Rape: A Silent Weapon on Girls/Women and a Devastating Factor on their Education

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Abstract

Rape is a commonest form of sexual violence that affects millions of girls and women in Nigeria. Rape is a violation of the fundamental human rights of a woman and girl. Rape has a significant impact on the education of girls and women, thus, denying them access to fully participate in education as a result of traumatic and life threatening experiences. Hence, this paper will focuses on — Definition of rape; types of rape; An evolutionary psychological perspective of rape; rape in Nigeria; causes and effects of rape on girls/women; implications of rape on girls/women's education. Suggested strategies and recommendations were also made. The law enforcement agents should investigate and bring the offenders to book to serve as deterrent to others and girls and women should have a great access to education as it is their fundamental human rights.

Keywords: Rape, education, girls/women, Nigeria.

Introduction:

Since the beginning of the creation, women have been the fabric of human existence. Yet, unfortunately, they have been subjected to endured different forms of abuse, such as rape, and their human rights have been violated often on a daily basis. Rape is an act of aggression and anger and is about exerting control over someone else. Rape as a crime that devastate on many levels physically, emotionally, psychologically etc is also a traumatic violation of the body, mind, and spirit which profoundly affects a girl's or women's health, education, and their well-being. (Joda et al., 2007).

Nigeria faces a number of problems endemic corruption, unemployment, persistent poverty, lack of basic medical care, low percentage in education, domestic violence, discrimination against women etc, are widespread because the government tolerates customary and religious practices that adversely affect them. (United States Bureau of Democracy 2004).

Rape has also been added to the above problems that constitute development-challenges (the United States Bureau of Democracy 2004; Amnesty International 2006). A grave example is that described in the Daily Sun (2007) in which unknown men took advantage of a girl's disability to exploit her sexually, and twice taken advantage of by randy vicious men who impregnated her. This girl now has two daughters, but not out of choice. A culture of silence aggravates this problem partly from humiliation and intimidation of victims by the police, as well as the "embarrassment" of public acknowledgment. Hutton, Omidian and Miller (2006) aptly describe this situation to include being ostracized by those who consider rape as bringing dishonor, to a woman's family and community. The 2006 Jacob Zuma rape trial in South Africa is a classic example of what rape survivors go through during a criminal trial. For example, the victims have to prove their innocence. Zuma stated in his testimony during

the rape trial that he believed the victim wanted sex due to her dressing (Gerntholtz 2006).

Every day, women and girls face different kind of assaults such as sexual harassment, violation, rape included. This occurs everywhere in the world, from home to busy city streets and workplaces, and from the richest enclaves to the poorest slums. (Fatusi and Alatise, 2006). The current case in Nigeria today is that of Chibok girls abducted by Boko Haram since on the 14th of April, 2014 in Borno State. According to WHO (2002), about one third of all the women or girls in Nigeria had at one time or the other been a victim of rape and other violence in its diverse form. In Nigeria, sexual abuse has been the increase in which several factors have been advanced to that effect and this include "the low level of education, skill training, and bargaining capacity" (Ibrahim and Shehu 2009:107). Dismissive attitudes within the police and an inaccessible justice system compound the failures of the state to protect the girl's and women's rights. Besides, girl's and women's aspirations and achievements are powerfully inhibited, not just by the injuries of physical attacks but by the implicit threat to social development (Naaeke, 2006). The memory of being raped and the fear experienced during and after the occurrence may never completely diminished and vanishes while others are severally traumatized throughout their life time. Violence such as using girls as house helps, rape etc as identified by Okeke, Nzewi and Njoku (2008), have prevented millions of girls from having access to education which is their fundamental human right. WHO (2010) explained that abused girls are more likely to suffer depression, anxiety etc and further pointed out that violence against girls or women affect their ability to learn or even the willingness to takes part in school activities.

Globally, women are still caught up in a cycle of human rights violations since the first United Nations Conference in Mexico, 1975 (Ward, Horwood, McEvoy, Shipman and Rumble 2007). Estimates show that "A woman born anywhere in the world has a one in three chance of being rape, beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime" (Reuters/AlertNet 2006). The benefits of educating girls are long established, because girls' education is the most effective means of combating many of the most profound challenges to human development. Providing both girls and women the opportunities to complete their education yield benefits for all.

