
MENACE OF RAPE IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY: VALUE REORIENTATION THROUGH SCHOOL AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAMMES AS A PANACEA

BY

ORJI EVELYN IJEOMA
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, CALABAR
eveonu4real@yahoo.com
08054102759

AND

UCHE RACHAEL S.
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING
UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, CALABAR
riciuche@yahoo.com
08038734019

Abstract

There is observed increase in rape, aggression, violence and crime in the Nigerian society today. The various news/media are on a daily basis disseminating reports of rape incidences in the society. Although majority of cases are reportedly undisclosed the menace of rape has become a global social, health and human right problem which has caused agitations to stop the menace among various stakeholders. Rape behavior is an act of violence which occurs when someone takes control over another by the use of physical threats or force, or by exploiting another person's inability to give or withhold consent for sex. Rape is a legal terminology reserved for cases of penile penetration of victim's vagina, mouth or anus without consent. Rape behavior is a serious breach to a person's privacy, security and sexuality. Rape remains a traumatic experience that usually has devastating psychological and emotional consequences on the victims' and other members of society. To some Nigerians, the menace of rape culture in recent time is unprecedented and this has been associated with too many causes ranging from hereditary, value-orientation to socio-economic challenges. Educational stakeholders like school psychologist, guidance and counsellors, parents, teachers and the society is aggrieved about this rape culture which is gradually establishing itself and even attempting to overtake the value system. There is need for intervention against rape. The present researchers insist that there is need for value reorientation through the school and social media product for the upcoming leaders of the society beginning from the basic education level. The issue discussed in this paper are; nature of rape and involvement, physical, psychological, emotional, social effect of rape and value reorientation. Conclusion is that together we can fight the war against rape in the society. Suggestions for counselling include; school programs should be integrated with values to empower individuals to stand against rape among others.

Keywords: *Rape, value reorientation, school and social media programs, Nigeria.*

Introduction

There is increase in crime in the Nigerian society today. There is no passing day that incidence of homicide, banditry, arm robbery and rape to mention some are not reported in various news media. Sexual violence has become an increasingly prevalence act in Nigeria over the years (Human Right Advocate Laila Johnson Salami, October 14th 2016). The Nigerian police recorded 717 rape cases between January and May 2020 (Mutua, June 15, 2020). This is adjudged as unprecedented and cannot be allowed in a society where peace and tranquility is much desired for national development. Rape has in recent time become a global social, health and human rights problem. In Nigeria it has caused national unrest and civil protest. Rape and gender based violence remains a sore point in Nigeria and countries worldwide. This was worsened during and after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (President Muhammadu Buhari independent day speech October 1st 2021) It is complicated because the incidence are largely undisclosed by most survivals, underreported by news media and understudied by researchers. According to the founder of Lucid Lemons Nigeria rape has been a silent epidemic used as a weapon of war from way back. Rape culture remains a traumatic experience with devastating physical, psychological and emotional consequence on victims and other members of society. Education stakeholders such as school psychologist, guidance counselors, administrators, parents and government are grieved about this rising rape culture in the Nigerian society. With this the present researchers insist that there is need for value reorientation which is expected to redirect the individual mind and attitude away from rape behavior. This discussion in this paper include; nature of rape and involvement, physical and psychological effect of rape on society, disclosure of rape incidence/factors hindering disclosure/effort at curbing the menace, need for value reorientation against rape behavior through school and social media programs.

Theoretical Background

This paper is guided by the tenets of behaviorists, socialization and social cognitive theories, which hold that social behaviors are as a result of nurture or training. In this paper Bandura social cognitive theory (2004) is apt. This theory posits that thinking processes mediate behavioral changes and problem behaviors (criminal activities like rape behavior) are preceded by a low sense of value and competence. Therefore in this paper value reorientation of individuals across the levels of education; primary, secondary, tertiary would inculcate values in them to take the right decision about their behavior towards others.

