

PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA: THE RED FLAGS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Chrisantus Kanayochukwu Ariche

Department of Philosophy
University of Calabar, Calabar
arichesantus@gmail.com

Nneka Sophie Amalu

Department of History and International Studies
University of Calabar, Calabar
amasophie001@gmail.com

Ndu Douglas Awurumibe

School of General Studies
Imo State Polytechnic
ogendu1305@gmail.com

&

Yusuf Abdullahi

Department of History, School of Arts and Social Sciences
Niger State College of Education, Minna.
abdullahiyusuf201522@gmail.com

Abstract

The rising number of cases of sexual violence in Nigeria has become so worrisome and mindboggling that, despite several widespread condemnation and punitive measures, bringing an end to it seems far-fetched. The argument of this article is that early identification of the red flags will play a significant role in curbing incessant cases of sexual violence. At the front pages of our national dailies, one reads several cases of sexual violence and unfortunately, women of all age brackets are victims of this heinous crime. It cuts across all sectors of the society, the homes, schools, workplace, hospitals and even the churches where people consider to be sacred and safe. In addressing this problem this work adopts the method of critical textual analysis and it is purely qualitative. Findings

show that several deterrent measures have not been able to eradicate the rising cases of sexual violence especially rape cases in Nigeria. Contributing to this discussion, this paper concludes that identifying the early signs (red flags) and taking a proactive rather than a reactive step will help in minimizing the incessant cases of sexual violence in Nigeria.

Keywords: Sexual Violence, Nigeria, Consent, Crime, Rape and women

Introduction

Sexual violence is an age long crime that has been in existence since early civilized societies. It has attracted the attention of scholars from different fields (Baxi, 2000. Dsah, 2021 Kayleigh et al 2022, Bovill et al 2022, Strizzi. et al 2021). At different times and in different places in history cases of sexual violence has been recorded. It is one of the global social problems or vices that has continued to torment children, young girls, women and even adult/old women. On a daily basis cases of sexual violence are being reported both young and old are being raped today. This is an indication that no one is free from the clutches of rapists, although young girls and women are more likely to be victims of sexual violence than men. In one week at least five girls are reported being raped in Nigeria. Pauline Tallen Nigeria's Minister for Women and Social Development reported that about two million Nigerians mainly women and girls are raped every year. Though this statistics is not yet proven but it shows that sexual violence is on the increase in Nigeria. The most alarming side to this crime is where fathers, brother's rape daughters and sisters and this has destroyed the entire family fabrics. Family values are threatened, our moral values are no longer respected and things seems to have fallen apart. Horrible and terrifying cases keep coming up each day and is quite frightening.

Dominant views on sexual violence argues that it is a violation of basic human right (Aimakhu, 2017), others conceive it as a public health problem (Nkiruka et al, 2018, McQueen et al, 2021). Literatures abound that have condemned sexual violence in its totality (Lopez-Sanchez et al, 2019, Kalra, et al 2013, Dash, 2021 etc). Sexual violence is a matter of urgent public importance and a collective project. It is a serious public health and human right problem with a lot of consequences on the girl child and women. One major problem in Nigeria is that sexual violence is grossly underreported even when reported it is reported late and in most cases not

reported at all. There is this culture of silence noticed among Nigerians, this is attributed to fear of secondary victimization, fear of shame, feeling of guilt and fear of stigmatization to say the least. The government has launched several punishment strategies to deter intending rapists, ranging from death penalty (Niger State), life imprisonment, castration (Kaduna State) and sex offenders register (as recommended by Pauline Tallem in 2019) despite these punishment strategies sexual violence still remains unabated. After a thorough examination of sexual violence in Nigeria this research took the task of identifying the early signs/red flags associated with perpetrators of sexual violence with a view of forestalling incessant cases of sexual violence in Nigeria.

Adopting the method of critical textual analysis the paper argues that identifying this early signs is a proactive ways of curbing the incessant cases of sexual violence. The objective of this paper therefore is to examine the prevalence of sexual violence in Nigeria through identification of early signs and reflags. It is in this direction that this paper is significant and unique because of its introduction of this new perspective that has not been exhaustively discussed in existing literatures. The submission of this work is that if these red flags are identified and nipped from the bud it will aid in minimizing incessant cases of sexual violence.

