

Rape as a Rising Traumatic Norm in Nigeria Society: Need for Value Re –Orientation towards Nation Building

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Abstract

There is increase in crime in the Nigerian society today. There is no passing day that incidence of homicide, bandit, arm robbery and rape to mention some are not repeated in various news media. The Nigerian police recorded 717 rape cases between January and May, 2020 (mutual, June 15, 2020). Rape cases have risen to unprecedented height and this Negative trend cannot be tolerated any further in our society, where peace and tranquility is much desired. Without a peaceful and tranquil environment, development of the economy may be truncated. The members of society have been impacted with this stressor called rape. And consequently a number of persons has suffered psychological problems. This condition if not arrested can negatively affect an individual's economic power, work adjustment and livelihood the researchers perceive the problem of rape are complicated because studies have revealed that it is largely undisclosed by most survivals, under reported by news media and understudied by Researchers. Therefore if no intervention is instituted by way of national value, reorientation of citizens through the educational sector, rape may continue to thrive as a traumatic norm in the Nigeria society, this paper discuss bothered on rape as a traumatic norm, disclosure by victim news media and educational intervention through value reorientation. Necessary suggestion are made on how to end this menace in Nigeria.

Keywords: Rape, traumatic norm, value reorienting national building, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

There is increase in crime in the Nigerian society today. There is no passing day that incidence of homicide, bandit, arm robbery and rape to mention some are not repeated in various news media. The Nigerian police recorded 717 rape cases between January and May 2020 (mutual, June 15, 2020). This is unprecedented and cannot be allowed in a society where peace and tranquility is much desired. Without a peaceful and tranquil environment development of the economy may be truncated. The members of society have been impacted with a number of psychological problems that can affect their economic and livelihood and contribute to national development. Rape has in recent time become a global social, health and human rights problem. It is complicated because the incidence are largely undisclosed by most survivals, under

reported by news media and understudied by researchers. Rape in uncertain nature remains a traumatic experience with devastating psychological and emotional consequence on victims and other members of society. Stigmatization is a process of producing and reproducing inequitable power relations, where negative attitudes towards a group of people, on the basis of particular attributes such as their HIV status, gender, physical disability, albinism, sexuality or behaviour, are created and sustained to legitimize dominant groups in society (Effiom, Cyril & Brenda, 2020). Education stake holders such as school psychologist, guidance counseling administrators, parents and government are turned about this rising traumatic norm in the Nigerian society. With this the present researchers insist that there is need for value reorientation which is expected to translate to peaceful

coexistence that would guarantee desired development. This paper discuss issues nature of rape and involvement, physical and psychological, emotional and social effect of rape, disclosure of rape incidence/factors hindering disclosure/effort at curbing the menace, need for value reorientation, value orientation against rape behavior through school programs and co-curricular activities. Theoretical Review .This paper is guided by the tenets of behaviorists, socialization and social cognitive theories, which hold that social behaviors are as a result of nurture or training. In this paper Bandura Social cognitive theory (2004) is apt. This theory posits that cognitive processes mediate behavioral changes and problem behaviors (criminal activities like rape behavior) are preceded by a low sense of value and competence. Therefore in this paper value reorientation of individuals across the levels of education; primary, secondary, tertiary would inculcate values in them to take the right decision about their behavior.

Nature of Rape and involvement

Rape involves lack of consent; the use of physical force, coercion, deception or threat; and the involvement of a victim that is asleep, unconscious, under aged, mentally incapacitated or physically impaired as a result of voluntary or involuntary alcohol or drug consumption. It is often associated with psychological, physical, social distress and occasionally result in fatality either from shock, severe injury or murder by the perpetrator in an attempt to conceal their identity (Ezechi, Musa, David, Wapmuk, Gbajabiamila, Idigbe, Ezeobi, Ohihoin, & Ujah, 2016). According to (Effiom, Cyril & Brenda 2020). Individuals may be stigmatized because of their ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, physical health, mental health, and so on. Many people who are stigmatized by others report their experiences and feelings of distress, shame, self-doubt, and hopelessness. Rape according to Atkinson (2008) is an act of violence which occurs when someone takes control over another by the use of physical threats or force, or by exploiting another person's inability to give or withhold consent for sex. According to (Effiom, Cyril & Brenda 2020). Stigmatization, like prejudice and social discrimination, often stems from ignorance. Many individuals may fear mental illness because they know very little about mental health conditions and their effects.

