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AN ESSAY ON RAPE AND ITS IMPLICATION ON THE SOCIETY

Rape is one of the crimes and social problems that is somewhat regarded as community’s least priority although the victims suffer from grave physical, mental and emotional consequences; but the effect of sexual violence also go far beyond individual survivors, impacting their closest relationships as well as impacting communities and our society at large .So what is Rape? Rape is a type of sexual assault usually involving having a carnal knowledge, which is initiated by one or more persons against another person without consent. The act may be carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority or a against a person’s consent, such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, or below the legal age of consent. The term Rape is, sometimes used interchangeably with the term sexual assault. The time is now and the place is anywhere in the world where this issue is not been given the attention that is warranted to fight against the biasness towards rape victims. This can be witnessed in the social upheaval that has shaken Nigeria; The story of Uwa Omozuwa, the 22 year old 100level student of the University of Benin, was raped and killed right inside a Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) parish on May 27,2020,during her study hours with a lot of trending hashtags #Justice for Uwa everywhere on the Internet. Also, the story of a 12 year old girl in Ajah, Lagos state. She was raped by four masked men in her home. The victim had bruises and tear in her vagina which led to massive bleeding. Nigeria record 717 rape cases in 5 months.

The consequences of rape to the woman or man can be classified either as physically, mentally, emotionally traumatic. Among the Physical effects include: Unwanted pregnancies, Diseases or health problems, Disruptions on the woman’s natural bodily functions, Changes in eating or sleeping patterns, Increased startle responses, Concerns about physical safety, Lack of control,Anger,Numbness,Confusion,Shock,Disbelief,Denial,Anxiety,Eating disorders, Substance use or abuse Low self esteem ,Contracting an STI or HIV and the list goes on. Mental Effect include Nightmares, Depression, Difficulty concentrating , Post Traumatic Stress Disorder(PTSD). Emotional effects include: Guilt , Shame ,Self blame, Embarrasement ,Fear, Distrust, Sadness, Vulnerability, Isolation.

EFFECT OF RAPE TO THE VICTIM

1. Unwanted pregnancy: Of course, the most immediate physical effect of the rape is the risk for the victim of getting pregnant. Dependant on the age of the victim, she may conceive a child even if she is just reached puberty. In most instances, rape victims who do become pregnant opt to abort the child that is considered the result of the crime committed against them. In some cases the situation is further complicated due to abortions not being a legal option for the victim.
2. Exposure or transmission of certain diseases: Without their knowledge, the rape victims are also at risk of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS that could affect their health in the short and long term leading to the death.
3. Damage or disruption of body organs or functions: Since rape is a form of forced intercourse, the victim’s body usually suffers physical injury particularly to the vagina, uterus and other parts of the reproductive system. The risks are greater if the rape victim is a child or a very young teen. In addition the rape victims are often beaten up and tortured during and after the rape, which might even lead to losing their life in some cases.
4. Trauma and paranoia: The foremost psychological effect of rape will be emotional trauma and paranoia. At times, the victim will exhibit symptoms of mental and emotional trauma through solitude and exclusion. They also develop fear in mingling and socializing with strangers and others people especially men. These effects can last for the duration of the victim’s lifetime.
5. Self-pity or Self-blame: Apart from making her aloof and isolated, rape can lead the victim to pity or blame herself for the crime. This effect is partly caused by the social stigma or shame that societies or communities wrongly attribute to the victims , She is often deprived of the care she should receive from families and society.
6. Suicidal tendencies: The most striking effect that rape can produce in a victim is the thoughts or tendencies of committing suicide. Because of trauma ,self-pity, and seclusion, rape victims often feel that there is no longer hope and they could no longer recover and that they are not worthy of living.
7. Recurrent dreams and nightmares: You may experience recurrent dreams and nightmares as your brain tries to process, understand and recover from what has happened. This is normal and the nightmares usually become less frequent over time. Talking about them with someone you trust will help- it might not stop the dreams completely but it will help them seem less powerful and overwhelming.

EFFECTS OF RAPE TO THE LOVED ONES

When someone is a victim of sexual violence, it affects not only the survivor, but also all of the people around them. Sexual violence can affect many people in a victim/ survivor’s life : Parents ,friends ,partners, children, spouses, classmates and /or co-workers.

Part of what makes it difficult for loved ones is not knowing what to say or do, but there are ways to offer constructive help as well as for you to get support.

EFFECT OF RAPE ON THE COMMUNITY

As with any form of violence, sexual violence tears at the fabrics of community well being. Schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, campus, and cultural or religious communities may feel fear, anger, or disbelief if a sexual assault happened in their community.

Additionally, there are financial costs to communities. These costs can include medical and mental health services, legal expense, lost work time and productivity, theft and damage to property and the incalculable lost contributions of individuals affected by sexual violence.

Although the economic costs of rape and sexual assault are hard to quantify and the data is limited, the existing research indicates that the costs are great. Various research studies have examined the quantifiable cost per rape, accounting for such costs as medical and victim services, loss of productivity, and law enforcement resources. Researchers also generally agree that intangible costs, such as decreased quality of life, though difficult to monetize, are also a necessary part of the calculus for sexual assault.(Many researchers, in fact, believe the intangible costs are especially high in cases of sexual assault, due to the serious physical and mental health consequences for survivors.)

According to the U.S Department of Justice (1996) the cost of crime to victims is an estimated $450 billion annually. According to the 1995 U.S Merit Systems Protection Board, sexual harrasement alone cost the federal government an estimated $327 million in losses associated with job turnover, sick leave, and individual and group productivity among federal employees.

It is time that all humans demand changes to all countries that perpetrate such injustices world-wide. It is time to provide the education and information and encourage discussions that will change the society’s attitude towards rape and find ways to eradicate this intolerable social issue once and all.