Sexual Violence

Violence is an “exertion of physical force upon another person from which there is a strong possibility that murder, injury, psychological damage or other negative changes will result” (Alkan et al 2021). National Sexual Violence Resource Center (2010) has it that sexual violence means forcing or manipulating someone else into unwanted sexual activity without their consent. It is a sexual act obtained by force, violence or coercion or act directly against a person’s sexuality irrespective of the relationship with the victim. It includes rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. For Center for Disease, Control and Prevention (CDC) Sexual violence is sexual activity when consent is not obtained or freely given. According to WHO Sexual violence is “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work”(WHO 2021).

Sexual Violence can also be seen as a sexual act that is committed against someone who is unable to consent or refuse. It includes “forced or alcohol/drug facilitated penetration of the victim...it involves a lack of freely given consent as well as situation in which the victim is unable to consent or refuse” (Basile et al, 2014, p.11). Furthermore, Basile et al maintains that “sexual violence includes both penetrative and non-penetrative acts as well as non-contact forms. It occurs when a perpetrator commits sexual acts without a victim’s consent or when a victim is unable to consent (eg. due to age, illness) or refuse (eg. due to physical violence or threat)” (p.1).

Penetration in sexual violence involves physical insertion of the sexual organs, hand, finger or other objects into the genital of another person. In sexual violence the victim is the person whom the sexual violence is inflicted upon. If she survives the sexual violence she becomes a survivor. The perpetrator is one who inflicts the sexual violence on another. Sexual violence is any sexual activity devoid of consent or when consent is not freely given which may or may not result to death of the victim. Here sexual activity is obtained by force, intimidation and coercion, it encompasses sexual crimes like sexual assault, rape and sexual abuse. In this study sexual violence will be limited to rape both in children and female adults.

Rising Cases of Sexual Violence in Nigeria

Nigeria experienced unprecedented rise in number of cases of sexual violence especially rape during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in 2020. Report from campuses, IGDP, neighborhood were on the increase (Peterman et al, 2020, Drotning, 2023). There were cases of fathers raping daughters, brothers raping sisters, neighbors raping their neighbor’s daughters, school children being raped and even hawkers raped, uncles defiling small girls, pastors and priests abusing children and even drivers raping their bosses children and recently bolt/uber drivers raping unsuspecting passengers. In fact there was a scenario where a man raped his daughter and when asked why, he said that the daughter is so beautiful and cannot understand why another man should deflower her. What a crazy thought! In a week it is surprising that one can count about 5girls being reported raped. Even with the rising case of reported cases there are so many cases still unreported both in rural and urban areas (Kayleigh et al, 2022). A little survey of cases of sexual violence especially rape recorded

since the upsurge of COVID-19 in 2020 will aid in substantiating the prevalence of sexual violence in recent times in Nigeria.

According to the PUNCH, on February 14th 2023 suspected cult members abducted one Mrs. Chigbewejim a mother of two and gang raped her to death in Rivers State. The incident happened in Abarikpo community, in the Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State. On March 12th 2023 PUNCH also reported a 24year old man who was alleged to have kept a 16 year old girl in his room for three days while having carnal knowledge of her. PUNCH on 11th march 2023 gathered that Nasarawa State police command arrested two suspected rapists who forced themselves on a 15year old girl and had carnal knowledge of her. Two secondary school students of Monatan High School, Ibadan, Oyo state have been arrested by men of the state police for raping a 17yera old girl on 12th December 2022. The incident took place in Oluyole Local Government area of the state. In May 27, 2020 a 22year old University student in Edo State Vera Uwaila Omozuma was allegedly raped, assaulted and murdered in a church at Ikpoba Hill area of Benin City. According to the report she was raped and further hit with a fire extinguisher on her head. She was rushed to University of Benin Teaching Hospital where she died (Ogunbiyi, 2020). In May 30, 2020 11susupekts were arrested for allegedly raping a 12 year old girl in Dutse local government area of Jigawa state. The victim upon interrogation reported about 11men who had sexual intercourse with her in different occasions. In April, Jennifer, an 18 year old girl was attacked and raped by a gang of five men in Narayi, a small village in Kaduna South local government area of Kaduna state. The rapists drugged her and carried out their wicked act on her. There was a case of 18 years Barakat Bello, a student of the Federal College of Animal and Production Technology Moore Plantation who was raped and butchered with machetes in Ibadan, this cruel act according to report took place at her home in Akinyele, Ibadan and her corpse found behind the house. A little girl Favour Okechukwu who was about 11years old was gang raped to death in Ejigbo Lagos state. There was also a case of 70 years old woman in Ogun State who was raped. A case was also reported of a six year old girl who was raped to death in Kaduna State (Ojigho, 2021).A 44year old man Zakariya Ya'u was arrested by the police in Borno State for allegedly raping a 92year old woman.