It is a legal terminology reserved for cases of penile penetration of the victim's vagina, mouth, or anus without consent. The various means used by rape perpetrators share a common characteristic; they all compromise an individual's ability to give sexual consent devoid of coercion (Ogunwale & Oshiname, 2016).

Rape is a global social, health and human rights problem that has been largely undisclosed by most survivors, under reported by news media and under studied by researchers. It is a traumatic experience with devastating health consequences, affecting both women and men globally, irrespective of class, culture, race, educational status, income and ethnic affiliation (Ezugwu, Ohayi, Iyoke, & Nnaji, 2017; Falade, & Fasuan, 2017). Although victims of rape have no age limit as babies, and the aged both males and females are vulnerable to this menace. However, it is the young unmarried women or girls who are disproportionately affected (Forke, Myers, Catalozzi, & Schwartz, 2008; WHO, 2002; Chiazor, Ozoya, Udume, & Egharevba, 2016). Persons who perpetrate rape are highly diverse, and they include persons who are known or not known to the rape survivors (Bergen, 2006; Jewkes & Abraham, 2005; Kirkwood & Cecil, 2001; Monson, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Binderup, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006; Russo, 2000; WHO, 2002). Rape is, however, believed to be more preponderant among people who know each other (Kirkwood & Cecil, 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006), such as acquaintances, friends (WHO, 2002), and dating partners (Monson et al., 2000; Russo, 2000; WHO, 2010). The abuse may involve use of objects, forcible fondling, and forcible sodomy (Hassan, Awosan, Panti1, Nasir, Tunau, Umar, Shehu, Ukwu, & Sulaiman, 2016). Forcible rape has been shown by Hassan, Awosan, Panti1, Nasir, Tunau, Umar, Shehu, Ukwu, and Sulaiman, (2016) to be more likely to involve a single victim than any other sexual assault. Personal weapons such as hands, fist, and legs are commonly used during rape however other weapons such as knife and gun have been noted to be used (Hassan, Awosan, Panti1, Nasir, Tunau, Umar, Shehu, Ukwu, & Sulaiman, 2016). Records have shown that in some cases no weapon was used (only verbal threats), but the use of weapons is more likely when the victim is older (Hassan, Awosan, Panti1, Nasir, Tunau, Umar, Shehu, Ukwu, & Sulaiman, 2016). The time of the day when rape occurs is related primarily to the age of the victim. For adult victims sexual assault is more likely to occur after midnight while the pattern in juvenile assault is said to be earlier in the day (during or after school hours). Neighbors, family members and friends take advantage of children in their care when parent are not around.

Rape can take many forms such as date rape, power rape, gang rape, anger or retaliatory rape, and sadistic rape, and can take place under very different circumstances. Rape victims are most times assaulted by one individual or several people (e.g. gang-rape); the incident may be planned or a surprise attack. Although rape occurs most commonly in the victim's home, the perpetrator's home, or in the dark corner of the street, it also takes place in many other settings, such as the

workplace, at school, in prisons, cars, the streets or open spaces (e.g. parks, farmland). The perpetrator of a sexual assault may be a date, an acquaintance, a friend, a family member, an intimate partner or former intimate partner, or a complete stranger, but more often than not, is someone known to the victim. There is no stereotypical perpetrator; sexually violent men come from all backgrounds, rich and poor, academic and uneducated, religious and non-religious. Perpetrators may be persons in positions of authority who are respected and trusted (e.g. a doctor, teacher, tourist guide, priest, police officer) and thus less likely to be suspected of being a rapists. Rape is an incident that used to be obscure, occurring once in a while but now it is parricide in many countries and the rise in the incidence in Nigeria is very devastating and highly destructive of the general psyche of the society. Stand apart rape is the new slogan of news media, is this enough?

