Gender Abuse: Rape in Nigeria and the Way Forward

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Abstract

Gender abuse is widely associated with the female gender and rape is one of such abuse. Rape which is most common against women leaves the victims devastated; they go through emotional and psychological imbalance that live with them for life. They are traumatized, the society stigmatizes them and many even died in the process. Rape has become a pandemic of monumental consequences in Nigeria. Almost on daily basis incidences of rape involving children, adolescents, young women and the elderly are common. It is common to hear cases of a father defiling his daughter or a teacher rape his student or pupil or religious leader rape his members, robbers rape their victims, a driver rape his boss's daughter, a security man rape his master's wife or daughter. The list is endless. The increase in gender abuse with particular emphasis on the prevalence of rape has become a thing of critical concern. This paper therefore examines the why of rape and the way forward so as to minimize its occurrences. Primary and secondary data sources were utilized in the discussions. It is also descriptive and analytical in approach. The central argument of this paper is that the occurrence of rape is so high that every policy of government at all levels is not the only solution. Our position is that concerted efforts of parents, government and non-governmental organizations/agencies, law enforcement agents, religious bodies are required to curb this menace called rape.

Keywords; Gender, Abuse, Rape victims, parents, Forward.

Introduction

Rape is a type of gender abuse. When a person intentionally penetrates or have a carnal knowledge of another without the other person's consent, rape is said to have been carried out. The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary, second edition defines rape as "a physical sexual affair with a woman by force and without her consent or to force someone to have sex when they are not willing, using violence or threatening behavior". The Wikipedia sees rape as a type of sexual assault usually involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration carried out against a person without that person's consent. Rape also occurs in other forms like coercion and abuse of authority. Rape types commonly reported are: gang rape, date rape, power rape, anger or retaliatory rape,(Chiazor, Ozoya, Udeme & Egharevba, 2016). Others are rape of children, war rape, serial rape and custodial rape. Spouse rape is another type, though not recognized as a crime either by Islamic (Sharia) or customary laws in Nigeria. In which ever form or manner and type, the abuse leaves the victims with physical, emotional and psychological trauma and in some cases it leads to death. Contrary to common opinion that most of rape offenders are strangers, it is true only to an extent, but some of the people that commit the offence actually know their victims in one way or the other. They are relatives, domestic servants, friends, or work colleagues.

Rape is a scourge not only in Nigeria but all over the world. There have been pockets of reported cases of rape in Nigeria for many years now. Most of the reported cases were not decisively dealt with apparently because, the appropriate authorities, for inexplicable reasons could not invoke the laws on perpetrators and so the cases keep rising by each passing day. It was not until May and June, 2020 when Barak at Bello was raped and killed in her home, Vera Uwa Omozuwa, raped and killed in her church and a 12-year old raped by 11 men in Jigawa state that the wake-up call came(Isiaka, 2020). Apparently devastated by the report, Nigeria's Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbanjo twitted on June, 19 2020,**"Gender based violence, rape and sexual assault have no place in our society. It is unacceptable behaviour and a blemish on our collective humanity and dignity as a people and as a nation"**. The unacceptability of this behaviour became registered in the swift response of both the federal and the 36 state governors. A state of emergency on rape was declared and the urgent and compelling need for the various states to domesticate the Violence Against Person's Prohibition (VAPP) Act promulgated since 2015 resurfaced again at the front burner of national discourse.

According to News Nigeria, of 15th June, 2020, one rape case is reported in every five hours and between January and May, 2020 over 700 cases have been reported in Nigeria. About 2.8 percent of females' within the age brackets of 5-20 years are sexually abused but due to public embarrassment during litigation and the social stigma attached to the crime, victims most a times refused to report or speak up and relations opt for out of court settlement. This social menace is a serious breach of human rights and an infringement on the dignity and self-preservations of women as contained in Articles 11 and XV111 (3) of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights,(Olakanmi, 2007). Presently, policy frameworks put in place to protect the rights of the victims are a far cry and the perpetrators appear to be having a field day.

A plethora of literature exists on the subject of gender abuse and rape. This work is part of the advocacy to first interrogate the menace, look at what gender really is, the ways in which the female gender is abused, why people rape, its effects and then proffer solutions on the way forward.

What is Gender?

