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 RAPE: CAUSES AND ITS EFECTS IN NIGERIA

 Justice for Uwa was the headlines a few weeks back. Everyone was brimming with so much energy to speak up for this young girl who had lost her life after been raped. It was as if it was the very first time we had experience something like this in this country or maybe it is due to the immobility of people at this point in time. I was overwhelmed by the amount of people speaking up against this act and also made a silent prayer that even when everything goes back to normal, we will have people who will not get drenched in their own responsibilities but help others with their voices. The statistics has shown that Africa has the highest number of child abuse around 34.4 percent. As of 2004, 80 percent of children involved in trafficking from Africa to Europe were Nigerians. Between 2012 and 2013, about 30 percent of Nigerian women have been involved in one domestic violence or another. A national survey carried out in 2014 on violence against children confirmed that one out of every four females reported to have been involved in sexual violence during childhood. 70 percent reporting more than one incident of sexual violence, 24.8 percent of females 18 to 24 years experienced sexual abuse prior to age 18 of which 8 percent sought help, with only 3.5 percent receiving any services. Rape is the act of forcing sexual intercourse upon another person without their consent or against their will. They happen as much among the poor illiterates as among the rich, average or so-called elites. I was about 12 when I started reading my Dad’s old newspapers and seeing varieties of rape cases ranging from eight months babies to elderly women. At some point, I started wondering why people rape their sisters, wives, mothers, and daughters or their sons. What causes such extreme depravity? Some people say it is due to indecent dressing. Is the length of the woman’s dress, her charming shape or her seducing look an invitation to all and sundry to rape her?

 One of the major causes of rape is what is normally referred to as RAPE MYTHS. “No stop it. I don’t think I want to do this….” He cuts her shut as he plunges his tongue into her warm lips. She tries to push him off and muffle something but he kept on pushing her to the wall. They are so many lines like this in books for instance Nora Roberts romance novels where they portray that the woman actually wants to do it but she needs the man to keep pushing. No means yes. A woman never says yes. She has to be forced. A man must prove his masculinity. When a woman says no to sex, she really means yes, so men should ignore women’s refusals. If a woman engage in something small like kissing or petting, one is obligated to engage in sexual intercourse. Whatever happens between a man and his wife is their business whether it was force or not and the man of the household are all kind of rape myths that silences the cries of these innocent girls and women to exercise her choice. Most times the accused are not even aware that they have committed this crime possibly more than once. They admit to forced sex but don’t see as rape. Boyfriends rape their girlfriends because they do not grab the concept of consent.

 Another major cause of rape in this country, is the stigmatization of victims. It is actually so shocking the fact that some young rape victims have guardians that are aware of it and still don’t speak up. They feel the child will get over the trauma. This mostly happen when it is an uncle or aunty or any family relatives, they chase the person away or something more threatening but that person is not taken to court. Men bank heavily on this silence to preserve the honor of the girl or woman and sometimes boy or man. We leave in a society where getting married is an elevated status and very essential so a rapist identity is not exposed to the society so that someday that girl or lady can get married in the future. It is very easy to blame the woman from bringing out the beast in him and should be punished for arousing him. The victims get blame rather than the rapists themselves as if the existence of women turn the holier-than-thou men to rapists. At this point. I sit back and begin to think how a 10 year old girl had possibly arouse a 68 year old man or an eight months old baby. In a survey in Nigerian universities (Punch newspaper), it is discovered that in one of the top federal universities, 100 percent of rape/sexually harassed victims are female students, 67 percent did nothing, 33 percent made some kind of report, 88percent have heard of sexual harassment, and 66 percent are aware of more than two cases. This particular survey says it all.

 The last cause of rape I will be discussing is lack of sex education even though they are so many more causes ranging from, male hostility and desire to control, the lax rape laws in Nigeria, alcohol and drugs, the fact that it is treated as a trivial subject, demoralization and so on. I was first introduced to sex education in my first year in senior class. It took a while for the school and other determined parents to convince others that it was important. Many adolescent boys have an urge to explore, sometimes their inaccessibility the opposite sex exposes them to porn and the profanity of using vulgar lyrics in songs which needs to be urgently curbed. They are so many artists in Nigeria who displays women as commodities for sex through their songs. Education gender sensitization and legal awareness are indispensable to control rapes.

 Everything in this world has a cause or reason as well as effects whether positive or negative. This depraved act does not bring about any form of positive effects but rather negative. We are going to be looking at the effects of rape on the victims and the nation as whole. They are so many effects of rape on the victims both physical and psychological. Physical effects are vaginal or anal bleeding, hypoactive sexual desire disorder, vaginal inflammation, chronic pelvic pain, pregnancy, HIV/AIDs and other sexually transmitted diseases. The worst effect on the victims is the stigmatization, depression, post traumatic disorder and blaming that comes after. It affects the nation as a whole too because it leaves a large amount of the citizens in fear of their security, and safety because the law enforcement agencies put in place are not effective enough. It also affect the nation because the values held are demoralized and debased by this act.

 If you passed through a road with a large stone in the center on your bicycle, and you came crashing down and maybe sustained injuries. Like every normal human being, you will move the stone from the road rather than come the next day and trip over it again and again. So we have been enlightened on the causes of this very depraved act we do not need to be sat down like children learning ABC to know the solutions to our problems. We need a lot of awareness among growing children, revitalizing our organizations, removing all form of stigmatization of victims and belief in rape myths. Also our rape laws in Nigeria should be strengthened to give justice to every victim of this crime. We need to stand up as one and say no to rape.