According to statistics Lagos state experience about 40% increase in rape, domestic cases and sexual violence in 2020(Libby,2021). Another

report from crime statistics showed a significant upward incidents of sexual violence rose to 21.0 % (about 1,367 incidents) and in March 2021 it rose to 61%. In 2020 Anambra State through the Ntasi Centre for Sexual Assault Cases located in Anambra state recorded 107 cases of rape and sexual violence. Local media alone recorded about 80 rape cases in 2020 in Anambra State. Premium Times reported that two suspects have been arrested for allegedly raping four minors in Umudim Nnewi North Local Government Area of the State. The number of rape cases against women and minors in Anambra was alarming. In June 2020 the Nigerian Police recorded 717 incidents of rape cases between January and May 2020. Nigerian Minister of Women Affairs Pauline Tallen reported that at least 3,600 cases of rape were recorded during 2020 lockdown. In the same direction in 2020 National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) established by the National Human Rights Commission Act, 1995 (Amalu and Adetu (2019) recorded 11,200 reported cases of rape. The upsurge of sexual violence in 2020 was unprecedented that the State Governors declared a state of emergency on rape and gender based violence in June 2020. There was also a decision to open a sex offender's register for perpetrators of sexual violence. However the narrative still remains the same nothing seems to have changed till today. The number of reported cases here is just a tip of the ice berg because there are many more unreported cases in Nigeria. Even some reported cases are not seriously followed up by the police and other security agencies.

The cases are so pathetic that Nigerian girls and women are not only raped but raped to death or murdered. It is glaring that with all the measures in place the perpetrators of this crime seem not to be deterred. Although many have argued that this is due to weak legal system, no hope of getting justice and reparation, corruption, no criminal prosecution of rapists, slow judicial system and difficulty in proving rape cases. With this enormous challenge one can argue that the best bet is to try all preventive measures or workable strategies to minimize this wicked act. It is said that prevention is better than cure and it is on this backdrop that this research took the task of identifying the red flags as a proactive means of minimizing rape cases.

Red Flags/Early Signs Associated with Perpetrators

Gift giving: Pedophiles knows how to use this strategy to a large extent to attract children to themselves. It is not in doubt that most of the perpetrators of sexual abuse especially raping of minors are people who are known to

the victims so using this strategy becomes so easy for them. It works like magic since gifts attract children. Usually when they get the girl child through gift giving they now take advantage of the innocent child and sexual abuse begins. From buying them little gifts like biscuits, ice cream, meat pie and similar things they migrate into the real sexual abuse. This can happen as long as the child keeps quiet about it. The perpetrators work so hard to keep it secret and they will continue to abuse the child for a long time. Often they threaten the child to keep it secret or use some other subtle ways to warn the child not to tell anyone what is happening. It is only when the secret fails that the news can be heard and it fails usually when the child gets pregnant, gets sexually transmitted diseases (STD) or other signs are observed. Some scholars conceive gift giving as a form of sexual grooming Winter et al (2020). It is “a behavior that an offender employs in preparation for committing sexual abuse against a child” (David et al 2006, p.540). Sexual grooming is a sexual abuse process. Craven et al defined

Sexual grooming as a process by which a person prepares a child, significant other, and the environment for the abuse of the child. Specific goals include gaining access to the child, gaining the child’s compliance, and maintaining the child’s secrecy to avoid disclosure. This process serves to strengthen the offenders’ abusive pattern, as it may be used as a means of justifying or denying their actions” (2006, p.297).