In explaining what gender is (Obi, 2018) stated that Gender is a human invention which came as a result of culturally patterned ways of organizing society. It is the socially constructed differences between men and women which are learned through the socialization process. To the World Health Organization gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities and opportunities that any society considers appropriate for girls and boys, women and men. The simple explanation of this is that, in early childhood, the girl child learns how to sweep, wash the dish and the male child learns how to hunt for animals to kill or try to mend a leaking roof or try to replace dead electric bulbs. Through this process of socialization, gender identities are established. Society create and assign different roles for males and females and give out lesser tasks to women (subordinate position) and more demanding ones to the men. Man therefore, feel as he grows that he is more superior to the woman and starts to disregard, discriminate and exploit the woman in the family and outside of it. Gender is not biological and his sex does not change from birth. Gender is different from the binary categories of biological sex. What then is gender abuse?

Gender Abuse

This refers to any act of violence directed and perpetrated against either the male or female. But for the purpose of this study, gender abuse refers majorly to the female, since the trend is more common with the female gender even though some androgynous females do abuse men. Gender abuse therefore connotes any violence that likely results in either physical

sex (rape), psychological harm, threats of such acts or any form of social injustice that compel women into subordination by men, (Ezeabasili, 2018). Gender abuse can occur in the form of physical abuse which involves the use of physical force in a violent manner that inflicts injury on the victim, such as kicking, punching, slapping, female genital mutilation, sexual (including marital) abuse (having sexual act without consent); emotional and verbal abuse such as name calling, yelling at a partner, social isolation; abuse of widows; forceful/underage marriages; economic abuse such as defrauding or stealing from a loved one, abandonment of children, incest etc. (Ezeabasili, 2018). In all these abuses, what has become a scourge in Nigeria as elsewhere is, rape.

Consent is paramount in any form of physical intimacy. It is a rape once consent is absent no matter the gender or age. Nothing gives anyone the right to a person's body if the person did not consent to it.

Causes of Rape

It has become a common sight to see, read or know from the media almost on daily basis incidences of rape involving children below the age of twelve years, adolescent and young women and the elderly as well. In Nigeria, rape is a social phenomenon that has reached an epidemic proportion. Quite often we hear of a father defile his daughter, a minor rape a fellow minor, a teacher rape his student or pupil, a pastor or religious leader rape his flock member, robbers raped a victim, a man has raped a sister-in-law or daughter-in-law, a master has raped his housemaid and a security man has raped his master's wife or daughter. The roll call is endless. These perpetrators appear to be on rampage and their victims, for no fault of theirs, get devastated, go through emotional and psychological imbalance that haunt them for life and sometimes get stigmatized by the society that ordinarily ought to care for them. Several reasons can be adduced for this dastardly act.

Ogbise, (2020) identified the early upbringing of the boy child as having an effect in his adulthood. Children brought up in a hostile environment where they see their mother often beaten up, threatened, intimidated or sexually abused by his father could possibly grow up becoming rapist as they become societal learners. This position is corroborated by (Chiazor, Ozoya, Udeme & Egharevba, 2020) when they said "They themselves (parents) engage in extra-marital affairs incautiously, before them and so they are likely to foster children that are rude, arrogant and wayward. Most children under this setting may probably become rapists". The point of significance in this early upbringing theory is that the foundation of everything determines to a great extent of its outcome.

Another challenge amongst men that indulge in rape is pedophilia, a mental condition in some men that makes them to be sexually attracted to only little children. When they have the crisis, they lure little children and defile them (Ogbise, 2020).

A possible cause of rape is peer group pressure and influence. The companies a child keeps may to a large extent define and shape his character and attitude, even when that child has a good training at his foundational stage. It is common to find the innocent youths who keep regular company of rapist easily lured into their nefarious activities. A popular saying goes thus "show me who your friends are, and I will tell you what you are" or "show me your friends, and I will tell who you are". Friends to a great extent define and reflect who a person is. Children network means a lot, because children who keep bad company are easily influenced.