Physical, Psychological, Emotional and Social Effect of Rape

Physically medical examination of rape survivors usually reveal that they may suffer a range of physical injuries, genital and non-genital, or in extreme cases, death. The most common forms of genital injuries are tears, ecchymosis (i.e. bruising), abrasions, redness and swelling. Non-genital physical injuries usually include bruises and contusions, lacerations, ligature marks to ankles, wrists and neck, pattern injuries (i.e. hand prints, finger marks, belt marks, bite marks) anal or rectal trauma. In addition, rape victims may be exposed to the risk of sexual transmitted infection (STI) including HIV, pelvic pain and pelvic inflammatory disease, unwanted pregnancy, urinary tract infections, unsafe abortion, and infertility. The health consequences of rape are severe, numerous and varied, and may co-morbid with psychological and emotional effects, both in the short-term and in the long-term. Psychologically and emotionally rape victims frequently experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD appears to be more common in persons who were threatened with a weapon and/or extreme physical force, in those raped by strangers, and in cases where physical injuries were inflicted. Symptoms of PTSD may manifest as intrusions and avoidance other psychological effect of rape identified by Gluck (2012) include; self blame, decompression, flashback, borderline personality disorder, sleep disorder, eating disorder, disassociation identity disorder, guilt, distrust of others, anger, feeling of personal powerlessness, poor self-esteem. Socially rape victims experience shame, defamation, stigmatization. Social distancing from friends, family members, colleagues and distrust. Escalating incidence of rape in the society leads to social upheaval, anger, fear and questions about the value system. Many individuals experiencing chronic mental health conditions may face, in addition to symptoms that may

be long-lasting or debilitating and are often difficult to deal with, the added challenge of public stigma, which arises in many cases due to misconceptions about mental health issues by (Effiom, Cyril & Brenda 2020).

Effort at Curbing the Menace of Rape in the Society

Despite the legal provisions of life imprisonment with or without canning for sexual assaulter in Nigeria, there is still record of incidence of rape in Nigeria. This may not be unconnected with the fact that most times rapist are not apprehended due to non disclosure. Other issues may be responsible for non reporting of rape cases. Cases of rape are under reported and hardly disclosed by the survivors out of fear of stigmatization. A person may feel unaccepted or experience feelings of depression, stress, or anxiety. Family members may also influence a person's desire to seek treatment, and some people may be pressured to enter an institution or seek a type of therapy they would not have chosen for themselves by (Effiom, Cyril & Brenda, 2020).

Other complex and multifaceted reasons for non-reporting are rejection by the society, back lashing and safety concerns, enduring culture of male dominance, coupled with the fact that even for cases that are reported the perpetrators are rarely prosecuted, female social and economic dis empowerment, and victim relationship to perpetrator. Similarly, Ezugwu, Ohaji, Iyoke, and Nnaji, (2017) posit that most rape victims do not disclose or report the incidents because of factors such as avoidance of stigmatization, the family may wish to keep it secret especially when the perpetrator is a family member. Also despite the severe penalty of life imprisonment for rape in Nigeria, perpetrator are hardly prosecuted and these may discourage victims from reporting. According to Geidan *et al.*, (2010); Ogunwale *et al.*, (2012), in Nigeria many rape survivors rarely seek for medical care, legal redress, and psycho-social help. Ezechi, Musa, David, Wapmuk, Gbajabiamila, Idigbe, Ezeobi, Ohihoin, Ujah, (2016) revealed that, one in every five women is a victim of rape and globally, 35% of women are rape victim with Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia reporting the highest incidence of rape. The reported figures are said to be inaccurate and often underestimate as most cases of rape are under-reported by the victims because of the associated stigma. Statistics shows that In Nigeria, only 2 of 40 cases of rape are reported, attributing this among-st other reasons, to the arduous legal requirements needed to prove the cases and the associated stigma (Ezechi, Musa, David, Wapmuk, Gbajabiamila, Idigbe, Ezeobi, Ohihoin, & Ujah, 2016). There is need to renew these legal procedures particularly the part of producing evidence after the incidence has occurred, it is traumatic to recall the experience. Olatunji (2012) conducted an extensive review of the Nigerian anti-rape law and identified shortcomings in the provisions which make