Nature of Rape and involvement

Rape involves lack of consent; the use of physical force, coercion, deception or threat; and the involvement of a victim that is asleep, unconscious, under aged, mentally incapacitated or physically impaired as a result of voluntary or involuntary alcohol or drug consumption. It is often associated with psychological, physical, social distress and occasionally result in fatality either from shock, severe injury or murder by the perpetrator in an attempt to conceal their identity (Ezechi, Musa, David, Wapmuk, Gbajabiamila, Idigbe, Ezeobi, Ohihoin, & Ujah, 2016). Rape according to Atkinson (2008) is an act of violence which occurs when someone takes control over another by the use of physical threats or force, or by exploiting another person's inability to give or withhold consent for sex. It is a legal terminology reserved for cases of penile penetration of the victim's vagina, mouth, or anus without consent. The various means used by rape perpetrators share a common characteristic; they all compromise an individual's ability to give sexual consent devoid of coercion (Ogunwale & Oshiname, 2016).

Rape is a global social, health and human rights problem that has been largely undisclosed by most survivors, underreported by news media and understudied by researchers. It is a traumatic experience with devastating health consequences, affecting both women and men globally, irrespective of class, culture, race, educational status, income and ethnic affiliation (Ezugwu, Ohayi, Iyoke, & Nnaji, 2017; Falade, & Fasuan, 2017). Although victims of rape have no age limit as babies, and the aged both males and females are vulnerable to this menace. However, it is the young unmarried women or girls who are disproportionately affected (Forke, Myers, Catalozzi, & Schwartz, 2008; WHO, 2002; Chiazor, Ozoya, Udume, & Egharevba, 2016). Persons who perpetrate rape are highly diverse, and they include persons who are known or not known to the rape survivors (Bergen, 2006; Jewkes & Abraham, 2005; Kirkwood & Cecil, 2001; Monson, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Binderup, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006; Russo, 2000; WHO, 2002). Rape is, however, believed to be more preponderant among people who know each other (Kirkwood & Cecil, 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006), such as acquaintances, friends (WHO, 2002), and dating partners (Monson et al., 2000; Russo, 2000; WHO, 2010). The abuse may involve use of objects, forcible fondling, and forcible sodomy (Hassan, Awosan, Panti1, Nasir, Tunau, Umar, Shehu, Ukwu, & Sulaiman, 2016). Forcible rape has been shown by Hassan, Awosan, Panti1, Nasir, Tunau, Umar, Shehu, Ukwu, and Sulaiman, (2016) to be more likely to involve a single victim than any other sexual assault. Personal weapons such as hands, fist, and legs are commonly used during rape however other weapons such as knife and gun have been noted to be used (Hassan, Awosan, Panti1, Nasir, Tunau, Umar, Shehu, Ukwu, & Sulaiman, 2016). Records have shown that in some cases no weapon was used (only verbal threats), but the use of weapons is more likely when the victim is older (Hassan, Awosan, Panti1, Nasir, Tunau, Umar, Shehu, Ukwu, & Sulaiman, 2016). The time of the day when rape occurs is related primarily to the age of the victim. For adult victims sexual assault is more likely to occur after midnight while the pattern in juvenile assault is said to be earlier in the day (during or after school hours). Neighbours, family members and friends take advantage of children in their care when parents are not around.

Rape can take many forms such as date rape, power rape, gang rape, anger or retaliatory rape, and sadistic rape, and can take place under very different circumstances. Rape victims are most times assaulted by one individual or several people (e.g. gang-rape); the incident may be planned or a surprise attack. Although rape occurs most commonly in the victim's home, the perpetrator's home, or in the dark corner of the street, it also takes place in many other settings, such as the workplace, at school, in prisons, cars, the streets or open spaces (e.g. parks, farmland). The perpetrator of a sexual assault may be a date, an acquaintance, a friend, a family member, an intimate partner or former intimate partner, or a complete stranger, but more often than not, is someone known to the victim. There is no stereotypical perpetrator; sexually violent men come from all backgrounds, rich and poor, academic and uneducated, religious and non-religious. Perpetrators may be persons in positions of authority who are respected and trusted (e.g. a doctor, teacher, tourist guide, priest, police officer) and thus less likely to be suspected of being rapists. Rape is an incident that used to be obscure, occurring once in a while but now it is pervasive in many countries and the rise in the incidence in Nigeria is very devastating and highly destructive of the general psyche of the society. Slogans such as Stand Against Rape (STAR), Rape Culture; Unlearn sexism slay the patriarchy, are these enough palliative to the consequences caused victims?

