



THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This paper investigated the epidemiology of sexual violence in Nigeria. Sexual violence has been considered as an “imposed sexual act with physical force” caused by lack of consideration of other’s right. In Nigeria, violence against women is becoming an increasingly recognized pandemic issue necessitating eradication and elimination. It occurs in various forms with resultant physical, sexual or psychological consequences. However, there is still denial and paucity of literature about the magnitude and pattern of this problem in Nigeria. Sexual violence against children and women brings with it long-term, both psychiatrically and socially. Apart from sexual gratification itself, sexual violence against women in Nigeria is a result of unequal power equations both real and perceived between men and women and is strongly influenced by cultural factors and values. The findings and results of this paper will be helpful to girls and women terms governing sexual violence and how to remain safe from been violated. Therefore, this paper systematically reviewed some related literature on sexual violence, contexts of sexual violence and examined it forms, the risk factors associated with sexual violence and the way out of sexual violence.*

KEYWORDS: *Sexual violence, women, child, STI, Nigeria*



INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, the issue of sexual violence is a big issue. Sexual violence against women and children has been an issue in Nigeria, according to Mooney (2013). It has become a worm infestation in society, threatening nature's most valuable and rare gift, the woman. Vera Uwaila, a 22-year-old University of Benin student, was raped and killed in a Nigerian church in late May 2020. A 16-year-old student was gang raped and died in Ibadan, Oyo State, in less than a week. A thirteen-year-old Nigerian girl was gang-raped and left for dead by four guys in Kaduna during the first week of June of the same year. Some of the many unreported rapes are as follows: (Mulino and Linz, 1995). According to statistics, one in four girls have been sexually abused. It is a sensitive problem that has been around for a long time in many countries and generations. There are many distinct ways of looking at this issue, each influenced by a particular set of circumstances. moral, spiritual and legal viewpoints as well as possible solutions are included in this section. For the sake of balancing possible gendered attitudes against rape, the two authors are of different genders.

Aims and objectives of the Paper

The paper seek to look at the following:

1. To review some related literature on sexual violence
2. To examine forms and contexts of sexual violence
3. To examine the consequences of sexual violence on victims and perpetrators
4. To examine the way out of sexual violence among women

Systematic Review on Sexual Violence

As described by Holmes (2014), sexual violence can take the form of a forced sexual act, an expression of one's sexuality, or an act directed against one's own sexuality by anybody, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any environment. Anus or vaginal penetration with any body part or object or oral penetration by a genital organ of another person without the victim's consent is defined as "rape" in this definition (Eby, 2010). All victims and perpetrators, regardless of gender, are included in this definition. Her understanding of the trauma associated with rape of the penis/vagina extends to rape with an object. This includes cases in which a person's mental or physical incapacity makes it impossible for them to consent (Eby, 2010). One individual or a group of people can commit rape (gang rape). This can be done at home, in lonely places, and even on a deserted highway or street in a very humiliating and frightening manner. The Public Relations Officer of the State Police Command confirmed this to Nigerian News Agency (NAN). Unfinished buildings were the scene of 33.3% of rapes in Kano (Mooney, 2013).

Rape is on the rise in all of Nigeria's states, and this has caused a lot of public outcries and protests. Rape reports from throughout the country indicate terrible acts of sexual abuse against women and children that are rarely seen before. Sadly, the most vulnerable are young women and girls. Sadly, there have been examples of fathers forcibly having sex with their daughters who are legal minors.



Incest is the sexual relationship between a father and a child that is defined as a sexual offense when it occurs. For centuries, it has been outlawed or sanctioned ranging from the burning ceremony to stigmatization (Coker, 2000). intercourse, they are sterile and will never be happy in life unless they are purified and their family links severed through a rite of purification. In Nigeria, incest is a crime punishable by law and considered taboo by nearly every ethnic group. Unfortunately, parents, uncles, and guardians regularly engage in this type of sexual misconduct with their own children. Men have learned to deal with sexual violence, according to an examination of accessible material from newspapers, police arrests, ministries, organizations, and NGOs.

