



A Violence Against Women and Girls During Sars-CoV-2 Lockdown from Education Perspective

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ABSTRACTS

This paper aims to discuss rape, one of the problems the pandemic caused in Nigeria from an educational perspective. To do justice to this, the internet, newspaper, personal communications, and journals were reviewed. From the sources, it was observed that: (i) within five months in Nigeria, over seven hundred cases were recorded (official); (ii) the forum of state governors declared a state of emergency on rape, (iii) NGOs and other stakeholders staged serial protests, (iv) the rape victims ranged between three years and 80 years old, (v) many deaths were reported during rapes, (vi) series of the cases were between fathers and their biological daughters, (vii) many 'celebrities' were involved, and so many others. Since this ugly incidence is becoming rampant, many 'jungle justices' are recommended to the government by the stakeholders, which include, castration of the male offenders, live imprisonment, wide publicity of the offenders through national dailies, and death penalties, just to mention a few. This paper recommends that to achieve the goal 5 targets of the SDGs or to eradicate or reduce the incidence of rape in Nigeria, all the stakeholders (men and women, parents, government, NGO, religious leaders, and others) should be ready to sacrifice all at their disposals to fight this menace called rape.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Part of the goal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the elimination of any forms of violence against women and girls anywhere (Kusuma & Babu, 2017). Rape can be classified as one of the violence against women and girls because it is an act of forcefully having sexual intercourse with someone without any mutual agreement. Globally, COVID-19 or SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic Lockdown is causing a lot of serious havoc, Nigeria is not excluded.

In short, the December 2019 pandemic of a new infectious disease was named Coronavirus Infectious Disease (COVID)-19 by a consensus group of WHO experts (Kaul, 2020). This resulted in a lockdown worldwide. In Wuhan and Beijing, case reports of such patients were first published by different authors (Zhu et al., 2020). One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is Goal 5, which is the achievement of gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls.

Three out of the targets of the goal are: firstly, putting an end to all forms of discrimination against all women and girls, secondly, the elimination of any forms of violence against women and girls anywhere, and thirdly, the elimination of every form of practices (female circumcision, early and forced marriage) that can cause abuse and trauma to women and girls. Rape can be classified as one of the violence against women and girls because it is an act of forcefully having sexual intercourse with someone without any mutual agreement. Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic is causing a lot of serious havoc, and Nigeria is not excluded.

Based on the current situation, the Women at Risk International Foundation posits that Africa has the highest prevalence rate of child sexual abuse, at around 34.4 percent in 2004, and 60 percent of children involved in child trafficking from Africa to Europe were Nigerians. Between 2012 and 2013, approximately 30% of Nigerian women experienced some form of domestic violence. According to the findings of a 2014 National Survey on Violence Against Children in Nigeria, one in every four females experienced sexual violence as a child, with approximately 70% reporting more than one incident of sexual violence. According to the same study, 24.8 percent of females aged 18 to 24 years experienced sexual abuse before the age of 18, with 5.0 percent seeking help and only 3.5 percent receiving any services.

This paper aims to review rape, one of the problems the pandemic caused in Nigeria. To do justice to this, the internet, newspaper, personal communications, and journals were reviewed. From the results, it was observed that: (i) within five months in Nigeria, over seven hundred cases were recorded as victims were stuck at home, and the number of harassment cases against women and children had escalated three times (The North African Journal, 2020); (ii) the forum of state governors declared a state of emergency on rape, (iii) NGOs and other stakeholders staged serial protests, (iv) the rape victims ranged between three years and 80 years old, (v) many deaths were reported during rapes, (vi) series of the cases were between fathers and their biological daughters, (vii) many 'celebrities' were involved, and (viii) so many others.

Since this ugly incidence is becoming rampant, many 'jungle justices are recommended to the government by the stakeholders, which include, castration of the male offenders, live imprisonment, wide publicity of the offenders through national dailies, and death penalties, just to mention a few. To avoid the breakdown of law and order, the Nigerian government declared a state of emergency on rape and sexual violence.

This paper recommends that to achieve the goal 5 targets of the SDGs or to eradicate or reduce the incidence of rape in Nigeria, all the stakeholders (men and women, parents, government, NGO, religious leaders, and others) should be ready to sacrifice all at their disposals to fight this menace called rape.