Definition of Rape

Rape is defined as any form of sexual intercourse without free mutual consent between those involved. Ezere et al (2009). It is a sexual intercourse that involves force, threat, blackmail, deceit or coercion. Hornby (2006) define rape as a crime of forcing somebody to have sex with one especially using violence. Under Nigerian law, rape is defined as forcible unlawful sexual intercourse, without a woman's consent (Imoukhuede 2007). It is the crime of forcefully having sex with someone against the person's wish (Chiedu, 2012). In a simple language rape may be define as a sexual intercourse between a man and a woman or a girl against the will or consent of the female partner.

Type of Rape

Rape can be categorized in different ways, according to the situation it occurs or by identity or characteristic of the victim or the characteristic of the perpetrator. The classified rape includes:

- Exchange Rape: is a rape occurring as a result of bargaining or solidarity displaying among men (Ruparel 2004).
- Punitive or Corrective Rape: is used to punish or discipline non-heterosexuals for

violating gender rules.

- **Theft Rape:** this happen when a woman is abducted, in most cases to be used as a slave or a prostitute.
- Ceremonial/Traditional Rape: this occurs during ritual, this give men a greater power to select activities or isolated locations that are conducive to rape such as "parking" or "making out" in a car (Muehlenhard and Linton, 1987).
- Rape by Deception: is another type of rape that occurs when the perpetrators gain the victims consent through fraud. A man pretended to be an official for a government who had power to cause negative impacts on a woman to pressure her into sexual activities (Di Silvio, 2011). This includes the rape of children in institutional care such as orphanages.
- War Rape: is a forced sexual relationship that occurs during wars by soldiers on female victims. Rapes in war are often systematic and thorough, and military leaders may actually encourage their soldiers to rape civilians. (Wikipedia).
- **Stranger Rape:** describes nonconsensual sexual penetration between individuals who do not know each other before sexual act. It is an offence committed by a stranger (Allison and Wrightsman, 1993; Bachman Prehn and Ward, 1990; Baker, 2003).
- Anger Rape: this rape is where the main aim of the rapist is to hurt, humiliate and debase their victims through physical violence and profane language using sex as a weapon to defile and degrade their victim by grabbing, striking, knocking, beating, tearing clothes and raping them.
- **Power Rape:** is a way of compensate for their underlying feelings of inadequacy and displays their acts of mastery, control, strength, intimidation, and authority (Muehlenhard and Linton, 1987).
- Sadistic Rape: is where the rapist finds intentional maltreatment of his victim intensely gratifying and takes pleasure in the victim's torments, anguish, distress, helplessness and suffering, the offender finds the victim struggling and erotic experience (Rennison and Welchans, 2000).
- Date Rape: is committed by someone that the victim is dating. It is more likely to occur at isolated locations, in a car or at the home of the assailant (Harney and Muchlenhard, 1991) and they last longer, up to four hours (Sligmann and Miller, 1984). Date rape as drug to weaken his victim or put his victim to sleep intentionally while abusing her.
- Gang Rape: occurs when a group of people participate in the rape of a single victim. This type of rape is heinous and wicked and the violators are alcoholic and drug users, night attacks and severe sexual assault outcomes and less victim resistance and fewer weapons than individual rapes (Ullman, 1999).
- Acquaintance Rape: refers to those sexual assaults committed by someone known to the victim through a romantic friendship relationship, frequently a date, teacher, employer or family member (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 1998).