It is not necessarily worrisome for an adult to give a child a gift or play childlike games with them yet these are behaviours that are also considered to be sexual grooming strategies (Winter et al 2020). Gift giving is not in itself wrong, it is seen in a healthy adult-child relationship but the worry is that it has been observed as one of the grooming strategies perpetrators employ. To distinguish between sexually motivated gifts and innocent gifts is very difficult because some gifts appears innocent in nature but is sexually motivated. Gift giving is a form of sexual grooming that is used to manipulate the victim and have easy access to him/her. The perpetrators who used this strategy claim to be kind and nice (Van Dam 2001). It is a warning sign and red flag and calls for closer observation.

Pornography: The danger of pornography can never be over emphasized and the accessibility of the internet has contributed to the upsurge of pornography. Pornography has become “globally available and the internet’s current existence availability has encouraged both sexual health education and the projection of inappropriate sexual behaviours” (Divya et al 2021). There is a correlation between pornography and sexual violence (Ferguson et al, 2009, Divya, 2021, Pandey et al, 2017). Pornography is “the portrayal of sexual subject matter exclusively for sexual arousal, which can be presented in various media like video, film, video games, writing, magazines and animations”(Manju et al, 2019, p.45). Pornography has a way of manipulating the psyche of its users. Addiction to pornography creates in the user a fake image or impression of sex and the effect is that the person starts fantasizing and looking out on how to experiment such unreal images and activities. A pornography addict begins to search for predators after watching a pornographic movie. The “effects manifest in many negative social vices like child abuse, rape, violence against women, family breakdown, crime among youth and sexually transmitted diseases” (Verma, 2012, p.70). Pornography puts fire on the user and any person around them is in danger of being sexually abused. The same feeling a drunk has is similar to that of a pornography addict and that is why you see a young man in his early 20’s or 30’s raping a child of 2 or 3 years or an old grandmother. It is bizarre and crazy but that is what pornography can do to its user.

Staying with little children at odd times: Sexual violence among minors as earlier said is mostly perpetrated by adults who are familiar with those children. These sexual deviants are mostly found in slums or “face me I face you” kind of homes. The perpetrators of this crime portray themselves as people who sincerely love and care for the children. Their parents and guardians in their innocence sees nothing wrong with their children being found around such adults since that uncle is a neighbor or family friend. The children especially little boys and girls also see such people as uncles and innocently suspect no harm. The perpetrators also combine this life style with gifts giving and from there it progresses to stretching of hand to private parts and finally ends in abusing the child. This act is usually done at odd times when parents and guardians have gone out for work and other daily activities. This is usually experienced among out of school children

and most often church leaders like pastors and priests are found in this barbaric and inhuman act.

Drug Addiction: Drugs have been intimately linked with sexual violence and assault (Nedejiko et al 2021, Horvath et al, 2006). The impact of substance use in sexual violence is complex and multi-faceted because it is prevalent among both perpetrators and survivors. Many drug addicts are rapists because sexual violence especially rape is often triggered by hard drug intake. Most of those involved in sexual violence operate under the influence of hard drugs. Drugs are intentionally taken by the perpetrators of this crime as a way of shunning the emotional effect, becloud their judgement and the fear that should accompany such act. A drug addict is a potential rapist and wherever he is, an eye should be on him/her and little children and young girls warned to stay away or avoid such people. Drug addiction is another red flag for sexual violence. Unfortunately it helps the abuser to have numb feelings in perpetrating sexual violence.

Excessive Intake of Alcohol: Alcohol and sexual assault go together because it plays a major role in sexual violence (Nedejiko et al, 2021, Horvath et al, 2006). Researchers have reported that up to 50% of survivors and more than 75% of perpetrators had consumed alcohol prior to an assault (Abbey et al, 2016, Horvath et al, 2006). A drunk is prone to sexual violence because too much intake of alcohol knocks reason out of a person and triggers sexual activity. Most of the people involved in sexual violence operate under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol has a way of making people loose grip of their senses and in such a situation several antisocial acts is carried out. Usually sexual violence is always associated with drunks, so any person into the habit of excessive alcohol consumption has the potential of committing sexual violence.

