**MADUKU LOUIS EFE**

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**ESSAY**

 **ERADICATING RAPE CULTURE IN THE SOCIETY**

Sexual violence has become an increasingly prevalent in Nigeria over the years. There has been little implementation of effective policies that treat sexual violence as a serious crime, which has led to more and more perpetrators walking free. Recently, a story of a six month old baby being raped by her father broke the internet. #JusticeForHajara trended as the Nigerian media announced that her alleged rapist was allowed to walk free on bail after arrest.

One should never be allowed to get away with such a serious crime in a democratic nation, ad it raises several questions regarding law and order in Nigeria.

So how can we work towards eradicating Nigeria’s rape culture? I suggest five measures.

1. Pressurize the government:

Nigeria’s 2013 sexual offences bill highlights sexual violence related crimes and the punishments that should go unquestioned. However, the bill has not been that effective as rapists continue to be liberated for their actions every day across the country. Therefore, it is important that as citizens, we pressurize the government through safe protests, social media and letters to our senators, letting them know that enough is enough.

1. Educational intervention:

Educating youths in particular and raising awareness about Nigeria’s rape culture is extremely important. From workshops to books to conferences , we need to ensure that the Nigerian population is informed and provided with risk-reduction procedures. Several courses are available including a free online course available to you with Purple Nigeria.

1. Self defense training:

Being able to protect yourself in situations of vulnerability is extremely important. Taking it upon yourself to make sure that you can defend yourself physically to some extent is highly important in unsafe environments. Resistance strategies can stop the actions of a rapist whether forceful or non-forceful.

1. Breaking the silence:

Unfortunately, sexual violence is highly stigmatized in Nigeria, which leads several victims to remain silent. The victim is often blamed due to several unfortunate practices such as gender bias and misogyny. There is also the false perception that men cannot get raped, which leads several male victims to keep silent. But remaining silent will never help the situation. Speaking up about your experiences and informing the necessary authorities is a step in the right direction. Letting perpetrators walk free will only lead to more cases of rape and no justice for you or any other victim of sexual violence.

 -We need to take actions and put an end to rape