**RAPE CRISIS IN NIGERIA**

Introduction Human sexuality is not just a matter of instinct as many people believe. It is rather an action which is controlled by decisions and social norms. It is a decision because no matter the reasons behind sexual activities, the two parties involved should under normal circumstances decide or take a decision to carry out the act. It is also controlled by social norms in the society because there are social sexual norms and ethical standards that guide how humans express their sexuality even though it varies from one culture to another. However, the variation of social sexual norms in different cultures does not rule out the fact that sexual abuse called rape is considered a taboo and strongly condemned and shunned all over the world. It is more serious when it involves children (minors) especially children and babies of eight years and below. Child rape in Nigeria is a new dimension of rape which has left many mouths agape and eyebrows raised. It is so embarrassing and heart breaking to hear that children who suck breasts are raped by beings who call themselves men. One begins to wonder what type of pleasure such worthless men derive from raping babies and children. How can a man with all his senses insert his manhood in the tender and undeveloped private parts of toddlers? Are these men human or beats? Apart from the fact that the female child due to her directional ability cannot make a decision about her sexuality, the child’s psychological state according to Catholic Diocese of Nsukka (2009) makes her vulnerable for rape. Rape is the crime of forcefully having sexual relationship with somebody against the person’s wish or consent. The term rape according to Wikipedia (2017) originated from Latin word “rapere” meaning to snatch, grab or to carry off. Child rape is a form of sexual abuse committed against a child that is not old enough to have sex, in which an adult or older adolescent uses the child forcefully for sexual gratification. There has been an outcry against child rape in Nigeria, which attracted the attention of not only the government, and non-governmental organizations in Nigeria, but also international non-governmental bodies (Uzoanya, 2015). The senate in Nigeria has passed a bill in 2015 which prescribed life imprisonment for rapists and anybody who has sexual relationship with children under the age 11 years, but unfortunately, the bill has not deterred the rapists (Halim, 2016). As individuals, and groups both governmental and non-governmental organizations try to quench the evil fire of rape of children, the fire burns farther and wider to consume the lives, future and the education of the innocent female children in Nigeria. The news of child rape is worrisomely increasing. It is now usual to hear that a man has raped his biological daughter, or that a baby girl of some months old has been defiled carnally by an old man. What lures men into raping children and babies really confuses people.

**CAUSES OF RAPE**

1. **Cultism and Rituals:** Occultism and rituals are other causes of child rape in Nigeria. Due to unemployment, acute economic recession and more especially high rate of materialism and satanism in the country, many young men have sold their consciences to money, affluence and materialism. For instance, according to Naira land Forum (2015), some people believe that when women especially virgins (children) are raped, the destiny of the victim is transferred to the perpetrator through magical means. An example of this is where a rapist \* used white cloth to charm 11 children and abused them sexually. He confessed that the act would reap the destiny of the victims spiritually to make him rich, but that he has not started being rich by the time he was caught (Olujisting, 2016). The rape of 6-month-old in Kano was also for ritual purpose (Dachen, 2017; Nigerian News Today, 2017).
2. **Indecent Dressing:** Indecent dressing is another factor that leads to rape in Nigeria. Many parents purchase all sorts of dresses for their children which expose the inner body and contour of the kids that should be covered from public views, such as tighs, buttocks stomach and breasts. These days, young female children are dressed shabbily in boxers, short nickers, pants and leggings (Achunike et al., 2014). As a result, one wonders whether the parents of these kids still remember that these children are females who need woman dignity and respect. Female children who indulge in such dresses become tomboyish with male stereotyped behaviors of sitting and spreading their legs, dancing seductively just like boys whom they share their dress code with. All these may arouse sexual urge in men and adolescents especially the sexy and irresponsible ones. Ayogu (2011), after conducting a research on sexual abuse revealed that parents knowingly or unknowingly buy clothes with inscriptions such as “I am a sexy girl”, “Kiss me deep”, “hug me tight”, “Romance me” or “Fuck me baby” for their female children to wear.
3. Another Cause of Child Rape in Nigeria Is Parental Carelessness and Irresponsibility Many parents due to quest for money or tight office work feel that bombarding the children with food stuff and other luxuries are always the best for them (kids). Such parents abandon their little children early in the morning at the mercy of yard members or even without anybody to guard them, and come back late in the night. In such situations, children are denied of love, affection, close monitoring and guidance. The children become their own mothers, loitering around without restrictions or being monitored. These attitudes expose children to all sorts of dangers including rape.
4. **Child Labor:** Due to economic recession and poverty in Nigeria, children especially girls hawk goods along the streets as early as 6 or 7 years old. The introduction of young girls into street trading or hawking increases the chances of child rape in Nigeria (Ali, 2018; Chukwu et al., 2018; Agbo, 2017 p. 3). Unfortunately, still, most of these hawkers go nude as they hawk their wares. Commenting on the nudity of Nigerian girl hawkers, naira land Forum (2016) opines that girl hawkers in the country have carried out a dressing code of wearing indecent dresses such as miniskirts, leggings, nickers and hanging tops that expose their little bodies-nipples, novels, hips, and laps. Furthermore, these girls in a bid to sell their goods are usually determined to follow their presumed customers to any length to dispose their items. Some criminals and rapists capitalize on the children’s innocence and gullibility and lure them to lonely places where they may be raped or molested sexually. Child rape just like other rapes has many negative effects on both the raped and the rapists, ranging from social, psychological or emotional, and physical consequences to health challenges on the survivors.

**Some infections that are caused rape are as follows**;

1. Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs) are the worst effect of rape including child rape. Many researches according to Holemes et al. (1996) have revealed that rape is a risk factor for HIV/AIDS and other sexual transmitted infections in the victim. Rapists according to Nwachukwu (1994, p. 246) often have underlying psychological problems ranging from strong emotion to influence of drug and organic brain disease like dyscontrol syndrome. Since they do not have right mindset, they usually engage in casual unprotected sexual relationships that may lead to vulnerability to sexual transmitted diseases and infections. Therefore, most of them are potential vectors of diseases and infections including HIV/AIDS. When they rape, they spread epidemic that may lead to premature death or terminal diseases and reproductive problems among the rape victims. The damage to reproductive organ can as well lead to bareness with its everlasting emotional trauma, regret and frustration for life time.
2. Another infection that rape victim can contract is viginitis or vaginal inflammation which in most cases is a symptom of infection of the vagina. The inflammation can also involve both the vagina and vulva. In this case, it is called vulvogavinitis, resulting in discharge, itching and pain (Holmes et al., 1996; Pobby, 2014; Healthline, 2018). Urinary Track Infection (UTI) is also another infection associated with rape. It is an infection which affects part of urinary track. Ebby et al. (1995) opine that when it affects the lower urinary track, it is known as bladder infection called cystitis, and if it affects the upper urinary track, it is called kidney infection known as psycho-nephritis.

