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**EFFECTS OF RAPE ON OUR SOCIETY**

The outcome of rape to the woman or man could be physical, mental or emotional. The physical effects include diseases(STDS), unwanted pregnancies, some health problems which may include uterine fibroid , maybe disruption on the woman's natural bodily functions and many others. The emotional aspect includes severe anxiety, depression, flashbacks, hopelessness, low self esteem, lack of confidence , suicidal thoughts or attempts, if not addressed or taken care of could be fatal ,loss of focus , just to mention a few.

 Unwanted pregnancy, this is a physical effect of rape, there is a risk for the victim to get pregnant. Dependent on the age of the victim, she may conceive a child even if she is just reached puberty. In most instances, rape victims who do become pregnant opt to abort the child that is considered the result of the crime committed against them.  In some cases the situation is further complicated due to abortions not being a legal option for the victim.

 Exposure or transmission of certain diseases. Without their knowledge, the rape victims are also at risk of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS that could affect their health in the short and long term even leading to death.

 Damage or disruption of body organs or functions. Since rape is a form of forced intercourse, the victim’s body usually suffers physical injury particularly to the vagina, uterus, and other parts of the reproductive system. The risks are greater if the rape victim is a child or a very young teen. In addition the rape victims are often beaten up and tortured during and after the rape, which might even lead to losing their life in some cases.

 Trauma and paranoia. This effect affects the social and interactive life of the individual. often, the victim will exhibit symptoms of mental and emotional trauma through solitude and exclusion. They also develop fear in mingling and socializing with strangers and other people especially men , this is because of the bad experience they’ve had. These effects can last for the duration of the victim’s lifetime if not dealt with/ treated.

 Self-pity or self-blame. Apart from making her aloof and isolated, rape can also lead the victim to pity or blame herself for the crime. This effect is partly caused by the social stigma or shame that societies or communities wrongly attribute to the victim. She is often deprived of the care she should receive from families and society at large, who in turn can accuse her of callous and provoking behavior. This worsens her mental state and she is left emotionally devastated.

 Suicidal tendencies. The most striking effect that rape can produce in a victim is the thoughts or tendencies of committing suicide. Because of trauma, self-pity, and seclusion, rape victims often feel that there is no longer hope and they could no longer recover and that they are not worthy of living.

The effects of rape on our society will essentially revolve around the response our society makes. In more highly developed countries, the society response will commonly be positive and encouraging for the victim. Communities provide emotional support for the victim and help him or her get over the trauma they are faced with.

Truly, the most immediate person affected by sexual violence is the victim/survivor, but the effects of sexual violence also go far beyond individual survivors, impacting their closest relationships as well as impacting communities and our society at large.

As with any form of violence, sexual violence tears at the fabric of community well-being. Schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, campuses, and cultural or religious communities may feel fear, anger, or disbelief if a sexual assault happened in their community.

Additionally, there are financial costs to communities. These costs can include medical and mental health services, legal expenses, lost work time and productivity, theft and damage to property, and the incalculable lost contributions of individuals affected by sexual violence.

Although the economic costs of rape and sexual assault are hard to quantify and the data is limited, the existing research indicates that the costs are great.  Various research studies have examined the quantifiable cost per rape, accounting for such costs as medical and victim services, loss of productivity, and law enforcement resources.  Researchers also generally agree that intangible costs, such as decreased quality of life, though difficult to monetize, are also a necessary part of the cost calculus for sexual assault.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (1996) the cost of crime to victims is an estimated $450 billion per year. Rape is the most costly to its victims, totaling $127 billion annually. According to the 1995 U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, sexual harassment alone cost the federal government an estimated $327 million in losses associated with job turnover, sick leave, and individual and group productivity among federal employees.

Fifty percent of rape victims lost or were forced to quit their jobs in the year following their rapes due to the severity of their reactions. Scholars at Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health indicated that development of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is likely in 50 to 95 percent of rape cases (1999). Lifetime income loss, due to sexual violence in adolescence, is estimated at $241,600.

In another study, the National Crime Victimization Survey found that between 2005-2010, 58% of female sexual assault victims were injured, 35% of whom received medical treatment.

For women who are raped by an intimate partner, about 36.2% are physically injured and, of those, 31% receive some type of medical care.  NCIPC (2003). Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 2003.  The injuries for intimate-partner rapes range from scratches, bruises, or welts to lacerations, broken bones, dislocated joints, head or spinal cord injuries, chipped or broken teeth, or internal injuries.   Nearly 80% of those who receive medical care are treated in a hospital, and 43.6% of those victims spend one or more nights there.

A 2003 CDC report on the costs of intimate partner violence found that the average medical cost for victims who received treatment was $2,084 per victimization. In half of these cases, private or group health insurers were the primary source of payment; survivors bore most of the financial burden one-fourth of the time. Many survivors incur at least some out-of-pocket costs for their medical care.

Also among intimate-partner rape survivors, more than one-fifth lose time from paid work, with an average loss of 8.1 days.  Additionally, over one-eighth report losing time from household chores, with an average of 13.5 days lost.  Nationally, rape survivors lose an estimated 1.1 million days of activity each year.

A 2006 study found that when victims receive advocate assisted services following assaults, like the 24-hour crisis response RVA provides to 14 hospitals across Chicago, they receive more helpful information, referrals, and services and experience less secondary trauma or re-victimization by medical and legal systems . Furthermore, the same study found that when advocates are present in the legal and medical proceedings following rape, victims fare better in both the short-and long-term, experiencing less psychological distress, physical health struggles, sexual risk-taking behaviors, self-blame, guilt, and depression. Rape survivors with advocates were 59% more likely to have police reports taken than survivors without advocates, whose reports were only taken 41% of the time.

The scenarios are obviously different in certain societies like that of Nigeria and other poor countries where rape victims are neglected and ignored and the crime itself is not prioritized, the society’s response would often be in a negative way. It could be either in the form of neglect, absence of justice for the victim and the criminal goes away scot-free, and putting the blame on the victim, maybe she wasn’t dressed well or what was she doing alone in the dark and the award-winning , she wanted it. She is often stigmatized in the society and is left alone to battle with the after effect of the rape.

It is time that we demand changes in our society that perpetrate such injustices.  It is time to provide the enlightenment and information and encourage discussions that will change society’s attitudes towards rape and find ways to eradicate this intolerable social issue once and for all.