cultural practices against women and girl children. In contrast, the cultural resistances challenge effective implementation and domestication because of the ingrained patriarchal and gender norms and practices.

Furthermore, Merry (2006b), in the analysis of *transnational legal culture*, has argued that law must not be radically imposed but must gain legitimacy by being widely upheld. Legal Pluralism not only helps us understand the tension between law and culture but also recognises the harmonisation of multiple legal systems through culturally sensitive approaches and community engagement. The lack of awareness and education, and survivors' delayed seeking of justice, hinder the effectiveness and reliability of the VAPP law.

Despite its contribution to the intersection of culture and law, it is a critique that Legal Pluralism may be indirectly supporting harmful traditional practices and subjecting women to violence. For instance, customary resolution of disputes may prioritise the reconciliation and silencing of the victim or survivor, thereby reinforcing patriarchal traditional practices. As Webber et al. (2020) have noted, the acceptance of radical Legal Pluralism must be aligned with the acceptance of fundamental human rights and gender justice. In Osun State, while traditional cultural practices must be preserved, they must be consistent with fundamental human rights.

Domestication of VAPP Law in Nigerian States

The implementation of the VAPP law in Nigeria serves as a milestone in the fight against gender-based violence and other harmful cultural practices. With survivors' confidence and legal protection, perpetrators are duly accountable for their acts, and advocacy and community awareness have helped shift people's mindsets. As of 2025, only 34 states, including FCT, have domesticated the law, with varying degrees of implementation. Some have extracted parts of the law, while others still rely on old laws and have yet to make use of provisions (Partners West Africa Nigeria, 2025). These show that most women are not getting due justice, especially those who are vulnerable.

Research highlighted how states like Kano and Taraba failed to implement the law due to several factors, like socio-cultural barriers, religious interpretations, institutional weakness, and unresponsive legislators in the legislatures that continue to obstruct the recognition of marital rape and domestic violence (Essien, 2023; Partners West Africa Nigeria, 2025). The research underscores the broader challenges of protecting women's rights in Nigeria, as the failure of Kano and Taraba to domesticate the acts poses a serious threat to the justice system and reinforces impunity (Obagboye, 2020a; Westminster Foundation for Democracy, 2023; Partners West Africa

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Nigeria, 2025).

Lagos and Ekiti States have taken on a new dimension in the fight against GBV, adopting alternative frameworks to combat its menace. Lagos enacted the *Protection Against Domestic Violence Law* in 2007, while Ekiti harmonised its existing frameworks through the *Gender-Based Violence (Prohibition) Amendment Law* of 2019. These states have made efforts to implement and enforce the VAPP law, thereby strengthening the delivery of justice to victims. The implications of integrating VAPP Law into communities include challenging harmful cultural norms, restoring survivors' confidence, facilitating effective reporting of cases, and promoting cooperation between government and civil society (Ikuteyijo et al., 2024). However, resistance from traditional institutions, limited awareness, inadequate resources, and insufficient legal and counselling support services pose barriers. VAPP Law is an enforceable legal document; having been assented to by the president, all states must domesticate it through their state assembly as constitutional and moral imperatives. Therefore, any state that fails to domesticate it conflicts with the power of the Constitution and exposes its citizens to a cycle of violence.

Table 1. Domestication of the VAPP Act in Nigerian States

S/N	STATE	Legislative Status (Bill)	Executive Status (Law)
1	FCT	Passed	Assented to on 23rd May 2015
2	Abia	Passed on 3rd December 2019	Assented to on 1st October 2020
3	Adamawa	Passed on 1st March 2021	Assented to on 30th August 2021
4	Akwa Ibom	Passed on 10th June 2019	Assented to on 19th June 2020
5	Anambra	Passed in 2017	Assented in 2017
6	Bauchi	Passed in May 2015	Assented in 2020
7	Bayelsa	Passed on 17th February 2021	Assented in 2020
8	Benue	Passed on 26th May 2019	Assented to on 28th May 2019

9	Borno	Passed in 2022	Assented to on 10th January 2022
10	Cross River	Passed in 2021	Assented to on 31st December 2021
11	Delta	Passed on 28th July 2020	Assented to on 7th October 2020
12	Ebonyi	Passed on 1st May 2018	Assented in May 2018
13	Edo	Passed on 17th June 2021	Assented to on 5th August 2021
14	Ekiti*	Passed the Gender-Based Violence (Prohibition) Amendment Law 2019	
15	Enugu	Passed on 4th April 2019	Assented in April 2019
16	Gombe	Passed on 18th October 2022	Assented to on 13th December 2022
17	Imo	Passed on 27th July 2021	Assented to on 17th December 2021
18	Jigawa	Passed on 24th February 2021	Assented to on 24th February 2021
19	Kaduna	Passed in December 2018	Assented on 1st December 2018
20	Kano	Yet to be passed	—
21	Katsina	Passed	Assented to on 22nd December 2023
22	Kebbi	Passed on 30th September 2021	Assented to on 27th July 2022
23	Kogi	Passed on 22nd March 2021	Assented to on 27th June 2022
24	Kwara	Passed on 24th September 2020	Assented to on 15th October 2020
25	Lagos*	Passed the Protection Against Domestic Violence Law (2007)	—