An Evolutionary Psychological Perspective on Rape

Rape by men of women has occurred across recorded history (Broude and Greene, 1978; Rozee, 1993; Sanday, 1981) and is an unfortunate fact of life in modern society as well. Thus, rape by men is likely to have been a recurrent adaptive problem for women over evolutionary history (Thornhill and Palmer, 2000). Rape results in many negative evolved psychological

mechanisms designed to motivate rape avoidance behaviours. Evolutionary psychology is not a specific domain of psychology, rather, offers a set of useful heuristic tools that can be used to generate novel and testable hypotheses across all domains of psychology. Evolutionary psychology rests on several premises (Buss, 2004). First, evolution by natural selection, the only known process capable of producing complex functional systems such as the human brain, second, behaviour depends on evolved psychological mechanism which are information – processing mechanism housed in the brain that register and process specific information and generate as output specific behaviours, physiological activity, or input relayed to other psychological mechanisms. Third, an evolved psychological mechanism is functionally specialized as a solution to an adaptive problem. A fourth premise of evolutionary psychological is that human brains consist of many specific evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to produce behaviour.

Rape and sexual coercion have been documented in many different species, including insects (Dunn, Crean, and Gilburn, 2002; Linder and Rice, 2005; Thornrhill, 1980, 1981, 1987; Vahed, 2002), amphibians and reptiles (Olsson et al, 1995). Fish (Magurran et al, 2001), birds Gotwaty and Buschhaus, 1998) and primates (Robbins et al, 1999). These studies indicate that rape has been a recurrent adaptive problem for many species. Rape is a fact of life across all known human cultures (Broude and Greene, 1978; Rozee, 1993; Sandy, 1981). In western samples, estimates of rape victimization are as high as 13% for women (Kilptrick et al., 1992; Resnick, Dansky, Saunders and Best, 1993). Rape is infact likely to be more common than these estimates suggest, however, because rape often go unreported (Kilpatrick et al., 1992).

Males of many species have evolved strategies to sexually coerce and rape females. Rape in humans must also reflect adaptations constructed over evolutionary time. Although numerous explanations have been offered to explain rape in human (e.g. learning or enculturation, mental illness, personality differences, drug and alcohol use, and other factors) (Bergen and Bukoves, 2006; Brecklin and Ullman, 2001; Dean and Malamuth, 1997; Lalumiere and Quinsey, 1996), these factors cannot explain the existence of such seeming complex behaviour. These factors may increase the likelihood of rape occurring, but cannot explain the complex organized behaviour seen as rape. Only two explanations are likely to be true: that rape is the product of specialized psychological mechanisms, or that it is a byproduct of mechanisms in the male mind selected to solve other adaptive problems, such as a mechanism to take needed resources by force, for example (Palmer and Thornhill, 2003a, b; Thornhill and Palmer, 2000).

Rape in Nigeria

Despite decades of feminist activism, men continue to rape girls and women at appalling rates. Rape is one of the more pervasive forms of violation against women in which the assailant uses sex to inflict humiliation on the victim or exert power and control over the victim. There is no doubt that rape is prevalent across all sectors of Nigerian society. Testimony of girls and women who have been raped and reports by Nigerian human rights organisations identify the Nigerian police force and other members of the security forces particularly the military as the principal actors. Amnesty International (2007), Rape at times was used strategically by police and security forces to coerce and intimidate entire communities. Amnesty International has met some women and girls who have been raped, some of whom have been abducted by the security forces in areas of the country where violence is rife and have documented their harrowing experiences.

Rape like a cankerworm seems to be thriving and deepening its roots at an alarming rate

today in the Nigerian society. The frightening reports of rape appear the national dailies cutting across all age brackets in the society. Achunike and Kitause (2014). Rape in Nigeria is alarmingly a menace that is spreading very fast. According to Chiedu (2012) rape has been in existence in traditional society and only became public knowledge with the advent of globalization, electronic and printed media. Rape is a global problem with women and girls being mostly vulnerable (Onah, 2010). Women and girls are still caught up in a cycle of human rights violations since the first United Nations Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 (Ward, Horwood, McEvoy, Shipman and Rumble 2007). Estimates show that a woman born anywhere in the world has a one in three chance of being raped, beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime.

There are several sad cases of rape in Nigeria. For instance a religious leader raping a member of his flock, a landlord raping his tenant's daughter, a teacher raping a student, a man raping his sister-in-law or daughter-in-law, a boss raping his staff, master raping his house girl. A young man raping a grandmother, an 80 year old has raped an 8 year old girl, a traditional ruler raped a subject and the list is endless. (Chiedu, 2012 p.1). Many of the perpetrators of rape are young men while others are adults (Obasi, 2007).