Physical and Psychosocial Effect of Rape on Society

Physically medical examination of rape survivors usually reveal that they may suffer a range of physical injuries, genital and non-genital, or in extreme cases, death. The most common

forms of genital injuries are tears, ecchymosis (i.e. bruising), abrasions, redness and swelling, Non-genital physical injuries usually include bruises and contusions, lacerations, ligature marks to ankles, wrists and neck, pattern injuries (i.e. hand prints, finger marks, belt marks, bite marks) anal or rectal trauma. In addition, rape victims may be exposed to the risk of sexual transmitted infection (STI) including HIV, pelvic pain and pelvic inflammatory disease, unwanted pregnancy, urinary tract infections, unsafe abortion, and infertility. The health consequences of rape are severe, numerous and varied, and may comorbid with psychological and emotional effects, both in the short-term and in the long-term.

Psychologically and emotionally rape victims frequently experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD appears to be more common in persons who were threatened with a weapon and/or extreme physical force, in those raped by strangers, and in cases where physical injuries were inflicted. Symptoms of PTSD may manifest as intrusions and avoidance Other psychological effect of rape identified by Gluck (2012) include; self blame, depression, borderline personality disorder, sleep disorder, eating disorder, dissociative identity disorder, guilt, distrust of others, anger, feeling of personal powerlessness, poor self-esteem.

Socially rape victims experience shame, defamation, stigmatization. social distancing from friends, family members, colleagues and distrust. Escalating incidence of rape in the society leads to social upheaval, anger, fear and questions about the value system.

Issues and Causes of Non-disclosure of Rape Cases in the Society

1) Justice Pervasion

Despite the legal provisions of life imprisonment with or without canning for sexual assaulters in Nigeria, there is still record of incidences of fresh cases of rape in Nigeria.

2) Scarce Information on the Identity of Perpetuators

The complaint among people are that most of these culprits are not apprehended due to non disclosure of their whereabouts.

3) Stigmatization

Cases of rape are underreported and hardly disclosed by the survivors out of fear of stigmatization.

4) Myths and Belief System

Myths, biased behaviours and beliefs permit people to think rape does not exist.

5) Victim blaming

Victims who are most time the femal folks are blamed and objectified for the incidence of rape. Therefore, in many of these cases, the victims carry their crosses and remain voiceless.

6) Other Reasons

Other complex and multi-faceted reasons for non-reporting are rejection by the society, back lashing and safety concerns, enduring culture of male dominance, coupled with the fact that even for cases that are reported the perpetrators are rarely prosecuted, female social and economic disempowerment, and victim relationship to perpetrator. Similarly, Ezugwu, Ohaji, Iyoke, and Nnaji, (2017) posit that most rape victims do not disclose or report the incidents because of factors such as avoidance of stigmatization, the family may wish to keep it secret especially when the perpetrator is a family member. Also despite the severe penalty of life imprisonment for rape in Nigeria, culprits are hardly prosecuted and these may discourage