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26	Nasarawa	Passed on 6th January 2021	Assented to on 21st January 2021
27	Niger	Passed on 24th February 2021	Assented to on 3rd November 2021
28	Ogun	Passed on 17th January 2018	Assented in 2018
29	Ondo	Passed on 2nd July 2021	Assented to on 15th July 2021
30	Osun	Passed on 12th August 2021	Assented to on 11th October 2021
31	Oyo	Passed on 18th December 2020	Assented to on 26th February 2021
32	Plateau	Passed on 24th December 2020	Assented to on 19th May 2022
33	Rivers	Passed in January 2020	Awaiting assent in 2021
34	Sokoto	Passed on 19th January 2021	Assented to on 22nd November 2021
35	Taraba	Passed on 24th February 2022	—
36	Yobe	Passed in 2021	Assented to on 16th April 2022
37	Zamfara	Passed in December 2023	Assented in 2023

Source: VAPP Tracker, 2025-Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015

Legal Framework and the Challenge of Domestication in Osun State

The VAPP Act of 2015 gained wider momentum in response to GBV in Nigeria (Adelakun et al., 2025). Its passage spurred collaborations among diverse stakeholders at all levels in their campaigns and awareness-raising efforts. Before its implementation, Nigeria was known for its older frameworks, such as the Criminal and Penal Code, which could not address the offences related to harmful cultural practices and GBV. Izevbizua and Omoruyi (2024) have noted that VAPP Law is the first of its kind to address all forms of harmful cultural practices and gender-based violence, offering a practical approach to justice and dignity. However, non-compliance and

weak political will undermine its effectiveness.

Government officials, stakeholders, and civil society organisations in Osun State advocate the implementation of VAPPA through awareness and sensitisation programmes and activities. Akintade (2021) reports that the wife of the former Governor implored all stakeholders to reinforce the implementation through collaborative efforts by government agencies, civil society organisations, and traditional rulers in the state. Stakeholders have identified weaknesses in the implementation of the laws and have mounted pressure on the government to enforce them, according to the Administration of Criminal Justice Law. This requires strengthening the Sexual Assault Referral Centres to ensure they are functional (Eighteen Eleven Media, 2023). IPAS Nigeria (2024) noted that the law enforcement agency lacks sufficient training, while advocacy and awareness remain low, especially in rural areas with high prevalence. Survivors mostly face stigmatisation, limited access to justice, isolation, banishment, and support services, such as shelter, mental counselling, which further weaken the law's intended action against GBV/VAW. Umeh et al. (2021) note that violence in Nigeria lacks a clear definition. However, the VAPP Law provides a detailed categorisation of violence, ranging from physical, psychological, emotional, economic, sexual and different harmful traditional practices. However, not all states have domesticated or implemented the law; even where they have, they are saddled with bureaucratic hurdles in the judicial system.

The Osun State legislature passed the VAPPA in August 2021, and the governor assented it in October 2021 (Idris, 2025). However, the law has suffered significantly from the absence of post-legislative scrutiny. The non-institutional capability remains a constant obstacle. Arowolo (2023) notes that without specialisation of the special court and training and retraining of officers, the VAPP Law will be ineffective. In Osun State, the ineffective institutional capacity has left many citizens neglected, and survivors coerced into abandoning justice.

Onochie and Nmor (2024) argue that judicial delay in delivering judgments and the misinterpretation of the law undermine the law's effectiveness. As Ekhaton (2019) rightly observed, the promotion of women's rights development often clashes with the deeply patriarchal practice, while people of Osun state see the VAPP Law as an external imposition. The challenge, therefore, is not to see it as a tool for destroying their community's cultural identity, but as an intervention to combat harmful practices and protect fundamental human rights.

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Law vs. Culture: Analysis of Findings and Discussion

Compared with other Nigerian states, Osun lags in implementing the VAPP law. Ekiti State has harmonised its GBV laws and set up specialised courts, while Lagos passed its Protection Against Domestic Violence Law in 2007. These states highlight the importance of institutional coordination, budget support, and public participation in turning legal frameworks into fundamental protections (Westminster Foundation for Democracy, 2023; Partners West Africa Nigeria, 2025). In its evaluation, IPAS Nigeria (2024) found that although 32 States have provisions for issuing protection orders, only 18 have incorporated them into broader GBV tracking systems. The report stressed that domestication alone is insufficient; effective implementation, monitoring, and community involvement are crucial for achieving meaningful results (IPAS Nigeria, 2024).