2. METHODS

This study is a literature review. We collect data from news and international articles published in journals. Detailed information on the way how to collect data is explained elsewhere ([Azizah et al., 2021](#)).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Incidences

In Nigeria, instances of minors being attacked for sexual assault by men are on the increase. According to the Nigerian foundation Stop the Abuse, the most vulnerable target of minors is those aged 11 to 15 years ([Umukoro, 2020](#)). According to Senator Pauline Tallen, nearly two million Nigerian women and girls are sexually abused each year ([Balogun & Adenowuro, 2020](#)). Although this estimate has yet to be clarified, the risk of sexual assault in Nigeria should not be underrated. Men's sexual assaults in Nigeria are vastly unreported, due mainly to social prejudice and masculine gender stereotypes ([Olusegun & Gbenga, 2019](#)). Despite this, men rapes happen throughout the country.

According to a report attributed to Nigeria's police chief, the country experienced a sharp increase in cases of rape and domestic violence against girls and women during the coronavirus pandemic. According to the police chief, he has heard from the public about the negative effects of the COVID-19 restrictions, which have increased in rape and gender-based violence cases. He stated unequivocally that the high figures were recorded between January and May of 2020. He also stated that 799 (seven hundred and ninety-nine) suspects had been apprehended. As victims were trapped at home, the total number of abuse cases against women and children "escalated three times."

Women have been killed and raped in high-profile cases in Nigeria, which has a population of 200 million people. The attacks have sparked outrage online and, on the streets, compelling stakeholders to work feverishly to combat the spread of sexual violence in the country. According to reports, the country's state governors declared a "state of emergency" on the issue, pledging to "ensure that perpetrators face the full force of the law." Following several days of nationwide protests by women's rights activists and others, governors from all 36 states agreed to tougher sex offender penalties.

To support the governors, Nigeria's justice minister, Abubakar Malami, announced the creation of an inter-ministerial committee to recommend legislative changes to ensure that sexual violence is dealt with following international best practices. To bolster this, the President of Nigeria, Rtd. General Muhammadu Buhari, raised an eyebrow at recent incidents of rape, particularly of very young girls, and backed Nigerian women in their fight against the threat of gender-based violence. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), one in every four Nigerian women is sexually abused before the age of 18 — and the vast majority of cases of sexual abuse in the country go unpunished.

Numerous rapes, for example, were confirmed during the lockdown. [Wuyo \(2020\)](#) in a case reported in Kaduna ten (10) rape incidences were mentioned during this period. A teenager was also raped multiple times, drugged, and dumped in a car. According to a news site, a 22-year-old microbiology student at the University of Benin was attacked, raped, and injured. The victim was rushed to the hospital and tragically died there. An eleven (11) year old girl was raped by eleven men in Jigawa State.

In Ekiti State, two men (dubbed "monsters") raped a seventeen (17)-year-old hawker, who was arrested and later charged in court. A lady was raped and stabbed to death in Ibadan,

Oyo State, while four masked men raped a 12-year-old girl in Lagos State, and a 25-year-old man allegedly raped an 85-year-old woman in Minna, Niger State.

In Isuaniocha, Awka North LGA, Anambra State, the chief executive of child welfare services in the state Ministry of Women Affairs, Children, and Social Welfare during a speech at the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF child protection community sensitization campaign stated that over thirty-two cases of rape were documented. According to the Director, sexual violence has become rampant in the community during the lockdown, with old men raping teenagers and children. She also described a case in which a 70-year-old man raped a four-year-old girl.

According to the Manager of the Salama Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Kafanchan, Jema'a Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Northern Nigeria, more than 108 identified cases of sexual assault were noted between January and February 2020, with nineteen rape cases and two hundred and nineteen (219) sexual assault cases documented in 2019. The center has launched rape awareness campaigns to reduce the number of rape cases.

A 32-year-old man in Kwanar Dangora, Kano, raped over forty women within a year of the pandemic. One of his victims is a woman in her eighty (80)s from his neighborhood. When the man was apprehended by the police, there was ecstasy throughout the community.

According to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) of Nigeria, the number of rape suspects arrested was 799 in five months of the pandemic, with 717 rape cases. Six hundred and thirty-one of these cases have been charged in court, while 55 are still being investigated.