rape prevention challenging in the country. First, according to the law, rape can only be committed by a man to a woman, and it involves only penal and vaginal sex. The law does not acknowledge male rape victims nor does it recognize anal sex as part of rape. Second, a victim of rape needs to establish that penetration occurred, corroboration (or validation) of the crime needs to be established, and proof must be provided that consent was not given. The limitations with establishing consent make proving many of the few valid rape cases difficult. Overall, the low prospect of receiving legal judgment for rape stifles enthusiasm in disclosing and seeking legal recourse. More-so, the increasing incident of rape and low reporting practices among victims and survivors and the poor ways society handles the incidence underscore the need for value orientation of citizens of Nigeria. Justifying the Need to Curb Rape Behaviour. The researchers further retract on the long-term consequences associated with the crime called rape and advocate the need for everybody to join hands together and fight it. Rape has severe, acute, and chronic psychological, sexual, and reproductive impact on the well-being of survivors and this can affect their contribution to national development of the Nigerian society. Observations show that in the immediate aftermath of a sexual assault, the survivor report a variety of psychological, emotional and social responses which affect the individual psycho-social adjustment. These responses include acute stress reactions, emotional detachment, and sleep disturbances, self-blame, difficulties in social and work adjustment and sexual functioning, fear, anxiety, depression, and PTSD (Suprakash, Ajay, Murthy & Biswajit, 2017). Some individuals may experience difficulties in functioning at work, home or school. Phobias, such as fear of crowds or a fear of being alone, may begin to appear depending on where the rape took place. Sexual dysfunction or changes in a person's sex life are very common. Some of the sexual problems women often encounter after rape are sexual aversion, flashbacks of the rape during sex, vaginismus, and orgasmic dysfunction. Although every rape survivor is unique, many will have one thing in common: Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS), RTS is a cluster of emotional responses to the extreme stress experienced and profound fear of death experienced by the survivor during the sexual assault. An individual who faces stigma due to mental health challenges, or for any reason, may experience stress or other distress. When facing persistent stigma, it may be difficult for one to remember that illness is not a defining characteristic by (Effiom, Cyril & Brenda, 2020).

Most significantly perhaps, rape can have devastating long-term psychological effects, influencing and radically altering a person's entire life course. Value Reorientation against Rape through School Programs and Co-curricular activities. Rape is alarmingly becoming a norm in our society today, awareness given

to members of society institution to eradicate rape are being advocated. Thus this paper posits that an intervention through the educational system can help reorient the minds of individuals against rape behavior now and in the future. The belief is there would be peaceful coexistence, when individual live without fear of attack or assault, they can be more effective and contribute their quota to national development. The desire to correct the inappropriateness in behavior of citizens, through school should be well comprehended, given the fact that education in Nigeria national policy is regarded as an instrument for change and national development. Looking across the level of educational system the researchers has identified consistencies in the value desired by the society. For example two of the specific objective of primary education, identified are; one is to mold and develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment. Also at secondary education, the importance of character is underscored. One of the specific objectives of secondary education is to raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens. Furthermore the goals of tertiary education states among others that it shall be to 1.) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society, 2.) That university education shall make optimum contribution to national development by making all round improvement in university education to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism. Based on the foregoing it can be appreciated that the educational system primary, secondary and tertiary level provides the platform for individuals to be good citizens. Values education received from primary, secondary and tertiary ought to reflect in citizen's behaviors, attitude and intentions. Thus the present researcher belief that value orientation at this level of education can develop the mindset of individuals against involvement in rape and other gender violence.

Due to crises of poor values and lack of virtues bedeviling it. Orji (2019) called for partnership of all socialization agencies for the healing of Nigeria. Ukpong (2020) noted that rising anti-social problem among individuals are as a result of dysfunctional family setting, negative peer influences, cognitive distortion, lack of social skills and school factors. Values are beliefs and attitudes about the way things should be. Our values have suffered negative modification and acquisition of poor values orientation in the society today, and some Nigerians have acquired many negative values such as rape behavior that are anti-developmental. The aberration can hardly foster unity in the society. Rape and its consequences kills our values and can impact the younger generation negatively if rape behavior is not curbed it can further

aggravate the incidence of insecurity in Nigeria. Therefore the present researchers advocate for value reorientation in the school programs and co-curricular activities to reflect the Nigeria policy on education objectives of;

- a) Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual.
- b) Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions
- c) Moral and spiritual principles in inter-personal and human relations.
- d) Shared responsibility for the common good of society
- e) Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children
- f) Acquisition of competence necessary for self-reliance (NDE 2014)

CONCLUSION

We all dream of a better Nigeria, and we are working towards it in various ways, but with the rise in rape cases and no orientation to create awareness as well as fight against it, we end up with shattered dreams, a country without safety and among others; increase in number of rape victims, citizens constantly living in fear.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COUNSELING

The following suggestions are made for counselling;

1. School program should integrate inculcation of values to empower individuals for nation building.
2. Co-curricular activities should be enrich with the teaching of values for nation building.

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