Aina-Pelemo, Olujobi, and Yebisi (2023) have noted that Nigeria's legislative framework needs urgent attention as survivors find it difficult to access. Imam-Tamim (2022) notes that there are difficulties between statutory law and the religious system, as the legal system must strike a balance to ensure community adherence. Obagboye (2020b) highlights the difficulty in the lack of compliance in the enforcement of the law in Nigeria and the power to criminalise sexual violence. Meanwhile, Izevbizua, Benin, and Omoruyi (2022) have asserted that the government must strictly enforce the law to eliminate harmful traditional practices justified by the glorification of culture (Igwe, 2015). In Osun State, reconciliation serves as another root, prioritising perpetrators over accountability (Idowu et al., 2023). Ugwu (2020) notes that the law is established as an imposition or external force to destroy the existing *status quo*. These perceptions fuel resistance and challenge the implementation of GBV legislation.

Chika and Nneka (2014) have noted that these harmful traditions are commonly practised in societies in the Eastern part of the country, making adherence to legal enactments difficult. Similarly, Okondu (2023) noted the need to incorporate indigenous knowledge of the law at the local level, especially regarding gender discrimination, and to involve relevant stakeholders to help uphold the law. Oduola and Muthuki (2018) have found that in Oyo State, there was a revolt against the law and a reluctance to accept them as victims. Anyone who made a case or reported the perpetration of GBV would be banished, shamed, pressured, and even

stigmatised, as upholding traditional institutions is considered more important than legalised law. The situation is the same in Osun State, where any individual who reports such claims would be stigmatised and shamed (Eighteen Eleven Media, 2023). Cultural silence also reinforces harmful cultural practices. In Osun State, cultural silence receives little attention, and the law is seen as an abstraction, with limited visibility in public discourse and public opinion (Idowu et al., 2023).

Conclusions

The study explored the tension between statutory legal frameworks and entrenched cultural norms in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in Nigeria, with a particular focus on Osun State. It is important to note that while Osun State's domestication of the VAPP Act is a commendable legislative achievement, its implementation continues to reveal gaps. Cultural resistance, institutional shortcomings, and low public awareness continue to limit the law's effectiveness. Closing these gaps requires a different approach that combines legal reform with community engagement, capacity building, and ongoing advocacy.

Findings from IPAS Nigeria (2024) revealed that the law enforcement agency has low training, and while the awareness and campaign for VAPPA remain low, especially in rural communities where its prevalence is high, survivors face stigmatisation or banishment from the community, limited access to justice, and inadequate support services. The absence of legal services, support aids, and shelter makes the victim more vulnerable, compounds their problem and undermines their justice. The 2020 pandemic exposed the fragility of GBV/VAW response to the act, as economic hardship rose because of the lockdown, many women are in a vulnerable position, and this pandemic shut down the whole world, as women faced severe domestic violence from their spouses. Osun state is seen as one of the hotspots of GBV/VAW in Nigeria during the Lockdown, and there is a need for culturally sensitive interventions that go beyond the legal provision of the law. GBV response of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) by the Centre for Women's Health and Information (CEWHIN), in Osun state, who advocate for the inclusiveness and survival of this centre's approach (Westminster Foundation for Democracy, 2022). However, these initiatives remain ineffective, unsustainable, and limited without community and institutional support.

The study analysed how cultural resistance continues to obstruct the

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government's efforts and responses to GBV/VAW. The historical background, its domestications, and its deeply rooted cultural practices challenged the authority of the Osun State government. Using the qualitative method, the study uncovers the tension between law and custom, while revealing societal expectations, cultural norms, and religious norms that threaten statutory authority and affect justice. The study recommended an actionable strategy to address this, promoting a survival-centred approach, raising awareness of its legal implications, and engaging traditional leaders.

Most importantly, the study concluded that there should be a community-driven approach to gendered justice, how these customs can be localised to align with human rights, and how cultural practices sensitisation programs can be established or reformed, without practices that affect the dignity of women and girls. Rather than dismantling cultural identity, the study called for a supportive environment, examined its role in shaping social norms, and highlighted its commitment to dignity, justice, and equality for all people.