Unsolicited Physical Touch: This is any contact that take place between two people that are not consensual, that makes people feel uncomfortable, threatened and intimidated or makes one feel that he/she has been taken advantage of. Touching the opposite sex who is not your partner is a red flag. Unwanted touching include bodily contact, grabbing, kissing, holding hands, invading personal space, fondling, putting hands on the thigh, touching of private parts, hugging and other unsolicited physical and sexual nature. If it happens in a work place it becomes any touch that is

unprofessional or morally unacceptable. Such touch is usually unwanted and without the persons consent and such is inappropriate, unacceptable and morally reprehensible. Such behaviours seen as potentially inappropriate were those involving physical touch and isolation. The perpetrator escalates the physical touch so as to prepare the child for the impending abuse. Often this begins “with seemingly accidental touch or innocent behaviours which then escalates to more intimate touching” (Winters et al, 2016, p.860). It can take the forms of actions and behaviours and such physical touch are signs to watch out. The “most common strategy touch used by incest offenders include cuddling, sneaking into the bedroom, wrestling or using sex as a game” (Lang and Frenzel 1988, p.310). This unsolicited touch can be seen among colleagues at work place, students and teachers, among peers etc. when such is noticed the person who is usually in this habit of unsolicited touching is a potential agent of sexual abuse.

Isolating people from friends/family members to be alone with them:

when people begin to isolate children or young people or even adults to be alone with them it becomes pertinent to keep surveillance on such people. This usually happen among family members, friends and neighbours, pastors and their members, teachers and students, adults and children etc. When an individual is in the habit of isolating another person from family members and friends to be with them surveillance should be placed on such individuals because they are potential rapists and perpetrators of sexual violence. Those in some professional settings create reasons to see the child after school hours or offer to take them on outings. These activities typically exclude other adults, in an attempt to get the child alone (Winters at al 2016). The “offender may also seek children with perceived psychological vulnerabilities that would allow the child to be more easily isolated from others, such as low self-esteem, low confidence, insecurity and naivety” (Finkelhor, 1994, Olson et , 2007). Here the perpetrators use coercion, manipulation, force and other available means within their reach to perpetrate sexual violence. They pretend to be helpers who intend to assist but many are wolves in sheep clothing.

The Way Forward

There is urgent need for inculcation of basic morals in the younger generation. Character formation is important. It is glaring that there is high

level of moral decadence amongst the youths. One experience all sorts of vices among the youths of today, these ranges from sexual immorality, lack of contentment, high level of dishonesty, all forms of internet fraud, disregard for the value of integrity, indecent dressing especially among young girls, lack of respect for core values and high level of indiscipline. Lack of these core moral values have led the younger generation to unacceptable lifestyles including sexual violence especially rape. The rate of rape cases in the society is alarming and this calls for inculcation of moral values among the generations of today. The values of trust, discipline, self-control, integrity, trust should be emphasized and inculcated among old and young in the society. Kapur argued that “a comprehensive campaign is needed that combats gender based inequalities, discrimination, exploitation, oppression, abuse, violence, inhuman values and violations of human rights, particularly against female children” (1995, p.10). Today’s generation must be taught that female children are not commodities to be consumed but human beings to be loved, cherished and respected. “Strategies that accomplish these ends include the promotion of human and spiritual values of love, compassion and nonviolence and discouragement of values of consumerism and materialism and worthlessness of human beings” (Kapur, 1995, p.12). It is unfortunate that in the society today parents are more interested in carrier and pursuance of wealth and total neglect to character formation, often children are left in the hands of strangers, house helps, teachers and other people to train. It has been unfortunately observed that some of these persons have turned to abuse and take advantage of these children placed under their care. Parents need to be responsible and take up the task of nurturing their children so as to raise responsible children who in turn becomes responsible citizens who will see sexual violence and such vices as a crime against humanity and human dignity and contribute in the fight against it. The emphasis on moral values is very paramount because when people are taught these values and encouraged to imbibe them it will automatically translate into reduction in crime because responsible adults cannot be associated with sexual violence. Furthermore there is overwhelming influence of pornography and this must be checked, parents must restrict children access to internet, some channels and phones use until they reach certain age.