victims from reporting. According to Geidan, Njoku, & Bako, (2010); Ogunwale, Oshiname & Ajuwon, (2012), in Nigeria many rape survivors rarely seek for medical care, legal redress, and psycho-social help. Ezechi, Musa, David, Wapmuk, Gbajabiamila, Idigbe, Ezeobi, Ohihoin, Ujah, (2016) revealed that, one in every five women is a victim of rape and globally, 35% of women are rape victim with Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia reporting the highest incidence of rape. The reported figures are said to be inaccurate and often underestimate as most cases of rape are under-reported by the victims because of the associated stigma. Statistics shows that in Nigeria, only 2 of 40 cases of rape are reported, attributing this amongst other reasons, to the arduous legal requirements needed to prove the cases and the associated stigma (Ezechi, Musa, David, Wapmuk, Gbajabiamila, Idigbe, Ezeobi, Ohihoin, &Ujah, 2016). There is need to renew these legal procedures particularly the part of producing evidence after the incidence has occurred, it is traumatic to recall the experience.

Olatunji (2012) conducted an extensive review of the Nigerian anti-rape law and identified shortcomings in the provisions which make rape prevention challenging in the country. First, according to the law, rape can only be committed by a man to a woman, and it involves only penal and vaginal sex. The law does not acknowledge male rape victims nor does it recognize anal sex as part of rape. Second, a victim of rape needs to establish that penetration occurred, corroboration (or validation) of the crime needs to be established, and proof must be provided that consent was not given. The limitations with establishing consent make proving many of the few valid rape cases difficult. Overall, the low prospect of receiving legal judgment for rape stifles enthusiasm in disclosing and seeking legal recourse. Moreso, the increasing incident of rape and low reporting practises among victims and survivors and the poor ways society handles the incidence underscore the need for value reorientation of citizens of Nigeria.

Justifying the Need to Curb Rape Behaviour.

The researchers further reflecting on the longterm consequences associated with the crime called rape advocates the need for everybody to join hands together and fight it. Rape has severe, acute, and chronic psychological, sexual, and reproductive impact on the well-being of survivors and this can affect their contribution to national development. Observations show that in the immediate aftermath of a sexual assault, the survivor report a variety of psychological, emotional and social responses which affect the individual psycho-social adjustment. These responses include acute stress reactions, emotional detachment, and sleep disturbances, self-blame, difficulties in social and work adjustment and sexual functioning, fear, anxiety, depression, and PTSD (Suprakash, Ajay, Murthy & Biswajit, 2017). Some individuals may experience difficulties in functioning at work, home or school. Phobias, such as fear of crowds or a fear of being alone, may begin to appear depending on where the rape took place. Sexual dysfunction or changes in a person's sex life are very common. Some of the sexual problems women often encounter after rape are sexual aversion, flashbacks of the rape during sex, vaginismus, and orgasmic dysfunction. Although every rape survivor is unique, many of them experience Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS), RTS is a cluster of emotional responses to the extreme stress experienced and profound fear of death experienced by the survivor during the sexual assault.

Value Reorientation against Rape through School and Social Media Programs

Rape culture is regarded as a negative trend in society which is anti-developmental. Many have advocated ways to end rape culture in Nigeria. Some non-governmental agencies have been spearheading actionable plans to address these proliferating negative culture in Nigeria and beyond. Notable organization against sexual violence and rape include Lucid Lemons,

Hands Off Nigeria, S.T.E.R. Initiative, Women At Risk International Foundation, The Consent Workshop, Girls Power Initiative calabar center. Others are World Health Organization (WHO), Center for Disease Control (CDC), National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) among others. Advocacy and sensitization through these organizations are ongoing and making some impact on citizens. Thus this paper posits that an intervention through the educational system can help reorient the minds of individuals against rape behavior now and in the future. It is believed that this would foster peaceful coexistence, when people live without fear of attack or assault. More so they can be more assured of their security and contribute their quota to national development. The desire to correct the inappropriateness in behavior of citizens, through school and social media platform has become inevitable to attack this negative behavior from the root through socialization. Looking across the level of educational system the researchers has identified consistencies in the value desired by the society for her citizens. For example two of the specific purposes of primary education, identified are; one is to groom and develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment. Also at secondary education, the importance of character is underscored. One of the specific objectives of secondary education is to raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens. Furthermore the goals of tertiary education states among others that it shall be to 1.) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society, 2.) That university education shall make optimum contribution to national development by making all round improvement in university education to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism. Based on the foregoing, it can be appreciated that the educational systems; primary, secondary and tertiary institution can provide the platform for individuals to be good citizens. This is because values education received from primary, secondary and tertiary ought to reflect in citizens' behaviors, attitude and intentions. Thus the present researchers' belief that value reorientation at this level of education can develop the mindset of individuals against involvement in rape and other gender based violence.