In an interview with (Timitimi, 2020) he declared that there is yet the myth about sex that serves as an impetus for youths and adults alike to indulge in rape. According to him some ethnic groups hold the belief that without engaging in pre-marital sex, boys will suffer from pimples, have small testicles and weak erection and cannot satisfy their spouse after marriage and for the girls, they will have small breast, experience early menopause and painful nipples while breastfeeding. Superstitions of this kind coupled with adolescents burning desire to experiment on anything sex may have the preponderance to influence them to commit rape,

Indecent dressing among women and girls that exposes parts of their bodies that ought to be covered from public view side by side the heavy paintings they carry on their faces and nails not only debase societal values but also serve as a magnetic pull to rapists. But (Ogbise, 2020) asked perhaps rhetorically "we have children that are being defiled, is it because they dress indecently"? While indecent dressing is perceived as having the effects of debasing the moral values of our African culture and society, it is a fact that these women walk openly in the streets, seen by all, yet not every man assaults them. The innate tendency to commit rape might still lie with the individual and not the dressing per se. This is however not to justify indecent dressing for its influence cannot be overemphasized. Even the media houses that promote their products with naked people, girls in particular share in this blame.

Poverty and economic factor may have equally pushed some parents to send their female children and teens to hawk all sorts of things on the streets even till late in the night just to make ends meet. This act exposes children to conditions that predispose them to be raped. Parents neglect has also contributed to rape. Many parents in pursuit of money leave

children to the care of relatives who took advantage of their closeness to these children to abuse them.

Another possible cause of rape has to do with alcohol and drug abuse. Some young men when under the influence of alcohol cannot control themselves, and forced themselves through any girl that comes their way.

That rape was so prevalent in Nigeria, particularly in 2020 during the pandemic and subsequent lockdown was attributed to joblessness among the youths. The lockdown brought vulnerable girls and women closer to rapist.

Having explained the possible causes of rape, it is also important to note here that rape leaves an indelible mark on the victims that manage to survive it. Many are left with medical injuries, diseases, unwanted pregnancy, in fact life time injuries that shatter the girl's future. Some victims even contemplate suicide and some fall into a state of depression. Some are raped and then drug to death. Indeed it is a silent pandemic that leaves a lasting impact in the life of the victims.

The Prevalence of Rape in Nigeria

Rape in Nigeria as elsewhere in the world has become a pandemic. There is hardly a day that passes without cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence reported in the media. In sub Saharan Africa the prevalence rate is estimated at between 15-40% and in Nigeria female sexual abuse among adolescents range between 11 and 15%, (Folayan, 2014). Only recently, Nigeria's Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, while launching the Sex Offenders Register in December, 2019 reported that about two million women and girls are raped and sexually abused every year. This figure if proven affirms that there is a system failure in handling of the issue as well as a rise in the cases. Folayan, (2014) further stated that in south west Nigeria, 4-6% of all adolescent girls experience rape with most of the cases not reported apparently due to the strong code of silence among victims and the stigmatization that society places on the victims.

Despite the wide spread public outcry against the menace there appears to be no end to the crisis. Achunike & Kitause (2014) states that rape is becoming a problematic issue in contemporary Nigeria as a result of many factors such as sex myths, culture of silence, peer group pressure among others that are already inherent in the Nigerian society. Adetomiwa Isiaka, a journalist on global voices, in a seminar in Lagos in 2016 reported that one in every four girls and women will experience rape and or sexual assault before the age of 18. In a 2018 Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) report that women

aged between 15 and 49 years had since age 14 and 15 experienced physical violence in the year preceding the survey. Chioma Agwuegbo, the founder of TechHerNG, an NGO that enhances technology knowledge exchange amongst women, while protesting against Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) on June, 5th, 2020 at Abuja stated that between January to June, Nigeria had recorded 100 reported cases and possibly a lot more unreported cases, lamenting that the crisis is now a scourge. The figure is alarming and goes to show the rising rate of the cases. Corroborating the increase, the reports of the Centre for Law Enforcement Education for Nigeria (CLEEN), October, 18th 2019, the United Nations, (UN) 24th August, 2018, para.78 and that of NOIPolls Limited, a public opinion and research organization, July 2016, all agree that gender based violence was on the increase in Nigeria. 78% of respondents affirmed that there is an increasing prevalence of domestic violence across Nigeria. The Punch Newspaper (2020) cited Nigeria's Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu as having affirmed the rising cases of rape to the restrictions put in place as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. In his words "It has come to public knowledge now that because of the Covid-19 restrictions, we have a surge in cases of rape and gender-based violence." Kano state Coordinator of the Women Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) and a member of the International Federation of Women Lawyers, Barrister Fatima Ahmad (2020) sees a nexus in a covid 19 lockdown spike in cases due to victim and perpetrator proximity. According to her, Kano Waraka Sexual Assault Referral Centre recorded 127 cases in 3 months (between April and June, 2020).