It has been observed that sex educating children has been abandoned in recent times and this has led to deformation of character. Sex education and awareness is very paramount especially to children and

younger generation. UNESCO emphasized quality sex education so as to promote health and wellbeing, respect for human rights and gender equality. It advocates for not just sex education but comprehensive sexuality education which it described as “a curriculum based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality” (UNESCO 2022). It “aims to develop and strengthen the ability of children and young people to make conscious, satisfying, healthy and respectful choices regarding relationships, sexuality, emotional and physical health” (European Expert Group, 2016). Today's generation receive distorted and conflicting information about sex as they move from childhood to adulthood hence the need for a comprehensive sex education to equip them for a responsible and fulfilling lifestyle. A distorted sex education leaves the young vulnerable to harmful sexual behaviours and exploitation. Enhanced quality sexuality education has “an impact on positive attitudes and values and can even out the power dynamics in intimate relationship, thus contributing to the prevention of abuse and fostering mutually respectful and consensual partnership” (Tanton et al, 2015). We need to mention the sex organs and let them know that those organs are private part of the body and should not be touched by anyone. The children need to understand that everyone is not uncle some are predators looking for who to devour. Parents and guardian should not be ashamed to sex educate the children. “Parents, relatives, friends and other laypersons are important sources of learning about human relationship and sexuality especially for younger age groups” (European Expert Group, 2016). Sexuality education “does not deprive children of their innocence. Giving children information on sexuality that is scientifically accurate, non-judgmental, age-appropriate and complete, as part of a carefully phased process from the beginning of formal education is something from which children can benefit”(European Expert Group, 2016). The problem is that in traditional African setting parents feel that it is an abomination to mention the sex organs but that is fallacious. Properly sex educating children helps them to identify potential pedophiles and parents should go further and tell them what they are called in their native languages. It is rather a crime when parents fail to sex educate a child and he/she goes out and get misinformed by people who are morally bankrupt. They should be taught topics like puberty, sexually transmitted diseases, friendship, emotions and dangers of adolescent pregnancy. All agents of socialization, the family, school, churches and all relevant agencies should rise up and

intensify efforts in this sensitization and everyone has to be a warrior in this campaign of sex education.

Another area of concern is the conspiracy of silence in homes, churches and schools (Nkiruka, 2018, Siobhan et al, 2022). The culture of silence must be permanently broken. There is always the tendency of the victim not to speak out because of fear of stigmatization, shame and blame. A victim of rape should not be blamed rather the blame and condemnation should go to the person who perpetrated the crime. Ezedike and Ariche (2017) reminds us that “our life is full of choices as free agents. We decide what to do and what not to do” (466). Many have argued that cases of rape are triggered by indecent dressing but it is important to state categorically here that indecent dressing cannot be an excuse for any sane man to rape another though this does not tend to support indecent dressing but self-control cannot be overemphasized. Crime is crime and must be condemned and rapists severely punished. There is so much concealment especially in the rural areas but thanks to the advent of social media that is constantly breaking the chains of secrecy on cases of rape. Unfortunately some families are involved in this culture of silence, suppression and concealment and this further makes investigations on rape cases unsuccessful and perpetrators think they are untouchable. Despite the challenge of burden of proof on rape cases when the victims speak out and appropriate steps taken this burden is made lighter and easier to dismantle or disburden and the victim gets justice. When a minor is abused the families sometimes keep silent because they feel they have failed on their parts to protect the child. There is guilt on the part of the parents’ .This is understandable but there is no justification for anyone to rape or abuse a minor. Furthermore it has been observed that when rape or abuse cases take place in schools the proprietors go extra miles to cover up the crime and bribe their way so as not to attract penalties or final closure of the school. This wrong and height of insensitivity, the school should not put their egoistic interest above the safety and dignity of the child entrusted under their care. This is the height of selfishness and greed. Even in churches such culture of silence has been observed especially when highly placed pastors, bishops and priests are involved in such a crime. Such concealment is motivated by the desire to protect their businesses and image to the detriment of the child. Stop keeping it secret, speak out and get help!

