**EFFECTS OF RAPE TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY**

Rape is a huge issue that plagues the world today. It is a worldwide issue, and is not specific to any one country. It is not specific to any one neighborhood, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or financial status. Rape is widely thought to be the most underreported crime. Also, it is sometimes difficult to prove rape when there are no physical signs. Rape can therefore be defined as the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.

Furthermore, there are many different types of rape. One type is called stranger rape. This is when a complete stranger rapes someone. These rapists often use weapons and threats of violence to gain the victim’s submission. However, the most common type of rape is called date rape. This occurs when someone is raped by a person they know. They may be on a date with this person, or be socializing with them at a party. This is extremely common, and often happens on college campuses. Date rape can also include when the assailant uses some type of drugs to make the victim powerless against the attack. With the easy availability of illegal drugs, date rape has become more commonplace. In these cases, the victims do not even know what happened to them, and if they were even raped. Some of the drugs can create loss of memory, so it makes it impossible for the victim to express what happened. Sometimes rapists use drugs to make their victim drowsy or unable to fight back. There are many different types of drugs used in this way. Rohypnol, gamma hydroxybutyric acid (more commonly known as GHB), and ketamine are just a few date rape drugs that may be slipped into an unwilling participant’s drink. These drugs are used for date rape because they “produce prolonged sedation, a feeling of well-being, and short-term memory loss”.

**Effects of rape to the victim**

–          **Unwanted pregnancy**. Of course, the most immediate physical effect of rape is the risk for the victim of getting 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**. The foremost psychological effect of rape will be emotional trauma and paranoia. At times, 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. These effects can last for the duration of the victim’s lifetime.

–          **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.

**Effects of rape to the community**  
 The effects of rape to a community or society will essentially revolve around the response the community makes. In the “First World” or more highly developed countries, community response will commonly be positive and encouraging for the victim. Communities provide emotional support for the victim and help her get over the trauma she has faced.

But the scenario is notably different in certain societies like Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and other poor countries where rape victims are neglected or the crime itself is not prioritized, community response would often be in a negative way. It could be either in the form of neglect, absence of social and legal justice, and putting the blame on the victim herself. She is often considered as an outcast in the society and is left alone to battle with the aftermath of the rape.

India being a conservative country, many Indians look down upon girls who are outgoing and prefer to wear western clothes. People often blame the girl for sending out wrong signals to men, thus making her vulnerable to rape. In cases where a woman is raped, she is always in fear of being marked a ‘whore’ or a woman of bad character, which ultimately prevents her from reporting the crime. In some cases, they don’t disclose these attacks to anyone and keep all their sufferings to themselves – an immense emotional upheaval which only the sufferer can describe.

The situation is not much different in Africa and the Caribbean where the number of rape crimes committed on women, have soared radically since three decades ago. Being male chauvinistic to a great extent, the Caribbean society often accuses the raped woman of immoral behavior, tries to force her to forget everything (failing to understand that it’s impossible for a rape victim to do so) putting her in the position of culprit rather than that of the victim.

In conclusion, It is time that all humans demand changes to all countries that perpetrate such injustices world-wide.  It is time to provide the education 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.