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NURSING MHS

GST 122 ASSIGNMENT

**CHILD MARRIAGE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

According to a survey carried out in 2017, 43% of girls were being married off between the age 9-15. Nigeria is the 11th highest nation in the world for percentage of child marriages. These figures are highest in the northern part of Nigeria where most girls are married off before they turn 18.

Girls as young as 9 have been pulled out of schools and married off to men often double their age as husbands. The after effect is disastrous. Child marriage affect the child in so any ways especially the female including early pregnancy, social isolation, interrupts her rights to good education and a brighter future placing her at risk of domestic violence, complications during childbirth thereby exposing her to life threatening illnesses like vesico-vaginal fistula, anaemia, high blood pressure, premature birth, malnutrition, sexually transmitted diseases and post partum depression even suicide.

Fistula is reportedly one of the worst epidemic predominantly caused by child marriage .according to the international fistula foundation (IFF), an obstetric fistula is a hole between the vagina and rectum or bladder that is caused by prolong obstructed labour leaving the victim unable to contain urine or faeces. Overtime, it leads to chronic medical problems like frequent infections, kidney disease and infertility. Medically, when an under aged girl has sex, gets pregnant and goes through childbirth because her body isn’t fully developed to undergo the pains of child birth she’s highly at risk of fistula. In a press release issued by international female rights advocacy platform, it was revealed that 65% of obstetric fistula occur in girls under the age of 15. The same report also revealed that girls who give birth before the age of 15 are 5 times more likely to die during childbirth.

According to UNICEF, Nigeria has the third highest absolute number of child marriage in Africa with over 3million cases and 11th highest prevalence rate in the world. Child marriage is driven by some factors which include; gender inequality, and the belief that the girl child is inferior compared to the male, level of education, some are married off to people in higher authority as a form of alliance which makes poverty a factor others, especially in northern part of Nigeria believe that once a girl has seen her period, she’s ripe for marriage which makes ignorance another factor.

Ways of preventing child marriage include; educate girls. Studies has shown that a girls who marries as a child come from a community where education is not valued, she’ll be illiterate and have little to no understanding of her right, Educate the parents as well because parents who know the effect of child marriage wouldn’t endanger their child, Provide relevant economic and financial support to girls who are already victims of child marriage, support legislation against child marriage, legal consequences should be taken against anyone caught involved in child marriage