Rape and other unusual sexually aggressive acts by men go unreported, resulting in a dearth of complete statistics on these criminal sexual actions in the country, according to Matasha (2019). Statistically, Consequences for society as a whole, as well as other factors. Yet, statistics show that despite this, sexual violence is on the rise in Nigerian communities at an unparalleled rate. From January to June of 2020, there were 717 documented rape cases in Nigeria, according to Lesserman (2016). During the Covid19 lockdown order in April and May, Anambra state police received more than 80 reports of rapes. The Justice Department in Akwa Ibom State received 100 rape cases (Mooney, 2013). Between January and May, the Kano State Police Command documented 47 rape cases. The Minister for Women's Affairs and Social Development also declared on July 13, 2020 that 3,600 rape cases had been received during the lockdown period. There were up to 100 cases per state during the lockdown, according to the women's affairs commissioners in Nigeria's 36 states, she said (Jewkes, 2015). There were 45,554 homicides, rapes, and other crimes perpetrated against persons in 2016, according to the Office for National Statistics (NBS). 2 279 rape and indecent violence instances were reported last year, according to IFWL President Zainab Aminu Garba, who added that rape is on the rise in Nigeria's northwestern states. According to Hakimi (in 2001). WARIF estimates that more than 10,000 girls are raped every day in Nigeria, making it one of the most dangerous countries in Africa. Two million Nigerian women and girls are sexually molested each year, according to Pauline Tallen, the Minister of Women's Affairs and Social Development, in 2019. A research issued in Abuja found that the North West of Nigeria had the highest rate of rape, at 92%, followed by the South West of Nigeria, at 91%. (Leserman, 2016).

Sexual Violence in Different Forms and Context

Sexual violence can occur in a variety of places and circumstances. A few examples of this type of sexual violence are: sexual violence committed against people in romantic or romantically committed relationships, violence committed against people in armed conflict, unwanted advances or harassment, and sexual violence committed against people who have intellectual or physical disabilities. Forced or coerced marriage or cohabitation, including child marriage, as well as sexual abuse of children. Female genital mutilation and obligatory virginity tests are examples of acts of aggression against women's sexual integrity. Human trafficking and forced prostitution for sexual exploitation. Human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation has no broadly accepted definition. In this context, the phrase refers to the migration of people—usually women—across and among countries for sex work (Mooney, 2013). An additional aspect of human trafficking is the insistence on an immigrant's participation in heterosexual activity in order to facilitate his or her journey. Forced servitude and compulsion are used in sex trafficking, along with fraud and the creation of debt. Many women and children are promised domestic or service jobs but are instead brought to brothels,



where their passports and other identifying cards are taken away. To be beaten or imprisoned and their freedom guaranteed, they must have acquired the purchase price and travel and visa charges by prostitution.

Sexual Abuse by Close Friends and Lovers

For the purposes of this definition, "intimate partner violence" is defined as any action within an intimate relationship that harms the people involved. Forced sexual encounters and other forms of sexual coercion, as well as various controlling behaviors (isolation of a person from family and friends), are among the most common forms of physical and psychological abuse. Bullying, constant belittling and demeaning are other forms of psychological abuse. A woman's physical and psychological well-being can be adversely affected by intimate partner violence in two ways: directly, by the injury it causes, and indirectly, through the chronic health disorders that result from the repeated stress it causes. It is therefore a risk factor for numerous acute and chronic illnesses and/or "stress-related ailments" among women who have previously experienced violence in a relationship. An injury to the abdomen or chest, a fractured or broken bone or tooth, damage to the eyes and ears, and an attempted strangling are all possible outcomes of physical trauma from domestic violence in the form of bruises, cuts, and abrasions.

