

### Sexual Assault – Rape in Nigeria

Sexual assault is an act in which a person touches another person sexually without that person's consent or coerces or physically forces a person to engage in a sexual act against their will.

There are different forms of sexual assault which include rape, forcible sodomy, forcible object penetration, marital rape, any unwanted or coerced sexual contact. Out of all these forms of sexual assault I will be talking about one, which is rape.

Rape is a form of sexual assault involving sexual intercourse or other forms of penetration carried out forcibly against a person's will or without consent. Rape is a violation of one's body, it can happen to any gender or any age group, but in recent times I have noticed that women are mostly affected.

In Nigeria people have taken to the streets in protest calling this case an epidemic, and I agree with this because truly the rate at which the cases of rape are on the rise if care is not taken, this could become an epidemic. Recently it was reported by BBC news website ([www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com)) on 10th June 2020 that a man in Kano confessed to have raped over forty women including an eighty-year-old woman, this goes to show that there is not even an age limit to this evil. In another report by an online media reporter, [allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com) of 15 June 2020 the Inspector General of Police (IGP) reported that within five months (January – May), a total reported cases of seven hundred and seventeen (717) rape cases have been recorded. Keeping in mind that these are the reported cases; imagine the number of unreported cases due to fear and stigmatization. The painful part of all these is that most victims are not just raped but are also brutally killed in the process.

Rape has many effects on victims, emotionally, mentally, and physically. Emotionally, it can cause the victim to fall into a state of depression, fear, rage and so much more. Physically, sexually transmitted diseases could be transmitted or in a case where there is brutality the victim is left injured. Mentally it could lead the person into a state of mental imbalance or self-hate and dejection.

As previously stated, most rape victims do not report cases due to stigmatization, fear for their life, shame and guilt, and even those that want to are either stopped by their family members because they are trying to avoid shame and disgrace, forgetting what the girl is going through. And those that have been able to report to the police are not taken seriously or never get the justice they seek. The worst part of this is also that people often try to find excuses for the crime. Sometimes, people push the blame on the female saying things like "what were you doing there?", "why was your skirt short?", "you were at the wrong place at the wrong time", and so many more, so if the short skirt is at fault what of the hijab or the long skirt or the diaper or even the old and wrinkled grandmother what fault do they have, no one ever asks the boy why he couldn't walk away or control his flesh.

In this case every one of us have our roles to play to reduce this issue, in the family parents should learn how to not only give all the sexual education to the girl they should also teach the male child how to learn self-control and how to respect women. Because of the kind of upbringing most men and boys have received, where they feel superior to women. They also believe that they have every right over a woman's body. Religious bodies should also take time to teach members about this issue and the consequences as it is also a sin unto God.

With everything I have said the government also has a very important part in this as they are the ones expected to help victims get the justice they seek. In the country the penalty for rape is fourteen years in prison but as it has been seen that even with this punishment in place it has not helped to reduce

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the case, so the government should look into implementing a harsher punishment so that those who are watching can see the consequence of the action they want to carry out. Also, the police should have a special task force who are properly trained to take care of such cases, and cases of special treatment should be avoided.

We all have a part to play in this issue and the sooner we realize it, it would be easier to eradicate and fight this “epidemic”.