During the pandemic, an eighteen-year-old student at the Federal College of Animal Health and Production (FCAHPT) in Ibadan reported the virus to the police. The young girl was allegedly attacked, raped, and murdered in her own home. Similarly, a thirteen-year-old girl was raped and impregnated by a thirty-three-year-old man in Enugu South East, Nigeria.

In Otada Community, Otukpo Local Government Area, Benue State, an accused enticed a victim by pretending to send her on an errand. When she returned home, she was beaten up and raped by the suspect, who threatened to deal with her if she revealed or leaked the secret. When the victim of the rape's parents uncovered the incident and notified the police, the man was nowhere to be found.

That over eight celebrities in Nigeria were involved in raping girls and women. The celebrities were mostly musicians who have traveled far and near. While the issue of rape has become a huge topic, sparking peaceful protests and hashtags, it has also led to more revelations of alleged sexual predatory acts by several celebrities. These acts have been happening for years and recent incidents have just boosted boldness and given some of these victims a voice. This isn't the first time Nigerian celebrities have been accused of sexual assault, however, unfortunately, these allegations end up being treated like timeline stories as they usually die off without investigations, justice, or closure.

That many celebrities condemned the actions of their colleagues. They believe that the action is tagged 'terrorist act' which is barbaric, insane, disgusting, and gruesome. Many of them called for better protection for the girl child and women. The five (5) Nigerian celebrities who were sexually abused at younger ages had spoken out. Relating their experiences, they said they lost their virginity, marriage, had trauma or emotional damage, were embarrassed, infected with Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), and also sadness and depression.

3.2. Interventions

Several concerned citizens have stepped forward to seek justice for the rape victims. Seven hashtags have been placed on social media in a bid to get justice from Nigerian authorities in cases involving rape and sexual violence. #JusticeForUwa, #JusticeForTina, #JusticeForJennifer, #JusticeForElizabeth, #JusticeForAda, and #SayNoToRapist, #NoToRape, #EndRapeCulture, #JusticeForOurGirls, #JusticeForBarakat, and several others are among the hashtags.

The Nigerian Police Force is working extra hard to deal with the current situation. The threat has been declared a total war by the IGP. The IGP promised to thoroughly investigate some of the rape and murder cases, as well as to find the perpetrators and face the consequences.

Civil Society Organizations, human rights organizations, activists, and feminist organizations have all called for an end to the attacks and for justice to be served. The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), for example, has urged the Plateau Government to domesticate the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) to reduce domestic violence and child rape in the state (Mustapha, 2020).

According to the Benevolent Women's Organization Worldwide (BWO), women in Nigeria should break the silence on rape. The country's constant rape cases have prompted some specialist Nigerian women to contact law enforcement agencies to declare an emergency on gender-based violence in Nigeria. During the "walk against rape" parade organized by "Project Alert," a Lagos-based NGO, a single individual (woman) exhibited by holding a placard and shouting a slogan.

The Sex Offenders Register, which was launched as part of the government's plan to fight rape in the country, is part of the solution to the rape problem. This luncheon was hosted by Nigeria's Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development. Every year, approximately two million Nigerians (mostly women and girls) are raped, according to the Minister. This figure, while not proven, indicates that there is a systemic issue in dealing with this spiraling crime. To combat the scourge of rape, an NGO, Save the Children International, and the Coalition of Civil Society Organizations in Gombe State have called for the domestication of the Child Rights Act.

The Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) organized a one-week countrywide mass demonstration against the country's elevated cases of rape, murder, and other forms of violence against women. The protest march was held following the federal and state governments' physical distancing protocol on COVID-19 management, which prevents public crowds.

The Jigawa State Government is on the possibility of establishing additional Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) to serve rape victims in the state as a means to curb sexual assault and violence. This will aid in the time trial of all those engaged in the menace, as well as the provision of psychological services to victims of rape by members of the state Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, and the SARCs will also represent an avenue during which proof against rapists can be founded.

Furthermore, the state government has been collaborating with law enforcement agencies, traditional rulers, the Council of Ulama (Islamic clerics), and other similar groups to abolish Gender-Based Violence in the state. We are confident that if this initiative is a huge success, many other states will follow suit.