Sexual Initiation that is coerced

Non-consensual, forced, or physically coercive first sexual intercourse (vaginal, oral, or anal) can have harmful impacts for children and adolescents who undergo FSI. Despite the fact that women are disproportionately affected, both male and female teenagers in Nigeria speak out about being subjected to forced sex. Forcible sexual initiation has been reported by up to 31.4% of adolescent boys and 5.7% of sexually active adolescent boys in this demographic. Adolescent girls with HIV (ALHIV) are more likely than non-HIV-positive women and males with ALHIV to undergo forced sexual initiation. As a result, this study implies that HIV infection may enhance the vulnerability of girls and women to sexual violence, which is already exacerbated by gender inequality. To explain gender disparity, we need to look at the elements that contribute to it on a macro and micro level. Some of the variables that support the commission of sexual violence include traditional social and gender norms that place a strong emphasis on male dominance, as well as laws that prohibit violence.

Gang Rape

The rape of a single victim by two or more attackers is known as gang rape, serial gang rape, gang rape, or multi-perpetrator rape in scholarly literature (usually at least three). Gang rape is based on a shared religious, ethnic, or racial identity. Serial rape can be motivated by a variety of factors, including, but not limited to, sexual claims, claims of sexual ability, war, retribution, and, in up to 30% of cases, attacks on another race, ethnic group, or religion. Rapes committed as part of a gang can include genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other forms of atrocity

Trafficking in the Sexually Explicit

Sex trafficking is a visible symbol of human trafficking and slavery in the 21st century, both of which are illegal. Individuals, families, and entire communities are adversely affected by this public health problem. When a trafficker employs force, fraud, or compulsion to exploit an individual for commercial labor or sex, human trafficking occurs. It is described as "the recruiting, housing, transporting, providing, procuring and patronizing or soliciting of a person



for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex acts" in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2000. Adult commercial sexual behavior may be induced by the use of violence, deception, or coercion. There is no compulsion, fraud or coercion in any commercial sexual activity that involves a minor. Preventing human trafficking begins with gaining an understanding of the prevalent risk and protective variables for violence.

Victimization of Sex Workers by others

Sex workers in Nigeria are subjected to a wide range of human rights violations and discrimination. People who "profit from the proceeds of sex work" are criminalized, not sex workers themselves, according to Nigeria's constitution. The fine for "aggressive" sex discussions with a client can be as high as \$2,000 for sex workers. Law enforcement authorities employ offenses to harass and penalize sex workers. In some situations, the stoning of a woman discovered engaging in sex work is used as a form of punishment in the northern areas of Nigeria, according to Amaka. While sex work is still illegal in Nigeria, the wording is ambiguous if it is undertaken by an individual without the assistance of managers or a brothel.

Risk Factors of sexual violence

The varied types of sexual violence against women and the situations in which it occurs make it difficult to explain. Intimate partner violence and sexual violence share many characteristics. Those in the social environment, like as a spouse or family, can raise the chance of rape influence and the response to it, including factors that increase the danger of someone being forced to have sex. Researchers have shown a strong correlation between multiple characteristics and the incidence of sexual violence.

Sexual Violence and Its After effects

Both the victim and the perpetrator might suffer short and long-term consequences as a result of sexual violence. From the case studies discussed here, the following are some of the outcomes:

Mental anguish for those who have been affected

As it turned out, the victims suffered from significant psychological trauma immediately following the occurrence, and while they eventually recovered, they were still haunted by the memory of the episode. Fever, slurred speech, a lack of appetite, insomnia, and a sense of unease are all symptoms of trauma. Victims frequently screamed in panic, even as they slept, and this was the most prevalent symptom they experienced. In one instance, a male victim was sexually violated by a coworker while working at a local bazaar (Case 3). Because of his traumatized and insecure state, he stopped going to work. She was despondent for many years after being sexually violated on multiple occasions by two different men.