In a survey of national dailies, Okunade (1998) identified 100 cases of rape of children whose ages ranged between 2 and 16 years. The victims were 94 girls and 6 boys while their assailants were aged 13 to 60 years. In Ilorin, Adedoyin and Adegoke (1995) reported that 50% of commercial sex workers surveyed had first sexual experience before 18 years and there stated that childhood rape could lead to prostitution. In Benin city, out of 950 rape cases reported at the at the hospital, 58% involved child rape, 40% of these victims were those attending formal school, 40% were engaged in hawking while the remaining 20% were idle. In Rivers state, reports show that no fewer than 200 girls were raped in 2012 (Kawu, 2013). In Lagos state recently, record has it that, two girls, aged 2 and 3 respectively were raped by adults aged 25 and 35 years old (Rotimi, 2013) said of Sylvester Ehijere, a 48 year old man had been sexually abusing his two daughters until March 2013 when he was exposed, arrested and is currently facing trial for his alleged crime (Odeh, 2013)

In Niger state, a 6 year old girls was sexually abused by one Ibrahim, 17 years old boy (Alhasan, 2013). Coupled with all above is the case of police and government officials in Kano who reported that there is an upsurge of child rape incidences, fearing that young girls are now unsafe in Kano city (http://www.nigeriachildrapeinkano.com/2012). In Kano alone, 54 cases of child rape were recorded. In Ekiti state, it was recorded that a policeman raped a 12-year-old girl in the capital city (http://www.grassrootsvaguard.com/2011),

The incidence of rape is not only in Nigeria, but a global problem, which devastate the girls and women education. In Darfur, Sudan, the UN has accused the Janjaweed-Arab Militiamen of abducting and gang-raping thousands of women and girls (Marinner, 2004). A report of American troops raping fellow female troupes in Iraq (Mofeit and Herdy, 2004). It is estimated that a third of all women and girls in the Sierra Leone conflict of 1991 and 2002 were raped (Ross, 2007). In Congo, also women are bearing the brunt of the horrible weapons of war; rape (Cooper, 2008). Not long in Pakistan, Mukhtaran Mal, was gang raped and left naked on the order of a tribal council in 2002 as punishment for her brother's alleged affair with a woman from another tribe (Delva, 2007). In Chicago, a nine-year-old girl was found raped, beaten and poisoned on the seventh-floor-stairway (Adeleye, 1997). These incidences among others point to frightening dimensions that rape may be assuming in Nigeria and the world at large.

Causes and Effects of Rape on girls/women

As good as sex is because it is a gift from God, the misuse of it is a sin of which the perpetrator would be judged if not repented. The following are considered to be the root cause and effect of rape on girls/women.

- Culture of silence: has aggravated the problem partly from humiliation and intimidation of the victim by the police as well as embarrassment of the public acknowledgment. Hutton, Omidian and Miller (2006) aptly describe the situation as including being ostracized by those who consider rape as bringing dishonor to a woman's family and community. This culture of silence reinforces the stigma already attached to the victim rather than to a perpetrator, as the dominant perception is that, girls have provoked the abuser to attack, victims in many of the incidence are unwilling to testify about their experiences. The effect of rape can be traumatizing with a short or long-term effect on the victim. The long-term effects of the rape depend largely on the individual's ego, strength, social support system, and the way she was treated as a victim. The physical effects of rape on girl's leads to injury, depending on their ages, size of the child and degree of the force used. These may cause internal lacerations and bleeding, in severe cases, damage to the internal organs may occur which in some cases may cause death.
- Myths about sex: this is a common belief among many ethnic groups that without premarital sexual intercourse, boys are bound to have small testicles, suffer from pimples, have difficult erection and not been able to perform better when married. The myth about the girls is that they are bound to have small breast, experience early menopause, painful menstruation and painful nipples when breast feeding their babies. (Garland, 2003). Child rape is among the effect of rape that cause infections and usually sexually transmitted diseases depending on the age of the child, due to lack of sufficient vaginal fluid, which causes neurological damage. This also causes traumatic stress which leads to notable changes in brain functioning development and has a deleterious effect on brain development, (Ogunyemi, 2000).
- Peer group influence: is another factor that encourages heinous rape. Isangedighi (1990) opined that most adolescents are led into sexual promiscuity by their peers. Many of them through peer influence experiment sex through raping and since they are not caught, they continue in the business of rape. And that the psychological effect of rape on girls may result in both long and short-term harm including psychopathology in later life which indicates depression, anxiety, eating disorder, poor self-esteem and sleep disturbances.
- Indecent dressing: indecent dressing has been traced to modernity. Indecent dressing that exposes the erogenous zones of female attracts undue attention from males which leads to sexual harassment that at times leads to rape (Mofoluwawo, 2012). It is a fact that action speaks louder than words; wearing of such seductive clothes attract male folk to rape such ladies.

