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**COURSE: GST 122**

**QUESTION: Perceive a problem in your present environment, formulate a researchable topic on**

**RAPE: It’s Meaning and Consequences**

Rape as we have come to know is one of the oldest crimes in human history as it also stated in the Holy Bible in the Book of Genesis Chapter 34, Verse 1. Rape is a crime in all countries of the world but the definition and punishment differ from place to place. It has also been noticed that rape cases are reported more in the Western world than many other parts of the globe. For example, in Africa and Asia, rape victims usually lack the courage to speak out or report their experiences to the law enforcement agencies due to negative societal attitude prevalent in such societies. Rape thrives in secrecy and in a culture where victims are blamed for what happens to them, instead of the perpetrators.

Rape in simple terms can be defined as a sexual intercourse between a man and a woman or a girl against the will or consent of the female partner. Going by the provision of the law, rape is defined under **section 357 of the Criminal Code** which applies to the Southern part of Nigeria as:

*Any person who has unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman or girl, without her consent or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force or by means of threats or intimidation of any kind, or by fear of harm, or by means of false and fraudulent representation as to the nature of the act, or in the case of a married woman, by personating her husband is guilty of an offence which is called rape.*

In the Northern part of Nigeria, it is defined under **section 282 of the Penal Code** as:

1. *A man is said to commit rape who….. has sexual intercourse with a woman in any of the following circumstances:-[a] against her will; [b] without her consent; [c] with her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her in fear of death or of hurt; [d] with her consent, when the man knows that he is not her husband and that her consent is given because she believes that he is the man to whom she is or believes herself to be lawfully married; [e] with or without her consent when she is under fourteen years of age of unsound mind.*

But in the US, the Department of Justice defines rape as:

*Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.*

Moving on to the consequences of rape based on the definitions, ndividuals or rather referred to as survivors of rape respond differently to the traumatic experience of rape. The effects could be short-term or last long after the rape incident.

On the individual, physically one might experience bruises, bleeding (vaginal or anal), difficulty walking, soreness, broken or dislocated bones, sexually transmitted infections and diseases, pregnancy, etc.

Mentally, victims of rape might also experience:

* Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety and uncontrollable thoughts.
* Depression, including prolonged sadness, feelings of hopelessness, unexplained crying, weight loss or gain, loss of energy or interest in activities previously enjoyed.
* Suicidal thoughts or attempts.
* Dissociation, which in most cases affects ability to focus on work in a workplace or on school work as a student.

Emotionally, victims of rape might also experience:

* Difficulty in trusting others.
* Anger and blame.
* Shock
* Numbness
* Loss of control
* Disorientation
* Helplessness
* Sense of vulnerability
* Fear
* Self-blame/guilt for “allowing” the crime to happen
* Feeling that these reactions are a sign of weakness

Spiritually, also the victims might be used for rituals by wicked heartless people.

In most severe cases or rather unfortunate cases the victims are murdered in cold blood or bleed to death especially in the case of minors that are raped.

Well on the individual’s family and the society at large the whole process of getting the victim to get back to their normal way of life is really tough as the help of a therapist will be needed, continuous love, patience, and understanding of the relatives to is necessary. They also have to face other people that might mock or ridicule the victim as most people believe it is the fault of the lady when raped.

The punishment for rape varies in different places:

In Nigeria – Life imprisonment (maximum but it may be less) it is also an unbailable offence as only a State High Courts can try perpetrators of rape in Nigeria.

In India – Life imprisonment or death

In France – 15 years’ imprisonment or death

In US – Life imprisonment

In UK – Life imprisonment

In Saudi Arabia – Death

In North Korea – Death

In Israel – 16 years’ imprisonment

In China – Death and

In Egypt - Death

As Christians we are warned that sexual intercourse joins the individuals both physically and spiritually, not to imagine being raped it is a very painful ad life changing experience no one should wish for an enemy. Hopefully the government will enforce more stringent measures to curb this disastrous development and individuals will be more careful where they go to, what they consume when attending occasions, how they dress and most importantly learn some defense techniques in the case of unforeseen circumstances.