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Topic : Rape culture in Nigeria

On Wednesday night in May 2017, Ade was on her way home from a “back of house” event that ended pretty late when she was attacked and raped by a group of men .”The road to my house is a lonely path. I often take a bike but it was so late ,there were no bikes so I had to walk “, she tells me .she walked past four men chatting , soon after, she felt something hit her from behind ,”they dragged me to a place and raped me she says “. “I went home and cleaned myself up. I didn’t tell anyone, not my sister, not my husband, no one.

Rape is non- consensual penetration of a person’s vagina, anus, mouth or body parts with an object, penis, or other body part. It is born out of a deliberate or non- deliberate notion that the victim’s body is that of penetrators to take whenever they please. So these endemic is a culture of sexual violence into the very fabric of our existence. It cut across all segment of society; the home, the education system, the workplace, the nations armed services, hospitals and even places of worship – place that over 40% of the nation’s populace consider a second home where many seek refuge. It is said that 90-95% of Nigerian women have experienced some type of sexual assault. Stories are pouring out all over the social media and the rape apologist and enablers are out in force, gas- lighting and derailing or just plain using foul language in a bid to make people keep quiet. But it seems that people have had enough.

It is often used as a tool to punish, shame, debase, subdue or control the minority who do not conform to a perceived acceptable norm of an allegedly promiscuous woman to curing a homosexual. When a society fails to protect victims and punish perpetrators, then it iterates this claim. This thereby, entrenches this form of sexual assault as a norm and pseudo-benefit only available to the perpetrators, while there may be a general understanding of the meaning of rape issue of consent is often a cause for debate. In every sexual situation, one should never assume that consent is granted. If you are unsure ask. Consent should not be assumed by body language, appearance, marriage, previous sexual activity, gender, silence , lack of response or incapacitation. The consumption of alcohol or use of other drugs can render a person incapable of giving consent.

In Nigeria women are reduced to their sexual function. And that is all. So, women are not expected to have dreams apart from getting married and having loving children and staying married. An unmarried woman is incomplete. A childless woman is deficient. A widowed woman is defenceless. All male-female interactions are confined to those expectations and become relationship of control. If a woman does not conform to any of these expectations, she must be controlled. This is why some men don’t understand rape until they can think of it through the experience of someone who is attached to them. Then it is a violation directed to the man not the woman.

Nigeria to an extent does not have a stable education system. A system suggest some sorts of organizing principle or plan that are reviewed and are in place. We do not have that. We don’t have an education system. What we have are series of arbitrary dictate that must be obeyed. These dictates come from society, religion and are pretty random and have no purpose but maintaining

status quo. Schools were set up to primarily to enable communication between the coloniser and the colonised. In that sense they were mainly centres of instruction and not education. Educating is teaching by explaining how something is done, while instruction is simply telling how something is done and while men can be made to disrupt social norms, women must obey them without question. Without question women must conform. Therefore there is no collective protection of women, no education system that understands our history and encourages our critical thinking, no legal system so we can say without shame, with all our chest that in history of Nigeria only 18 men or little additional number of men have been convicted of rape.

Never the less, there must be individual responsibility. If you are socialised into a society that treats women as less than human, into a society that is a non- state with no discernible criminal justice system, you can still stop oneself from raping people. You can still take individual responsibility.