For instance, a three month old baby was raped in Nasarawa State, in Akwanga, Barakat Bello was raped and murdered in Akinyele Local Government Area of Ibadan; a five year old was raped as well as a 49 year old woman all in the same Local Government Area in 2020. A boy of 32 was said to have raped his mother who ended up with twin babies. Similarly, a 22 year old student of University of Benin, Uwaila Omosuwa died two days after she was raped in a church and many others. Then the question is how has the Nigerian government handled the issue of rape?

Government Attempt at Curbing Rape

Has the Nigerian political leadership done enough to curtail the trend? There are mixed reactions to the question. For the United Nations refugee agency, there appears to be deliberate cover-ups in some of the high profile abuse cases. Chaloka Beyani (2020) the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights of internally displaced persons in his visit to Nigeria in August, 2016 stated in his end of mission visit to Nigeria stated that the Nigeria government had "a tendency to downplay the problem of sexual violence and abuse" of internally displace people, which in effect "constitutes a hidden crisis of abuse

with fear, stigma and cultural factors as well as impunity for perpetrators leading to under-reporting of abuse to the relevant authorities**.** "Amnesty International Report (2019). Osai Ojigho (2018) Director of Amnesty International said in May, that "It is absolutely shocking that people who had suffered so much under Boko Haram have been condemned to further horrendous abuse by the Nigerian military." (Amnesty report, May, 2018: Index No. AFR 44/8415/2018) sometimes indicated that female detainees are sexually molested in order to extract confessions. He raised the alarm following outcry from many of the women in these camps that soldiers and civilian JFT members use force and threats to rape women in satellite camps by taking advantage of hunger to force women to become their "girlfriends" in what appears to be survival sex. "Sex in these highly coercive circumstances is always rape, even when force is not used" remarked Ojigho. In another report published in March, 2019, Index No. AFR 44/0090/2019, Amnesty International, while welcoming Nigeria's cooperation with the review process and its positive response to some of the recommendations made by other states with regard to the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, raised serious concerns on the country's accountability for Human Rights Violations which it described as "elusive". It notes that "pervasive violence against women, including rape of women and girls in internally displaced persons camps…" persisted.

The ordeal faced by the displaced persons in the camps many of whom are widows and unaccompanied orphans is further compounded by restricted movements (which contravenes UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, principle 14:2 on Internal Displacement), irregular supplies of food, clothing, medicine and other essentials which makes them vulnerable to rape and sexual exploitation by camp officials, soldiers, police, members of vigilante groups etc. A Nigerian research organization, NOI Polls reported in July, 2020 that in the IDP camps in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, flash states of Boko Haram insurgency, 66 % of the 400 displaced peoples mostly women and children were sexually abused. So while we lament over the high prevalence rate of rape cases and other forms of sexual violence in our homes, the conflict zones makes the case of women and children even more tragic as they are constantly captured and turned into sex slaves. Admittedly a lot needs to be done but, looking at the internally displaced peoples' camps alone as the UN envoy has done and drawing up a sweeping conclusion may not present a dispassionate judgment on governments efforts at tackling the incidence of rape both in the states and at the Centre.

To some feminist activists, government score card is in the affirmative. Again, Dise Ogbise (2020) while explaining government response stated that for Bayelsa State different bodies and initiatives have received over 80% support in their struggles. Presently, under the

office of the Governor's wife, a gender-response initiative team comprising lawyers, psychologists, doctors and nurses has been set up to deal with all rape and other gender-based violence related cases in the state. For the Nigeria police, she said a lot needs to be done. Her experience has shown that for the purposes of professionalism in handling of cases, police officers in the gender units or departments require training and retraining in addition to better funding that will guarantee swift investigation and prosecution of cases. There are some loopholes in the process. According to her "policemen had to ask rape victims who are gang-raped and already traumatized of support to go to the scene of crime to take photographs and all of that is demoralizing and discouraging". Barrister Ogbise's call is at tandem with the Inspector-General's order of deployment of additional investigators to police units with a view to strengthening the capacity of the units to respond to the increasing challenges of sexual assaults and other gender based violence (Aljazeera News, 2020).