The Implications of Rape on girls/women Education

Sexual abuse has a negative impact on girl's and women's educational attainment (MacMillan, 2000) later job performance (Anda et al., 2004), and earnings (MacMillan, 2000). Sexual survivors experience reduced income in adulthood as a result of victimization in adolescence, with a lifetime income loss estimated at \$241,600 (MacMillan, 2000). Sexual abuse interferes with women's ability to work (Lyon, 2002). Fifty percent of sexual violence victims had to quit or were forced to leave their jobs in year following their assaults due to the severity of their reactions (Ellis, Atkeson, and Calhoun, 1981).

Discrimination against girls and women and the violation of their rights often resulted in less

access to their education, not only that but their access to nutrition and physical and mental health care enjoying fewer of their rights and often being subjected to various forms of cultural, social, sexual exploitation and to violence and harmful practices such as genital mutilation, rape etc. but of all the discrimination and denial of opportunities that the girls and women suffered, the most damaging is the denial of their rights and opportunity to education. There are enormous social and economic gains, which accrue to the individual girls, her family and society as a result of her education (Collins, 2014; Idoko, 2010).

It is lack of access to education which keeps girls and women "not only at the bottom of the social power structure but may perceive themselves and their future roles as sex objects, subservient to men and trapped in, rather than choosing, traditional roles" (Friedman, 1992). A growing body of evidence suggests that providing equal access to education, and specifically providing education to girls/women, is a good economics, because it makes labour markets more efficient, enhances growth rates and helps reduce social disparities (Mornson, Raju and Sinha, 2007; Aromolaran, 2008:397-428). Despite this fact, the recent NDHS (2013) report shows 37.8 percent of women/girls have no education at all as against 21.2 percent of the men with no education. In fact, the fear of rape, lack of educational or employment opportunities for girls and women, and the traditional/religious notions of the primary role of women and girls as wives and mothers contributes more in denying their access to education.

Rape is a practice that robs the girls of their childhood, imperils their health, and destroys their hopes and it profoundly affects their life through substantially lower education prospects, health complications (such as vesico-vaginal fistulae, a higher likelihood of acquiring HIV/AIDs, higher level of infant mortality with early pregnancies). Many of these girls experience obstructive labour and consequently develop fistula and are abandoned by both husband and parents of their own fate (Child Right Information Network, 2011).

Without proper guidance or education, girls and women are probably to face high levels of sexual abuse and rape is included. Rape and other violence such as child labour or using girls/women as house helps as identified by Okeke, Nzewi and Njoku (2008), have prevented millions of girls and women from having access to education, which is their fundamental human rights. Poverty and the level of education of mothers hinders their access to education, poor attendance of girls in the school is another implication to their education, because girls continue to face many obstacles that impede their part to learning (UNICEF, 2003).