In the COVID-19 pandemic, reported rapes in Nigeria tripled to several thousand, but the United Nations Children's Fund summaries that one in every four girls seems to be a victim of

sexual assault, suggesting that tens of thousands of rapes go unprosecuted. A Nigerian software engineer has created an application that enables rape victims to report incidents and seek help while overcoming social stigma. Victims of rape can use the SmartRR software to make a complaint to law enforcement agencies without having to physically visit a police station. Victims can also get online guidance and support. It fully covers up the individual identity of women who might otherwise not have reported the rape.

On April 1st, the Nigerian Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs started paying 20,000 Naira to households enrolled on the National Social Register for individuals and households as a relatively brief criterion to mitigate the economic toll of the clampdown. The Nigerian Upper house revised the Criminal Code Act (applicable to the Southern States) to remove gender-specific language that exempted male rape victims, as well as the waiting period for pursuing statutory rape cases. Furthermore, the Upper house passed a Sexual Harassment Act to fight sexual harassment and assault in higher education institutions, and the federal government has vowed to collaborate with states to ratify the Child Rights Act.

The Kaduna State Governor approved an addendum to the Kaduna State Penal Code imposing severe punishments for those involved in child rape, including removal of testis for male convicted criminals and fallopian tube removal for female offenders. This reform also requires convicted rapists to be mentioned on the state's Sex Offenders Registry.

3.3. Causes of Rape

Routines such as being alone at home, visiting 'evil' peer groups, and hawking in the nearness of motivated offenders take one away from the protective custody of protectors and into the waiting or monitoring arms of offenders. Individuals, according to Pratt et al. (2016), self-select into risky behavioral routines, such as acting in a manner that makes them susceptible to threats. This involves falling prey to the gimmick of drinking alcohol, which provides a means to cause her to fall asleep and lose self-guardianship. The timing of economic activity aggravated victimization. Because of the lack of guardianship and visibility, selling at odd hours in the vicinity of anti-social elements gives room for defilement.

Rapists in Nigeria are so free because of lax laws against rapists, which has been a major issue for women's safety. The issue of law enforcement in Nigeria must be resolved.

According to statistics, the modern way of dressing (Indecent Dressing) that exposes various erogenous zones on the body of women can cause sexual harassment by men. Furthermore, studies show that men perceive women with less clothing on their bodies as having a frivolous personality.

Silence is one of the worse causes of rape in Nigeria because i. people are afraid that the girl and woman will not be married ii. fear due to the dishonor and stigma associated with rape, partly, from humiliation and intimidation of victims by the Police, as well as the "embarrassment" from the public.

Alcohol and drugs are one of the reasons that induce rape in Nigeria. Generally, the unemployed youths believe in finding solace in the use of alcohol and drugs. This situation leads to an increase in violence among youths.

Peer Influence (Negative) is one of the root causes of problems among the youths worldwide. The youths at any time wish to feel belong in any way among their peers. As a cause of doing this, they misbehave. Rape is one of the bad aspects of their bad behavior. Chiazor et al. (2016) stated that most adolescents in trying to remain relevant and to gain the continued approval of their friends try to experiment with sex through raping.

One of the side effects of the internet is the availability of pornographic films, sex novels, pictures, and magazines. The love and the addition to all these could instigate rape. Many of

the sites are not monitored or controlled and so many of the authors wear dresses that do not deal with our community, many of them play nudity, and the roles played by many of them are sexy. All the above stick to the memories of the viewers and readers. The long-term effect is rape.

4. CONCLUSION

Coronavirus Infectious Disease (COVID)-19 is an infectious disease and was given the name by a consensus group of WHO experts. It resulted in a global lockdown. Numerous events occurred during the lockdown, one of which was rape, which contradicts one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals because it is an act of forcibly having sexual intercourse with someone without mutual consent. According to source information, over 700 cases were registered in Nigeria within five months as victims were stuck at home, the number of harassment claims against women and children had tripled, deaths of victims were reported, 'celebrities' were involved, and so many cases involved fathers and their biological daughters. The Nigerian government has declared a state of emergency on rape and sexual violence to put an end to this scourge. NGOs and other stakeholders are also at the forefront of reducing or eliminating the pandemic's impact.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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