Tradition, culture and religion continue to subject women to violent acts and shape their perception of morality, justice and gender roles. These practices often negate the law, creating fear and stigmatisation and silencing of women into extinction as survival or victims failed to seek redress, and perpetrators enjoy accountability given to them as the patriarchal traditional system is deeply ingrained in the Nigerian system. However, the tension is not insurmountable, as dialogue, innovation, reforms, and community engagement offer opportunities for both the community and legal authority.

As Omorogiwa (2022) argues, the law should not be, as its name implies, merely statutory, but an act that people see and commit to change without resistance or the imposition of authority. In interpreting this study's findings, it becomes clear that there is tension between law and culture, and that this is not a binary conflict but a dynamic negotiation. To avoid incompatibility between legal norms and cultural values, they must be harmonised through inclusive, participatory processes. The VAPP Act provides a legal foundation, but its success depends on societal willingness to embrace change and protect the rights of all people.

VAPP law has gained significant momentum in Osun State since its establishment as a tool to combat the harmful effects of GBV. Despite its domestication, it is constrained by entrenched adherence to cultural practices. Thus, the law must be friendly and harmonise with the cultural

realities, with empathy, education, training, and creative awareness campaigns in the media and public programmes. For any government policy to succeed, a family must be settled, as law only works when the home front is peaceful and free of poverty, problems, and challenges.

Recommendations

The recommendation offers a range of holistic approaches, including religious engagement and traditional inclusion, education and awareness, gender-sensitive law enforcement, and the community-based VAAPA track. Through these, Nigeria and Osun State can move forward in responding to GBV and harmful cultural practices. Firstly, traditional and religious leaders are not just custodians of traditional law; they also play an important role in their communities, where they are respected and serve as gatekeepers of culture and traditions. The statute law should not compete with traditional law but should face reality and involve local stakeholders through training and retraining, while imposing consequences in a friendly manner.

Secondly, many rural communities are distant from these laws; there is a need for community-based programmes in rural areas, as non-governmental organisations cannot track them. These community members will serve as a direct link to the non-governmental organisation for reporting cases of harmful cultural practices. To ensure that survivors are not silenced by fear or stigma, community-based reporting mechanisms must be established. These systems, managed by trusted local actors such as women's groups, youth leaders, or health workers, can provide safe spaces for disclosure and facilitate timely referrals to legal and psychosocial services. Anonymity and confidentiality must be prioritised to protect survivors and encourage reporting. Other ways, such as storytelling, narrative, radio, and television programmes, can educate people in rural areas and help VAPPA gain a foothold, with the laws announced consistently and clearly, and spoken in the community's indigenous language for clarity.

Thirdly, the judiciary, police, and other officers who will attend to cases of GBV and harmful cultural practices must have the necessary knowledge. They must understand the legal terms, report the case carefully to avoid shaming the victim in society, and be detailed and understand the cultural context of the issue at hand, without jeopardising the case.

Girls and women must be educated and enlightened right from childhood to avoid violence, not that the educated do not witness violent acts. However,

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it reduces perpetrators' actions, as awareness-raising makes it easier for women to understand their fundamental human rights and the appropriate channels to forward their complaints. It is important to incorporate it into the teaching of civic education or critical pedagogy, as law, culture, and gender will form the bulk of it and be passed down from one generation to the next.

Despite the domestication of VAPPA in Osun State, local people still see it as a hindrance to their culture. However, integrating such a law into the community is paramount, as it will help implement multiple strategies to enhance its effectiveness and enlighten the community about its legal implications and rewards. Also, during integration, it must include human and capital development, supporting victims, and only through these means can we move beyond this paper approach and use it to transform lives.

Religion also forms part of the culture as it coexists. The teaching in the holy book should be the one to preach gender justice and interpret it rightly. These will help ensure that practices are not violent, in accordance with fundamental human rights. As religion preaches peace and support for gender equality and equity, harmful cultural practices will continue to exist.

Community-based research should be conducted periodically to track the law's effectiveness through case reporting. These will help the relevant stakeholders evaluate the feedback to the authority, determine whether the law is effective, and assess whether it is making progress toward its stated purpose. Such data will not only inform policy refinement but also offer scalable models for other states navigating similar tensions.

Finally, if the Legal Act is to be progressive, it must not rely solely on statutes but must also speak to people's minds and ideas. However, the battle is not only a Legal battle but a cultural reckoning; it demands love, kindness, empathy, and it must be protective and transformative, not imposing or forcing. There is a need for a mindset of cultural change that aligns with fundamental human rights, not as resistance. It is important to know that all recommendations provided here are not gainsaying but serve as a paradigm shift in the context of VAPPA domestication and implementation. It is necessary to note that Legal reform must show empathy, community engagement, educational transformation, cultural

reforms and dialogue; only then can Law transcend into justice, dignity and societal renewal of hope in culture and traditions.

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