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TITLE: RAPE, RAPE MYTHS AND RAPE APOLOGY.

*What is rape?* Rape is a form of sexual assault that involves sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration carried out by same sex or opposite sex without the consent of the person. It is carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority, or against a person who is incapable of giving valid consent, such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, has an intellectual disability or is below the legal age of consent. It is an act of sexual intercourse with an individual without his/ her consent, through force or the threat of force.

 Rape was long considered to be caused by unbridled sexual desire, but it is now understood as a pathological assertion of power over a victim. The legal definition of rape has changed in all areas. The traditional definition was narrowed with respect to both gender and age; rape was an act of sexual intercourse by a man with a woman against her will. As rape is now understood, a rapist or a victim may be an adult of either gender or a child. There is also an increasing tendency to treat as rape an act of sexual intercourse by a husband with his wife against her will and to consider forced prostitution and sexual slavery as a form of rape. Rape is often excused as a result of hatred or stemming from a patriarchal system in which women are viewed as the property of men. Rape is a serious crime and is treated as a felony in most countries with common law systems.

There are many myths about rape, sexual abuse and sexual violence and they make it difficult for victims to open up or get help. Victims often think they would be blamed by others and be treated badly by family members and friends. We need to understand these myths to help us work against sexual violence. Some examples are as follows:

1. Women often lie about rape because they regret having sex with someone, or because they want attention.
2. If you are in a relationship with someone it is “always” okay to have sex with them.
3. If someone didn’t scream of attempt to fight back during sex, then it is not rape.
4. People who are sexually abused are children are likely to become abusers themselves.
5. Women shouldn’t go out alone at night as they are likely to get raped.
6. Women provoke men to rape them by wearing revealing clothes or flirting.
7. Once a man gets aroused he can’t help himself, he has to have sex.
8. When it comes to sex, women and girls give mixed signals. They sometimes play ‘hard to get’ and say ‘no’ when they mean ‘yes’.
9. Women don’t commit sexual offences.
10. Men don’t get raped.

All these outlined above are false!

RAPE APOLOGY

Rape apology is an umbrella term for any arguments suggesting that rape is misreported, over-reported, not a big deal, infrequent. In some circumstances such as marital rape, corrective rape, or if the victim was provocatively dressed

‘Apology’ here means defense, and not a statement expressing regret. A person who is in defense of a rapist or who see victims as the cause of rape is a “Rape Apologist”. There are slew of rape apologists arguments, all of which are hopelessly flawed.

They asked for it! : The victim can be alleged to be either a promiscuous whore who dressed like a slut or, more generally, put themselves In the situation. If young, they could be tagged as temptress and manipulative Lolita who was dressing older than their age.

No means Yes: unlike the above argument, you are unlikely to hear this one espoused openly by politicians and public figures. The old chestnut that some people sometimes say no when they mean yes remains very common (especially women). They feel when a person rejects sexual advances from their new partner is just trying to play hard to get.

Marital rape: there is an overlap between rape apologists and those who oppose reproductive rights for women and those who feel that marriage equals ownership.

 In conclusion, rape myths are part of African culture and it fans the arguments of rape apologists. Rape has always been one of the major ills of the society and the world at large. Some could be between blood relatives, as a means of settling scores between rivals, rituals, sexual adventures amongst teenagers, peer pressure, cultism or even unplanned circumstances and so on. Some cases are backed up by people through social media and can be identified by using Hash tags like #justiceforuwa, #justiceforJennifer, #justiceforbusoladakolo etc.