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TITTLE: **Rape a social menace**

Rape is one of the major problem faced in the world today, it’s a menace which has persisted over time across borders. It is experienced and witnessed everywhere. It has impaired it victims emotionally and has caused trauma in their lives. Rape can easily be defined as a type of [sexual assault](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_assault) usually involving [sexual intercourse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_intercourse) or other forms of [sexual penetration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_penetration) carried out against a person without that person's [consent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consent). The act may be carried out by physical force, [coercion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coercion), [abuse of authority](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abusive_power_and_control), or against a person who is incapable of giving valid consent, such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, has an [intellectual disability](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual_disability) or is below the legal [age of consent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_consent). The term rape is sometimes used interchangeably with the term sexual assault. Rape is a crime. Anyone who commits rape is known as a sex offender. If a person sexually assaults a person over the age of 18 it is known as rape, but where the person sexually assaults a person below the age of 18 it is known as defilement.

There are various opinions by people, scholars as to what leads to rape. These opinions spans from indecent dressing, keeping late nights, walking alone at odd hours inter alia. In the aftermath of a sexual assault or rape, survivors can face extremely difficult and painful emotions and experiences. Every survivor responds to traumatic events in their own way. The effects of the trauma can be short-term or last long after the sexual assault or rape. Various effects includes the emotional, psychological and the physical effect.

The victims of rape most times undergo trauma and other emotional issues because victims may not recognize what happened to them was rape. Some may even remain in denial for years afterwards. Confusion over whether or not their experience constitutes rape is typical, especially for victims of psychologically coerced rape. Women may not identify their victimization as rape for many reasons such as feelings of shame, embarrassment, non-uniform legal definitions, reluctance to define the friend/partner as a rapist, or because they have internalized victim-blaming attitudes. The public perceives these behaviors as 'counterintuitive' and therefore, as evidence of a dishonest woman.

Moreover, victims may react in ways they did not anticipate. After the rape, they may be uncomfortable/frustrated with and not understand their reactions. Most victims respond by 'freezing up' or becoming compliant and cooperative during the rape. These are common survival responses. This can cause confusion for others and the person assaulted. An assumption is that someone being raped would call for help or struggle. A struggle would result in torn clothes or injuries.

Also, dissociation can occur during the assault. Memories may be fragmented especially immediately afterwards. They may consolidate with time and sleep. A man or boy who is raped may be stimulated and even ejaculate during the experience of the rape. A woman or girl may orgasm during a sexual assault. This may become a source of shame and confusion for those assaulted along with those who were around them.

However, trauma symptoms may not show until years after the sexual assault occurred. Immediately following a rape, the survivor may react outwardly in a wide range of ways, from expressive to close down; common emotions include distress, anxiety, shame, revulsion, helplessness, and guilt. Denial is not uncommon. Men experience similar psychological effects of being raped, but they are less likely to seek counseling.

Afterwards, the survivor may develop symptoms of [posttraumatic stress syndrome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post_traumatic_stress_syndrome) (PTSD)) and may develop wide array of psychosomatic complaints. PTSD symptoms include re-experiencing of the rape, avoiding things associated with the rape, numbness, and increased anxiety and [startle response](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Startle_response). The likelihood of sustained severe symptoms is higher if the rapist confined or restrained the person, if the person being raped believed the rapist would kill them, the person who was raped was very young or very old, and if the rapist was someone they knew. The likelihood of sustained severe symptoms is also higher if people around the survivor ignore (or are ignorant of) the rape or blame the rape survivor. Also victims of rape may undergo physical effects as presence or absence of physical injury may be used to determine whether a rape has occurred. Those who have experienced sexual assault who have no physical trauma may be less inclined to report to the authorities or to seek health care.

Another effect of rape is the transmission of sexually transmitted infections or diseases, those who have been raped have relatively more reproductive tract infections than those not been raped. HIV can be transmitted through rape. Acquiring AIDS through rape puts people risk of suffering psychological problems. Acquiring HIV through rape may lead to the in behaviors that create risk of injecting drugs. Acquiring sexually transmitted infections increases the risk of acquiring HIV. The belief that having sex with a [virgin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginity) can cure HIV/AIDS exists in parts of Africa. This leads to the rape of girls and women.

Nonetheless, people recover from rape in three to four months, but many have persistent PTSD that may manifest in anxiety, depression, substance abuse, irritability, anger, flashbacks, or nightmares. In addition, rape survivors may have long term [generalized anxiety disorder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generalised_anxiety_disorder), may develop one or more [specific phobias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specific_phobia), [major depressive disorder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_depressive_disorder), and may experience difficulties with resuming their social life, and with sexual functioning. People who have been raped are at higher risk of suicide.

It is however worthy of note that society's treatment of victims has the potential to exacerbate their trauma. People who have been raped or sexually assaulted are sometimes blamed and considered responsible for the crime. This refers to the [just world fallacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Just-world_hypothesis) and [rape myth acceptance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape_myth) that certain victim behaviors (such as being intoxicated, [flirting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flirting) or wearing sexually [provocative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provocation_(legal)) clothing) may encourage rape. In many cases, victims are said to have "asked for it" because of not resisting their assault or violating female gender expectations. A global survey of attitudes toward sexual violence by the [Global Forum for Health Research](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Forum_for_Health_Research) shows that victim-blaming concepts are at least partially accepted in many countries. Women who have been raped are sometimes deemed to have behaved improperly. Usually, these are cultures where there is a significant social divide between the freedoms and status afforded to men and women.

Nevertheless, preventing sexual violence requires addressing factors at all levels of the [social ecology](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/social-ecologicalmodel.html), the individual, relational, community, and societal levels. There are various methods of preventing rape which includes the formation of social norms or rules that protect against sexual violence and rape which can be approached by social-emotional learning, promoting healthy sexuality and also by empowerment based training. Another method to help curb rape or sexual violence is by the provision of opportunities to empower and support girls and women which can be achieved by strengthening economic support for women and families and strengthening economic supports for women and families and strengthening leadership and job opportunities.

There are three major legislations that deal with rape, there are; The Criminal Code (applicable in all the Southern States), The Penal Code (applicable in all the Northern States), and The Child Rights Act (only applicable in the states which have domesticated it)

Conclusively, the devastating effect of rape can never be overemphasized, it’s a social problem which has emotionally, psychologically, physically, mentally distorted the life of its victims. Stigmatization of rape victims has to stop and all sex offenders must be reprimanded and face the letters of the law.