Child Marriage

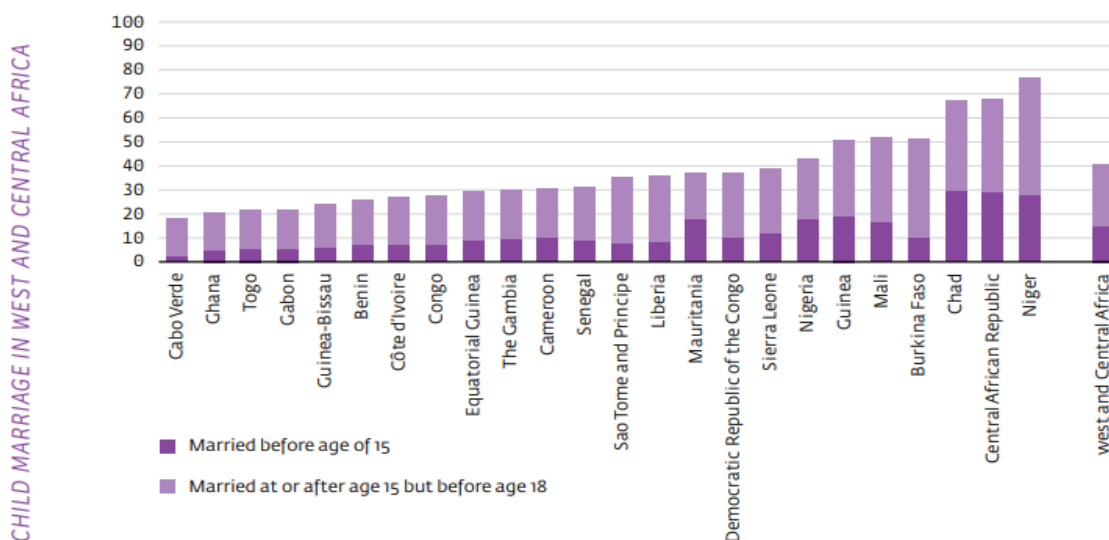
Nearly 60 million girls and young women in West and Central Africa were married before the age of 18, a frequency of 41 percent. This, however, obscures important distinctions within and between countries. Six of the 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage in the world are located in the region, all of which have rates more than 50%. First and second place for child marriage are Niger and Chad, with 76 and 68 percent, respectively, in the globe. 14.4



percent of the region's population is married at age 15, with Chad and the Central African Republic both having prevalence rates above 25 percent. Child brides are most common in Nigeria, the region's most populous country. An estimated 22 million child brides live in Nigeria, accounting for 40 percent of all child brides in the region. There are 4.1 million brides in Niger, the most populous country in the world.

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were married or in union by age 15 and by age 18, West and Central Africa²

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multi-Indicator Country Surveys (MICS), 2005-2017.
Generated by UNICEF Data and Analytics Section, January 2018





Number of girls and women married in childhood in West and Central Africa

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multi-Indicator Country Surveys (MICS), 2005-2017.
Generated by UNICEF Data and Analytics Section, January 2018

Nigeria	22 million	Benin	900,000
Democratic Republic of the Congo	8.9 million	Central African Republic	800,000
Niger	4.1 million	Togo	600,000
Mali	2.8 million	Liberia	500,000
Burkina Faso	2.6 million	Mauritania	500,000
Chad	2.6 million	Congo	400,000
Cameroon	2.4 million	Gambia	200,000
Ghana	2.3 million	Guinea-Bissau	200,000
Côte d'Ivoire	2.1 million	Gabon	200,000
Guinea	1.9 million	Equatorial Guinea	100,000
Senegal	1.6 million	Cabo Verde	30,000
Sierra Leone	1.0 million	Sao Tome and Principe	20,000

Hampered Education

In the victim's life, early or permanent school dropouts seems to be a repercussion of abuse. Because of actions, both legal and informal, taken in reaction to acts of sexual violence, victims' caregivers and family members felt unsafe sending them to school for fear that the perpetrators' or their allies' sides would hurt the victims again. They were teased by their neighbors and family members for a long time since victims of sexual violence are stigmatized by society. When the victim's relatives pressed him during the shalish, he admitted to the harassment. Neighbors perceived this refusal poorly. Neighbors branded her a "bad girl" for agreeing to the intercourse with the culprit in this case. Her parents physically and emotionally abused her in this case because she disobeyed them. In another example investigated, some neighbors refused to let their children play with the five-year-old victim four years after the occurrence, worried that the victim might spoil their children, according to the investigation. The victim's mental health suffered as a result of her marriage.

