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**Sexual Assault among Women and Children in Countries like Nigeria and USA**

Sexual assault is any sexual act performed by one person on another without the persons consent and it includes genital, oral or anal penetration by a part of the accused body or by any object. It may result from force, the threat of force either on the victim’s inability to give appropriate consent. Sexual assault has been described or categorized based on personal relationship as marital, acquaintance, incest and date rape, or legally in terms of age as statutory rape and child sexual abuse. It is a serious violent crime that has no place in any ideal society and no one can justify its prevalence in any community that thrives on mutual trust. Sexual assault is becoming a common occurrence among the vulnerable group: young adult women and adolescent.

In Nigeria, random observation lends credence to higher prevalence of sexual assault in our higher institutions of learning than found in any stratum of our society. True incidences are not accurate because most cases of sexual assault are under-reported by the victims for fear of stigmatization and reject among peers and the society. The female victims are mostly blamed for the act, while the culprits are usually left unpunished. Common factors speculated as favoring sexual assault in our society are indecent dressing by females involving display of body parts (like breast, navel, buttocks) through tight and transparent wears popularly referred to as “sexual flashpoints”.

Sexual assault is a severely traumatic experience that disproportionally affects adolescents and young adult women and it’s often associated with psychological, physical and social distress. There are types of sexual assault: Child sexual abuse, Groping, Rape, Sexual harassment etc.

Child sexual abuse: Here young children are assaulted by people older than them. The young children are being pressured to engage in sexual activities regardless of the outcome. Incest is more common than other forms of sexual assault on a child and can result in more serious long-term psychological trauma, especially in the case of parental incest. Approximately 15 to 25 percent of women and 5 to 15 percent of men were sexually abused when they were children.

Groping: This is simply the touching or fondling of another person in a sexual way without the person’s consent. Groping may occur under or over clothing.

Rape: Outside the law, the term rape is often used interchangeably with sexual assault. Although closely related, the two terms are technically distinct in most jurisdictions. Sexual assault typically includes rape and other forms of non-consensual activity. In the U.S., rape is a crime committed primarily against youth. A national survey on violence against women conducted by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 18% of women surveyed had experienced a completed or attempted rape at some time in their lives. Of these, 22% were younger than 12 years and 32% were between 12 and 17 years old when they were first raped.

Sexual harassment: This is intimidation, bullying or coercion of sexual nature. It may also be defined as the unwelcome or inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favors. In the United States, sexual harassment is a form of discrimination which violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. 51% of women are harassed by their supervisor in the U.S.

There are so many side effects that happen to people who have been sexually assaulted. They can be emotional or physical.

Sexual assault may be prevented by secondary school, college, workplace and public education programs. Effort should be made by those in position of authority to improve and guarantee security in the society to realize its statutory role. Efforts should be made to encourage working with men on gender issues and women empowerment which will go a long way towards minimizing sexual assaults. And the females on their parts should observe a good moral conduct both in behavior and appearance and also be assertive to take control of themselves when an attempt is made to assault them.

**References**

1. **Sexual Assault fact sheet.**
2. **Wikipedia**
3. **Research gate**
4. **RAINN (Rape Abuse and Incest National Network)**