Strategies

- To ensure that the voices of victims of rape are heard and they can access justice.
- Education must play a role in discouraging this abusive behaviour (rape) through campaign, educating young people to understand what constitutes abusive behaviour so that women and girls in every country are able to live lives free from any violence against them.
- The government should drive a significant cultural shift so that the focus of the criminal justice system is on the credibility of the allegation rather than the credibility of the individual. The potential and dignity of every women/girls should not be blighted by any form of violence.
- Preventing the act of raping against girls/women from happening in the first place, by challenging the attitudes and behaviours, which foster it, and interven early to prevent it

- Take action to reduce the risk to girls/women who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.
- It is important to educate communities that girls/women are not chattel or movable property but individuals who need to be valued and not abused.
- Male involvement and input when implementing programs to prevent the rape against girls/women has shown to be effective. A report released by Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) shows that making men aware that when girls or women are subjected to rape or any other form of violence, it affects all the members in the family, including themselves, has been instrumental in making some men regard their daughters and wives as equals in decision making.
- Attention must be given to legal actions and judicial interventions.
- Alternate sanctions should also be considered. Here, an abusive male partner may be
 prohibited from contacting or abusing his partner and may be made to leave home by
 a civil court. He can also be ordered to pay support and seek counseling and treatment
 for substance abuse.
- Partnering between the health sector, legal and judiciary departments, policy makers, and religious leaders will be effective in reducing the rape behaviour.
- Policy makers, activists, and all the various stakeholders must realize the importance
 of investing in primary prevention against raping of girls/women. This must foster the
 creation of a global social environment that promotes gender equity and sharing of
 power between men and women.

Conclusion

Rape is a topic that makes people of all ages uncomfortable and could be a male or female but men are mostly the offenders. Rape is a very traumatic event on the life of the victim and every precaution should be taken to prevent the girls/women from being raped as it has a long-lasting effect on them. Parents, especially mothers should see to it that their girls avoid things and environment that will predispose them to raped and good moral standard should be upheld at home with love among the family members. The Teenagers (girls) need accurate information about predisposing factors to rape and its effect in order to prevent it. The Health educators should be able to deal with the psychological aspect of this problem as most rape victim have long lasting trauma. Everyone should get involved in the prevention of rape to reduce its occurrence in the society and rapist should be punished as this will help to curtail the menace in the society.

Recommendations

- Education is not a luxury item that is only to be ensured, it should be started as soon as possible with a great priority that girls are especially vulnerable at this situation and they must be protected against any violence such as physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.
- Education should remain a key safeguard preventing the girls and women from labour and helping to combat the sexual exploitation, which mainly threatens girls.
- ➤ Efforts should be made to protect the girls and women from the rape and other abuse will also ensure sound and early cognitive development. And ensuring that women are empowered, healthy and well educated.
- > Suggested solutions to the problem of rape by Estrich (1998) go along with those of Amnesty International (2006). These include getting men involved in finding solution to this crime in such areas as the police departments, hospitals and district attorney's

- offices. By doing so, they can be trained and given the expertise to deal sensitively with the physical and emotional issues involved in order to win the victim's cooperation and successfully prosecute the perpetrators.
- > Support should be given to developmental associations, civil society, human rights organisation, national councils, ministries, youth centres, mosque and churches to confront this menace.
- ➤ Government to ensure that all girls and women who have been subjected to rape have access to justice and to reparations including compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.
- ➤ All perpetrators should be brought to justice in trial standards and exclude the death penalty and facilitate private criminal prosecutions by non-governmental organisations and other cases of rape.
- ➤ Government should ensure that punishment prescribed for rape are commensurate with the gravity of the crime committed.
- ➤ Ensure of effective separation of men and women in prisons, police stations and all other places of detention facilities for women or girls (teenagers) are staffed by women officers.
- ➤ Improve the way the police and other services reach out to women and girls who are at risk from gangs so they can be given the right support.
- ➤ On the education side, the schools have a key role to play in educating children about healthy relationships and consent so that children can recognize abuse and know they can seek help.
- ➤ Government should enact and and/or reinforce penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in legislations to punish and redress rape and any act of violence done to girls and women, whether in the home, workplace, school or outside the school, place of worship, motor-park, refugee camps, prisons, community, society or any place that the perpetrators may take advantage of abuse the girls/women.

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