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**COURSE TITTLE: COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH II**

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**ASSIGNMENT: YOU WERE TAUGHT THAT IN WRITING AN ACADEMIC ESSAY, YOU SHOULD START WITH THE PERCEPTION OF A PROBLEM. PERCEIVE A PROBLEM IN YOUR PRESENT ENVIRONMENT AND FORMULATE A RESEARCHABLE TOPIC FOR IT.**

**RAPE CULTURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS**

Rape is a contemporary issue that has been a problem in not just our society but in the world at large. Rape can be defined as unlawful sexual intercourse or sexual penetration of the vagina, the anus or the mouth of another person with body parts or objects. Rape is simply sex without consent. A research carried out in 2014 shows that 51.4% of female teenagers in Nigeria are sexually active and 5.7% of them had forced sexual initiation. While it is known that rape victims are not limited to a particular gender, the fact still remains that in highly patriarchal societies such as Nigeria, the highest prevalence of rape cases is recorded among the female gender. Females, especially rape victims are being accused of initiating rape with indecent dressing, being overly flirtatious or not consenting clearly with “no”. Most incidents of rape in males happen between older women and younger males. African communities have been accused of nurturing a rape culture for centuries under the guise of culture and tradition. This is not false because certain rituals in different African communities enable men to carry out forced sexual intercourse with women. For instance, the pre-marital ritual known as “Ukwuthala” in the South African Nguni community allows for a young man of marriageable age to kidnap a girl or young woman with the intention of forcing her family to initiate negotiation and approve the marriage. This practice is also popular among the Tiv people of Nigeria. Such practices enable men to carry out forced sexual intercourse with kidnapped brides.

According to Amnesty international, Sex without consent is rape. It’s as simple as that.But myths and gender stereotypes related to rape and consent are widespread in our societies, including in court rooms. In fact, in Europe, only 8 countries have laws that define rape as sex without consent. But courageous women across the region are fighting to change this. Knowledge is power, also when it comes to fighting rape. So, here are five true statements about rape.1. The majority of rapes are committed by people known to the victim. 

A common assumption is that rapes are mostly committed by strangers. But in fact, the majority of rapes are committed by someone known to the victim. Perpetrators can be a friend, a colleague, a family member, partner or ex-partner. The ‘stranger myth’ sends the wrong message that a sexual assault committed by someone known to the victim is not rape. An alarming 11 percent of respondents to a 2016 survey on attitudes on gender-based violence in the EU expressed a view that to force sex with an intimate partner should not be illegal.Rape can and does happen in the home,

2. Often, victims of rape do not physically resist, thereshould be no assumption, in law or in practice, that a person gives consent because they have not physically resisted. Just because a woman doesn’t have visible injuries, didn’t’ say NO or did not show resistance, doesn’t mean she was not raped. Despite the expectation that a “model” rape victim will fight the attacker back, freezing when confronted with a sexual attack has been recognized as a common physiological and psychological response, leaving the victim unable to oppose the assault, often to the point of immobility. For example, a 2017 Swedish clinical study found that 70 percent of the 298 women rape survivors’ assessed experienced “involuntary paralysis” during the assault.

3. False rape reports are rare.

There is no evidence to sustain that false reports are common. Rapes are hugely under-reported due to lack of trust in the justice system or because of fear of not being believed. The reality is that it takes a lot of courage and determination to report a rape. And when they do so, women are often blamed and humiliated, being repeatedly asked what they did to provoke it or why they put themselves in a particular situation. Survivors deserve to be believed, their reports should be thoroughly investigated and they should get the support they are entitled to.

 4. What women wear is not to blame.

The assumption that what a woman wears can provoke a man to rape her stems from rooted stereotypes about male and female sexuality. However, in reality, women are being raped or assaulted while wearing any type of clothing. No type of clothing is an invitation for sex or implies consent. What a woman was wearing when she was raped is simply not relevant. Rape is never the victim’s fault. An understanding that sex without consent is rape is the first step to change social attitudes that further harm rape victims.

 5. Alcohol and drugs can never be an excuse to justify rape.

Similarly, having sex with a person, who is incapable of consenting because of alcohol or drugs, is rape.

According to Wikipedia, Rape culture is a sociological concept for a setting in which rape is pervasive and normalized due to societal attitudes about gender and sexuality. Behaviours commonly associated with rape culture include slut shaming, victim blaming, sexual objectification, trivializing rape, denial of widespread rape, refusing to acknowledge the harm caused by sexual violence, or some combination of these. It has been used to describe and explain behaviour within social groups, including prison rape and in conflict areas where war rape is used as psychological warfare. Entire societies have been alleged to be rape cultures. It is associated with rape and fantasy and rape pornography. The notion of rape culture was developed by second wave feminists, primarily in the United States, beginning in the 1970s. The first published use of the term “rape culture” is linked to 1974 in the book *Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women*, edited by Noreen Connell and Cassandra Wilson for the *New Radical Feminists.* The concept of rape culture explains how society perceives and behaves towards rape victims and rape perpetrators. A rape culture is viewed as a society in which rape is not only rampant, but normalised, due to societal attitudes regarding gender and sexuality .Rape is a crime that is unacceptable and should not be excused, but the lack of punitive measures in our society today is an aide to this crime. Where crimes such as stealing and murder are taken as serious offences and punished the reverse seems to be the case with rape. Perpetrators of this crime are hardly ever caught not to talk about being punished and so they confidently go on to their next victims. Rape should be seen as a crime of violence rather than just a crime of sex, the focus of rape should be shifted from desire for sexual pleasure to one of male dominance, intimidation, and a sense of control over gender norms. The emotional, psychological and physical pain that victims go through should be considered, victims of sexual abuse are often times afraid to tell their stories for fear of stigmatization or blame from the public and in reality, instead of receiving help and support they are often times blamed and ignored. Rape should not be normalized and seen as an aspect of the African culture, it should not be a nurtured culture or a trivialized issue. Consent is the most important part in any agreement, no means no. People, especially women should have the right to their bodies, and their mode of dressing should not be a ‘reason’ behind their abuse, dressing does not mean consent. We should raise better citizens that understand that each human is equal and no man has greater power or dominance over the other.

Normalizing rape is normalizing crime, by normalising this crime; it implies that we have a failing criminal justice system that disregards the tasks given to it. It implies that we are aiding this act by failing to prosecute the offenders; we are building the egos of these criminals and shielding them. It implies that we are calling laws such as the Child Rights act, the Criminal Law of Lagos State, The Penal code and The Criminal code impotent. In our society today, people have become more aware of the frequent nature of this crime as a result of the frequent reports by the social media. By playing the blame game with the victim, we are instilling a sense of male dominance meaning that we are ready to accept whatever these males do whether good, or bad as in the case of rape. The onus lies on the government, organisations and individuals to educate people on the dangers, consequences and effects or rape. . It is not right for people to live in fear of being violated because of their gender or status. Organisations should inculcate the right culture in their staff, children should be taught the importance of consent from a young age. If we inculcate the right values in people we will get the results we desire in order to make our county safe for everyone. As citizens, we have to realize that while the victim might be a stranger to us today, it maybe someone we know tomorrow. We have to protect everyone and speak up against this menace when we have the chance, silence is compliance. Only through this can we ensure that we are step closer to a brighter future.

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