The enactment of the violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, 2015 is one good initiative of government and its adoption by the various state governments is widely anticipated to help checkmate the trend. Barrister Ogbise (2020) again remarked "One of the major reasons why the government (State Houses of Assemblies) is hammering on the domestication of VAAP Act is because of the increase in the rape cases in Bayelsa State and Nigeria as elsewhere". Very recently, Nigerians became disillusioned and discontented with frequent and rising cases of rape in the country and under the aegis of different human right campaigners thronged to the streets of Abuja, matched round police headquarters to demand for justice, after a 22 year old student, Vera Uwaila Omosuwa died two days after she was reportedly raped in a church in Benin city, the Edo state capital (Aljazeera news (2020).

As a follow up of this, the Nigerian Governors forum, in their meeting in Abuja, resolved to declare a state of emergency on rape and to set up a sex offenders register as well as sign on two federal laws which seek to punish rape and violent acts against women according to Bukola Adebayo (2020). President Mohammadu Buhari in his Democracy Day (June12th 2020) broadcast to the Nation said "I am particularly upset at recent incidents of rape, especially of very young girls. The police are pursuing these cases with a view to bringing perpetrators of these heinous crimes to swift justice". He emphasized that "I wish to assure all our women of this administration's determination to fight Gender-based violence through the instrumentality of the law and awareness creation" (TVC News, June, 2020). The awareness creation is championed by many non- governmental bodies and numerous feminists' initiatives partnering with the government in the fight against all forms of gender based violence in Nigeria. "Nigerian authorities need a zero tolerance

approach to end violence targeted at women" Osai Ojigho Amesty international (2018). However, in all of these, most perpetrators of high profile rape matters and others escape prosecution because either the victims refuse to speak up or speak out for fear of victimization, stigmatization or harassment or victim's relations who are supposed to pursue the matters have received one form of bribe or the other and opt for settlement out of police or court. In some instances, even mothers (wives) protect their sons (husbands) after a husband (father or son) defiles or sexually harass his daughter or sister. Matters handled in this manner result in under reporting of cases and will give the illusion that government is insensitive to incidences of rape and other gender-based violent acts. How do we checkmate this trend? Barrister Ogbise (2020) advocates that "evidences of victims should be given or taken in camera (in the chambers of magistrates or judges prosecuting such cases), there should be less of media coverage and names of victims or their relatives need not be mentioned to avoid stigmatization".

There is the question of lack of prosecution of cases not only in Nigeria but elsewhere. Chiazor, Ozoya, Udeme & Egharevba, (2016) affirms that out of about 147,000 rape cases every year, only a little above 1,000 are convicted. In Lagos state, Nigeria, out of about 10,079 cases only 18% of the figures which constitutes rape cases that took place between 2013 and 2014 were reported. In Bayelsa State, southern Nigeria, between January and September, 2020, about a 100 rape cases were reported, out of which less than half are facing prosecution. According to statistics gathered by Women of Compassion Worldwide in 2008, Delta State in Southern Nigeria recorded 1128 cases of rape between January and July (Chiazor, Ozoya, Udeme & Egharevba (2016). They stated further that, a 2010 joint survey carried out by CLEEN Foundation and Macarthur Foundation showed that among the 36 states in Nigeria, Cross River, Ebonyi and Bayelsa states are on top of the log in terms of robbery, rape and murder. The figures of the rape scourge are on the increase. The question now is, what do we do to curb or eliminate this scourge

The way forward

As everybody share in the blame for this unwholesome act, everybody has a role to play in curbing it, beginning with the parents. For the parents, their role in stemming the tide of this menace is critical. The vulnerable girl-child under their care needs all the necessary attention and protection. They should as a matter of utmost necessity always put their children under the care of tested and trusted individuals if for any reason they become indisposed. Parents should monitor what films and programmes their children watch, what they wear at home and outside the home, discourage sending their children to hawk, should be interested in the companies they keep. The home as the foundation of society could be likened to the "Problem Tree". "When you think a tree standing there gives you

a problem and you decide to pluck its fruits or cut the branches without its roots, you still have a challenge. When you cut the tree from its roots, it will no longer grow-up "Ogbise, (2020). This analogy underscores the fact that the family, as a foundation of any child is key. A faulty family moral breeds rascals, thieves, armed robbers, drug addicts, rapists. So parents must bring up responsible children that will add value to society. In any case only responsible parents can bring up responsible children. This implies that parents too must watch their own character and behaviour.