Rising Inequality

Families of victims of workplace sexual harassment and/or violence have suffered because of the tensions that have risen, resulting in job loss and destitution. Poverty was worsened by joblessness. The victim's family decided to put their son's education ahead of making money.

Consequences faced by Perpetrators

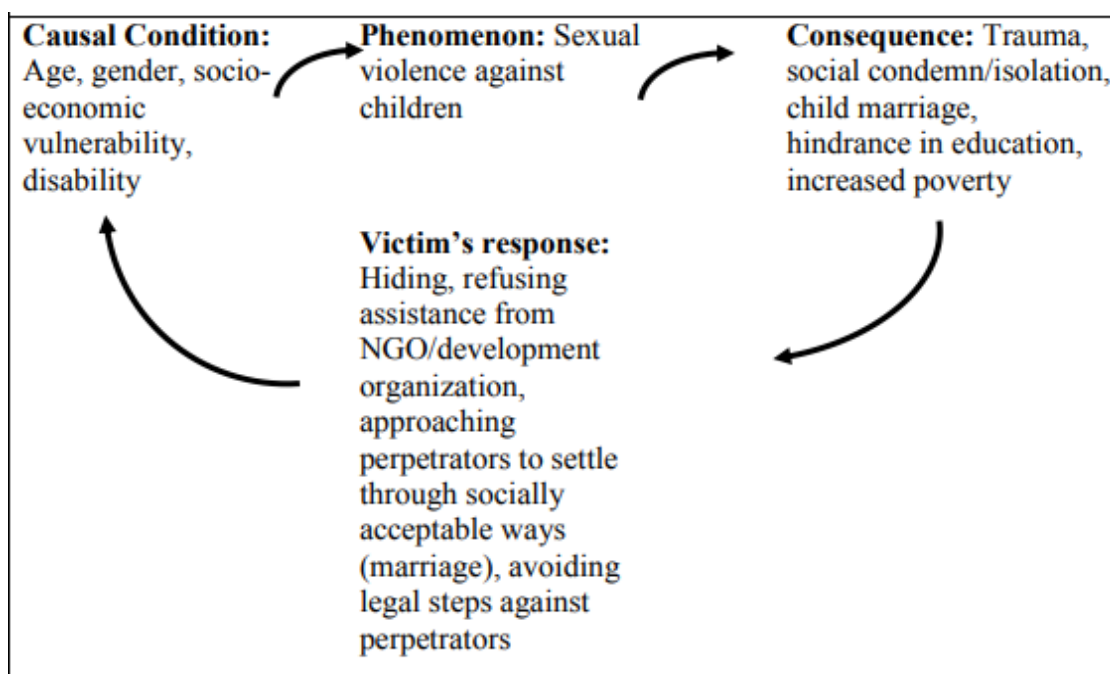
Legal Repercussions

When the victims went to court, the perpetrators had to reckon with legal consequences. In some cases, they were released on bail and brought before the court whenever their presence was required. In one case, the perpetrators were initially arrested, but the victim's family later had to withdraw the case from the court under pressure from the perpetrators. In the other case,

after being released on bail, the perpetrator continued to be involved in various illegal activities as before. In one case, the perpetrator was not arrested, although the victim took legal action and filed a complaint. It happened when the perpetrator, by deception, entered into a sexual relationship with the victim and made the victim pregnant. The same happened in another case where the perpetrators (three involved) were not arrested despite the issuing of an arrest warrant.

Feelings of Guilt and Disappearance

One perpetrator was found to be remorseful for committing sexual violence against his three-year-old cousin, although he considered the crime "trivial" or "minor" that "shouldn't go too far". affair in the Shalish and receives overcompensation from his family. After the incident, the perpetrators disappeared from the village and nobody saw him after the incident.