Due to crises of poor values and lack of virtues bedeviling the Nigerian society, Orji (2019) called for partnership of all socialization agencies for the healing of Nigeria. Ukpong (2020) noted that rising anti-social problem among individuals are as a result of dysfunctional family setting, negative peer influences, cognitive distortion, lack of social skills and school factors, thus advocates for value reorientation. Values are beliefs and attitudes about the way things should be. Our values have suffered negative modification today. Some Nigerians have acquired many negative values such as rape behavior. The aberration can hardly foster unity in the society. Rape and its consequences kill our values and impact the younger generation negatively. The present researchers join their voices in the eradication of rape through the education system as follows;

Value Reorientation through School Programs

Education of children and youth in the school system is very important to raise awareness about the Nigeria rape culture and the consequences on individual and national development. Workshops, training section, conferences and seminars should be organized to ensure that the upcoming generation is informed about risk reduction procedures such as; protection, detection, verification and reaction. For example: self-defense training can help the individual acquire resistance strategies to stop the actions of a rapist whether forceful, non-forceful. More so self-defense strategies can equip individual to make prompt use of alarm, emergency response hotline available. Through training individuals can advise others who had been

sexually abused to access sexual assault referral centers closest to them for counselling and psychosocial care. School curricula and co-curricular programs should emphasize the promotion and internalization of the Nigeria policy on education objectives enumerated below;

- a.) Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual.
- b.) Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions
- c.) Moral and spiritual principles in inter-personal and human relations.
- d.) Shared responsibility for the common good of society
- e.) Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children and
- f.) Acquisition of competence necessary for self-reliance (NDE 2014)

Value Reorientation through Social Media Programs

Social media have come to stay in our world as a veritable route for reach out activities, unfortunately many use this means to disseminate evil such as violence, aggression, hate speeches and behaviors that do not foster peace and unity. Social media is a useful platform that has enabled millions of Nigerians to connect with people, promote their business, socialize and access news and other educational information. Platforms for information sharing under this media include; World Wide Web (WWW), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter and a host of others therefore this media can be used for various sensitization, awareness and advocacies towards tamping out rape culture among our citizens. The president, Muhammadu Buhari in his Independence Day speech noted that heads of court has been mandated to establish specialized court for the speedy and seamless trial of rape/gender based offences especially to ensure that justice is done for sexual violence (President Muhammadu Buhari Independent day speech October 1st2021). News such as this can reach millions of people through positive use of social media platform.

Conclusion

We all dream of a better Nigeria, and we are working towards it in various ways, but with the rise in rape cases and no orientation to create awareness as well as fight against it, we end up with shattered dreams, a country without safety and among others; increase in number of rape victims, citizens constantly living in fear.

Suggestions for Counseling

The following suggestions are made:

- 1) School programs should be enriched with values to empower individuals to stand against rape.
- 2) Social media should be use for value reorientation of the minds of citizens to shun violence and sexual based offences.
- 3) Schools through their Parent Teachers Association meeting (P.T.A) should advice parents on how to provide personal security against rape. Schools can adopt the ten (10) actionable self-checklist of resistance to bring an end to rape culture by Lucid Lemons. These are; 1) name and shame, 2) redefined masculinity, 3) enthusiastic consent, 4) get in the know, 5) end victim blaming, 6) zero tolerance policy, 7) self-defense, 8) don't laugh listen, 9) apply pressure, 10) take care of yourself.

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