Closely related to this is the value of girl-child training/education which of course begins from the home. The girl should be taught what is enticing to the opposite sex; to know the right or value of her body; where and what part of her body should be touched or not by whoever, whether uncle or cousin or whoever.

Also communication between the mother and the girl-child must be very strong. There must be a finest bond between the mother and the daughter that will make her free to discuss anything with the mother, particularly when there is any unsavory touch. The mother must find a way to reach out to the girl-child as she is growing. They must keep watchful eyes on them.

Not only mothers, the men must also be involved to tackle this scourge. The advocacy against rape must not be seen purely as women affair. As Puulin Tallen (2020) said "dichotomizing voices that can advocate for better social practices is not helpful in the long run". According to her if men should reduce sexual violence to a woman issue and sit back, they are just as morally complicit. A former Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard (2020) corroborated this position when he said "We'll only get there by drawing more men into the conversation", a conversation of activism, a conversation of advocacy and campaign.

To the victims, it very important for them to remove fear, they should speak out rather than dying silently and internally. Speaking out will enable them get immediate medical attention, in case there is any infection or injury it can be dealt with early then the law can take its course. They must not fight alone, they must leave the culture of conspiracy of silence, culture of it's a family affair so let it be settled outside the court. This will go a long way to reduce the increase.

It is understandable that there is collaborative efforts between the government and various Sexual and Gender Based violence (SGBV) service providers/organizations which are involved in receiving and responding to cases of SGVB. They are advocating for stiffer legislative frame-works to bring perpetrators to justice and to serve as deterrent to others.

There is the need for more activism, advocacy, campaign and collaboration by various non-governmental organizations and the government. Advocacy and campaigns should be intensified and not limited to the state capitals and big cities alone. It should be extended to the nooks and crannies of farm settlements, towns and villages where people do not know where and how to seek for help reside. This would help become aware of the existence of non- governmental organizations (NGOs) that render support services such as free legal services, security and improvement of vulnerable persons. E.g. 'DO Foundation' a non-governmental organization involved in advocacy against gender violence. In fact, many cases of rape are recorded in the villages. Such platforms should provide the impetus for people to walk up to and speak up. If there is more advocacy and collaboration, the work will become less stressful and better service delivery will be guaranteed.

Further still, the various local governments, states and the federal Government should partner with non-governmental organizations in terms of logistics support for the campaigns to effectively penetrate interior communities. Advocacy groups and Initiatives are volunteers and need the support of government.

The Sexual Offenders Register launched by the Federal Government in 2019 (Aljazeera News) should be adopted by every state governments as it will provide a data base. It is suggested that the personal bio data of those convicted should be published in local and national daily newspapers. In addition to prosecuting and convicting them, extant laws should be put in place to deny rapists appointments, promotions for carrier officers and those seeking for elective positions. The domestication of the Violent Against Persons Prohibition (VAAP) Act of 2015 should be compulsorily domesticated by the various states in the country and implemented to the letter. Perhaps stiffer penalties (life and death sentence) should be put in place. Laws have always existed against rape but time has come for more severe punishment.

The need for children to be taught sex education cannot be overemphasized. Both at formal and informal levels, sex education should be made compulsory in schools, not only at the secondary school level but also at the primary school. Doing this will help create early awareness of this scourge as well as safety precautions.

The society must not only return to its esteemed moral ethical values, they must continually teach and enforce them.

Media sensitization and orientation is equally important in fighting against this menace. More efforts need to be geared towards this. Religious bodies, organizations, churches must be part of this orientation.

Conclusion

The ongoing discussion has revealed that rape is a public health nuisance that violates the fundamental human rights of women that leaves its victims in hopelessly traumatizing situations if they survive the act. Due to the social stigma, rejection, police harassment, threats from the perpetrators themselves, most victims become scared of reporting their assailants to the police and other bodies for prosecution. Sometimes some victims even contemplate suicide.

While the political leadership has vowed to prosecute and bring perpetrators to justice as President Muhammadu Buhari has vowed to do, some constraints and loopholes appear to be seemingly standing diametrically opposed to the realization of zero tolerance of the subject under discourse. Let justice be seen to be served so that perpetrators will not continue to act with impunity

As indicated in the discussion, concerted efforts of all stake holders will go a long way to curb this menace.

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