What can be done to Prevent Sexual Violence?

It is difficult to find evidence-based programs aimed at preventing sexual violence. The majority of interventions have been created and put into action in industrialized nations. It's not clear if they'll be useful in other contexts. The interventions that have been created fall into the following categories.

One-on-one approaches Support and care for the mind

After a sexual **violence**, counseling, therapy, and support group activities have been found to be beneficial, particularly if there are aggravating issues related to the violence or the rehabilitation process. Using a brief cognitive-behavioral training immediately following a traumatizing event may speed up the healing process, according to some studies. It has been



found that victims of sexual violence often hold themselves responsible for the act, and addressing this in psychological therapy has been proved to be critical in their rehabilitation. However, short-term counseling and treatment programs following acts of sexual abuse require a lot of additional research.. Non-governmental organizations, such as rape crisis centers and women's organizations, have provided the majority of formal psychiatric care for victims of sexual violence. There will always be a dearth of resources for those who have been sexually **violence**. There are many ways to promote accessibility, including setting up free phone helplines. South Africa's "Stop Woman Abuse" hotline, for example, responded to 150,000 calls in its first five months of operation.

Perpetrators' Training Program

Only a small number of programs specifically address sexual violence perpetrators. They're mostly seen in developed countries, and the research on them is quite new. Men who engage in sexual violence frequently deny that they are to blame or that their actions are aggressive. Offenders need to take responsibility for their actions and be held accountable in public if rehabilitation programs are to be effective. Victim support services and anti-sexual violence initiatives will benefit from working together.

Sexual violence can be prevented in the following ways, according to Hakimi (2001):

Rape victims should not be blamed for the violence they have been subjected to.

1. The media, your lover, or anybody else should not define your sexuality for you.
2. Never use drugs or alcohol to entice a partner to have sex with you.
3. Avoid objectifying or categorizing women as a means of engaging in sexist behavior.
4. Spread the word about the myths and realities of sexual violence to everyone you come into contact.
5. Interrupt jokes about rape.
6. In advertising, pornography, professional wrestling, and other media, challenge images of violence against women.
7. As a volunteer, a donor, or a lobbyist, you can help women and men working to end sexual violence in your community.

CONCLUSION

Every year, sexual violence impacts hundreds of thousands of people all around the world. Various social, cultural, and economic conditions play a role in the development of this phenomenon. Sexual violence against women is a direct result of gender inequality. Many countries lack data on most types of sexual violence, and further study into all elements of sexual violence is urgently needed. In the end, it's all about the interventions. There are a variety of approaches, but the most common include primary prevention of sexual violence, support for sexual violence victims, steps to increase the possibility of rape perpetrators being identified and punished, and tactics for rape prevention.



Improving the status of women and redefining social standards. In both rich and developing countries, it is critical to develop solutions that can be implemented with little resources. Victims of sexual violence benefit greatly from the physical and psychological care provided by health experts. – evidence-gathering for the benefit of law enforcement Case management and evidence collection are much more efficient in countries where there are protocols and policies, as well as well-trained medical personnel and close ties with the legal system. Ultimately, governments and civil society must engage strongly in the fight against sexual violence, as well as a coordinated response from a number of sectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this, the author made the following recommendations:

1. The victim's sense of having the legal right, respect and equal chance to live in their environment without fear of harassment can definitely be relieved and satisfied by the victim's pursuit of justice. The social and mental damage caused by women who have been raped following sexual violence need rigorous and appropriate psychiatric treatment to help them heal and develop the resilience they need to cope.
2. For a holistic approach to addressing sexual violence in the country, the psychological component must be included. When it comes to the formation of federal, state, local, ministries, institutions, and organizations, competent psychologists should always be included in the preparation of an action plan. The feelings and emotions of those involved in incidents of gender-based violence must be put on the back burner when pursuing justice.
3. A judicial process must be used to determine the merits of each reported case.
4. Victims of rape require the assistance of their family, friends, and professionals in their social network and police officers, as well.

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