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## **CHILD RAPE IN NIGERIA, IMPLICATION ON THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILD**

In the world we live in today, rape is an act that happens everywhere and everyday. Rape is a type of sexual assault involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration carried out against a person without that persons consent which may be carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority, etc. Rape is a serious offence against humanity at large and women in particular, but child rape is a horror. It is very irritating to hear a news of a male adult raping a baby of few months old. However, nothing goes for nothing as the research has identified many reasons for such atrocious act against children in Nigeria which include; the mishandling of rape cases which seems as if the laws are protecting the rape offenders more than the rape victims, lack of reports of rape cases among other reasons. The effects of child rape according the findings are that many rape victims suffer shame and stigmatization, serious emotional traumas, sexual dysfunction among others which leave indelible marks on the lives and education the girl child.

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.

In late August, it was the case of a four-year old girl raped in Ogba area of Lagos, South West Nigeria; earlier in the year, a 16-year-old in Edo State, South-South Nigeria dying alongside two NGO workers on the way to court anticipating judgment delivery against her own father who had impregnated her after several years of rapes and abortions. Or the six-month old baby in Kano, up north, who was badly deformed after being raped by a man in his 40's (with his wife aiding the process) as cure for their childlessness, in the words of their spiritualist, and the list goes on—daily. Besides the case of the late teenager, none of the above has secured judgement even with the wide publicity attending the cases.

It is obvious; the high rates derive from a weak and indeed weathered law enforcement. The Nigeria Childs Rights Act (CRA) of 2003, Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act of 2015 are just a few of policies and regulations that 'beautify' our legal landscape albeit in various stages of coma. A deeply corrupt police force (where people pay themselves off offender's list), a laid-back and ineffective judiciary (where cases can linger for 20 years) and a society rife with the rape culture is perfect receipt for a major rape crisis.

But another alarming dimension is the danger faced by those who speak out against the offenders, especially powerful offenders. Betty Abah will discuss her work as a child rights advocate in Nigeria and the risks it brings with it.

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. 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 behaviours 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. 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.

Child rape has very serious adverse implications on the education of the child in Nigeria. It is important to note that the overall consequences of child rape can affect learning and education directly or indirectly, hence rape hampers all children's life activities including learning. The social stigma and shame associated with child rape is capable of causing truancy or school dropout for the rape victim. Emotionally, child rape can lead to depression, fear, school phobia and other emotional crisis depending on the age of the rape victim. She can develop suicide thoughts, anxiety disorder. Such child may feel worthless, guilty, hopeless, regretful which may result to little or no interest in life including education, difficulty in concentration in learning, and recall of memories. All these may affect learning and academic performance. If the rape involves school environment or a male teacher, the child may develop school phobia and lack of trust on her male teachers forever. Emotional trauma generally impairs physical health as well as mental efficiency, both of which impede learning. Academically, children with emotional traumas are noted for low grade in school work, failure in school examinations, repeating of class or grade and school dropout. There is no gain-saying that physical consequences of child rape may involve fever, loss of appetite, injuries, pains and hospitalization and death, which of course affect attendance to school and life adversely. It is significant to note that health risks of children are detrimental to their education. A child who is infected with sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis and or cervical cancer may have her life and education endangered sooner or later.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- 1) Laws should be effective so as to protect the girl child, and bring culprits to justice as quickly as possible.
- 2) Agencies fighting against rape should partner with the governments, parents, and other stakeholders on how the society should treat rape offenders and what to be done to bring succor to the rape victims.
- 3) Female children should be taught that they must report to their parents anybody who tries to touch their private parts.
- 4) Mothers being naturally closer to children should have strong cordial relationship with the children to enable children confide in the mothers any event in their lives on daily basis.
- 5) Children should not watch pornographic films. Children's films should be scrutinized in order to prevent them from watching immoral films and videos.
- 6) Female children should be dressed properly to maintain the dignity of womanhood.
- 7) On no account should female children be left under the care of private male teachers, family drivers, male neighbours, or security guards alone.
- 8) Female children should be discouraged from sitting on the laps of males