**Crisis of Rape in our society**

The word “rape” as defined in the Merriam Webster’s dictionary can be defined as; unlawful sexual activity and usually sexual intercourse carried out forcibly or under threat of injury against a person's will or with a person who is beneath a certain age or incapable of valid consent because of mental illness, mental deficiency, intoxication, unconsciousness, or deception. "While a murderer destroys the physical frame of the victim, a rapist degrades and defiles the soul of a helpless female," is the famous quote on this topic.

Over the years, rape has become one of the most significant issues that the world faces. Record shows that Nigeria is one of the countries that is said to have had the highest issues of severe rape cases. Sexual assault on women is a common phenomenon in our country. Under sexual assault comes; molestation, eve-teasing, child sex abuse, rape, marital rape, domestic violence.

There have been recent reports on rape in our country which were all horrifying as the victims were not only raped but also beaten and murdered mercilessly. Rape is a very big problem which must be handled effectively for the well being of our society as it has numerous negative effects on people most especially women and children.

The important question which arises when we talk of rapes is what causes rape. Why rape cases are increasing at an alarming rate? First and the foremost cause of increasing rape cases is the lack of public safety. Women are not safe outside their homes and why only outside they are not safe even inside their homes.

A number of cases have been reported wherein the guilty has committed the crime in the very house of the victim. Rapes are being done in moving vehicles also which raise a question on the effectiveness of the traffic system of our country.

Studies show that rape victims are more likely to report sex crimes if female police officers are available. Lack of female police further aggravates the problem.

Another very important reason is a sluggish court system of Nigeria and few convictions. Nigeria’s court system is painfully slow and for rapes that do get reported, the conviction rate is not more than 26%.

As the accused is not convicted, others think that they can go around freely and rape whosoever they like. Stigmatizing the victim and encouraging the victim to compromise gives a further impetus to this horrendous crimes. In recent times, prominent leaders and experts have blamed women's clothing as responsible for increasing rape cases which is totally wrong. No clothing is an invitation to rape.

Rape outrages a woman's modesty. After a rape incident, a woman lives a pathetic life which includes fear, depression, guilt complex, suicidal action and social stigma.

The dire need of today is to curb this violent crime. The most important step to be taken in this direction is the strengthening of laws dealing with sexual assaults.

Death penalty should be imposed on a rape accused.

A woman's squad should be formed in every district which would exclusively deal with problems of women.

Fast track courts must be established so that justice is given as early as possible.

In conclusion to this devastating issue of rape, we should work together as a society to protect our women and end sexual assault and violation.

Women are wonderful daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers. They should be loved, cared, respected and should be protected.