There is urgent need to review the penal law in Nigeria. The law on rape should be swift and strict. Law makers should review the penal laws, the law on rape is too narrow and should be broadened. Rape should be broadly defined in the penal law, it should involve every form of sexual intercourse without consent, or use of any other object to penetrate another. The Civil Society Organization should mount pressure on law makers for this review. One understands the burden of proof in rape cases especially when a minor is involved or is the victim. When minors are abused it is usually difficult and time consuming to investigate. It must be understood clearly that rape undermines and bridges the fundamental right and dignity of the victim. Under the penal law one has to prove there was penetration. This is sometimes hindered by late reports. If the report is early enough the victim should immediately be taken to the hospital for proper investigation and documentation. This helps to fasten investigation and makes it easy and successful. Rape cases are difficult to prove in Nigeria because sometimes the evidence is lost, people wash up after the unfortunate incident because of the disgusting experience though this is wrong because it hinders the success of investigation. Another challenge is that sometimes witnesses are unwilling to testify. There is lack of forensic laboratories and experts in Nigeria. Due to some of these challenges it becomes necessary for the law to include that, any person the child speaks to suffice as evidence in case of child abuse or rape.

The senate should stipulate strict and stringent measures as deterrent. These measures should range from castration, life jail and other painful excruciating punishment for rapists and philodophiles. Jungle justice should be discouraged because of problem of wrong identification. The Child Right Act should be domesticated in all states of Nigeria. The criminal justice must be reviewed and people must be compelled to obey the law. Rapist don't care if their victims die after the crime, therefore victims should get justice because rape victims go through a lot of emotional and psychological trauma sometimes it lasts a life time. Females are delicate creatures and rape perpetually torment the victims all through existence. There is no hurt less than rape because it inflicts emotional, mental, psychological permanent harm on the individual. The criminal code, penal code and Child Right Act should and must be domesticated without further delay. It is encouraging that some states in Nigeria have declared war against rapists Niger State raised a motion of death penalty for rapists, Kaduna State stipulated castration. So many other states have sworn

to deal decisively with rapists and this will serve as deterrent for intending rapists. It is pertinent to also argue here that Sexual Harassment Bill of 2020 should not be restricted to academics or educators but should extend/cut across all sectors of the society. Although sexual harassment is different from rape but both has to do with forcefully having carnal knowledge of another or coercing one to sex. The Bill that is criminalizing sexual harassment should be broad and cuts across all spheres of or sectors of the society without exception.

Lastly watch how people shower gifts on your little children. Like earlier stated predators use gifts to lure children to themselves, then rape or abuse them in the end. Parents and guardians should closely keep an eye on their children and ask questions if they notice a particular “uncle” always buying unsolicited gifts for them. When such gifts becomes consistent the child should be cautioned to resist such and prevented from getting too close to such adult. It has been said earlier that not every person is an “uncle” let us stop confusing these little children because some of the so called uncles are wolves in sheep clothing. It is important to stress that not all who commit sexual violence engage in these strategies and again not all who exhibit these signs are guilty of sexually motivated intentions. However it is very difficult to distinguish who is innocent and who is not. This is because some of the perpetrators who exhibit these behaviors appear innocent.

Conclusion

Sexual violence especially rape in Nigeria has been a recurrent crime and the rate at which it is increasing is mindboggling. The victims of this crime has suffered both mental, physical, psychological and emotional harm and some of them have even received blame by those who are supposed to protect them. Unfortunately the perpetrators of this crime seem not to be bothered and worst still some of them go scot free either due corruption or lack of forensic laboratories and experts to adequately investigate the matter and so many other factors. Several measures and punishments have been explored to punish offenders and perpetrators of this cruel and inhuman crime. However, these deterrent measures have not been able to eradicate the rising cases of sexual violence especially rape cases. In this connection this work has exhaustively looked at sexual violence especially rape and identified the red flags or early signs as a way of minimizing the

recurrent cases of sexual violence in Nigeria. Although it is difficult to differentiate sexually motivated actions and those devoid of sexual intention but these red flags is a pointer. Lastly, this paper recommends that if these red flags are seriously watched out for and nipped in the bud sexual violence in Nigeria will be drastically reduced to the lowest minimum because to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

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