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## **CURBING THE MENACE OF RAPE THROUGH UPPER BASIC SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the relevance of Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum in curbing the menace of rape in Nigeria. The paper reveals that there is increase in the occurrence of rape in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Some of the factors responsible for this increase in Nigeria are: Lax rape laws in Nigeria, Indecent dressing and Culture of silence. The paper posits that Social Studies deals with man's realities; it aimed at the development of problem-solving skills in learners. It also inculcates in learners, civic values and skills that will make them to be active and responsible members of the society. The dynamism of Social Studies curriculum makes it easy to integrate emerging issues and problems while outdated ones are expunged. If Social Studies curriculum is well designed to address societal issues and problems and the contents are effectively taught, it is capable of solving societal and national problems. In view of this, the paper emphasizes the need to review the current (2012) Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum and recommends some contents on rape that should be included in the revised curriculum.*

**Keywords:** Rape, Upper Basic, Social Studies, Curriculum, Contents on Rape

### **Introduction**

Rape as a form of violence has become a source of threat and fear to individuals, families, the community and governments across the globe. Rape has continued to be a wide spread global problem in contemporary times (Omoniyi, 2013). It is a global pandemic affecting both the old and young, people of various classes, the educated and uneducated, regardless of their ethnic background or religion. Sadly, women and girls are the most affected of this crime, though men are affected too. Findings have established the fact that male genders are also sometimes victims of rape, though this case is often under-reported. (Falade & Ishola, 2020) not referenced

In many developing countries like Nigeria, there are frequent reported cases of rape or sexual assault. Rape has become a common social problem due to its high rate of occurrence (Izzi & Obinuchi, 2016). This has prompted, among other things, urgent passing of legislations against rape in some developing nations of the world, with the hope of curbing this social malady. An example of such legislations is the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015, Nigeria which was promulgated in 2015 by former president, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan and it was aimed at eliminating violence in private and public life, prohibiting all forms of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological, domestic, harmful traditional practices; discrimination against persons and to provide maximum protection and effective remedies for victims and punishment of offenders.

In spite laws and legislations against rape and public enlightenment through the mass media, the rate at which the crime is perpetrated in Nigeria and some other developing nations is still alarming. This indicates the need for critical intervention by the government, Non-governmental Organizations and individuals. Education is machinery that can be used to educate the citizens with the intention of developing in them skills and

attitudes that can promote responsible behaviour and effective citizenship. The National Policy on Education states that education in Nigeria is an instrument “per excellence” for effecting national development because it fosters the worth and development of individuals, for each individual’s sake and for the general development of the society. In view of this, education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because it is the most important instrument of change. Any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Curriculum is an important instrument used by educational agencies to equip learners with relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes that can actualize desired change in them and the society as a whole. Fageyinbo (2008) points out that curriculum is a deliberate, defined, systematic, structured, designed and dynamic programme to achieve individual and societal aspirations, goals and needs. The Nigerian school curriculum is therefore designed, among other things, to provide precautionary measures against social vices like rape, cultism, drug abuse, internet fraud and examination malpractice.

The nature of Social Studies as well as its status in the Nigeria Basic Education programme puts it at a central focus as a subject that has the capacity to transform learners and equip them with relevant problem-solving skills. Social studies being an integrated subject serves a great deal to address social problems in the society. Social studies education is a subject that develops in learners the right type of values and attitudes that are needed to create a peaceful and sustainable society. (Abdul Kabir, 2014; Falade & Ishola, 2020 not referenced). According to Falaye (2013) not referenced Social Studies is one of the compulsory subjects in the school curriculum. Given this position, its relative importance among other school subjects is indispensable. In the light of this Akpan (2020) argued that Social Studies subject is one of the subjects in Junior Secondary Curriculum that could enable persons to achieve moral, societal and educational goals. This paper examines the menace of rape in Nigeria and the need to

integrate contents on rape into the Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum.

### **Cases and Causative Factors of Rape in Nigeria**

The word rape is derived from the Latin verb *rapere*, which means 'to seize or take by force'. It can be described as a forced, unwanted sexual intercourse; it is sometimes also called sexual assault, which can happen to both men and women of any age and also occurs when someone forces or tricks another person into unwanted sexual activity, even if actual physical violence is not involved (Medhelp, 2008 in Akinwale & Omoera, 2013). Rape can also be seen as a type of sexual assault which always involves sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration, perpetrated against a person without the person's consent (Falade & Ishola, 2020). Rape is a form of social deviancy which varies from one country to another and its manifestations change overtime.

It was gathered from Premium Times (2021) that a total number of 91 cases of rape were recorded between January and February in Lagos. One of the critical cases mentioned was how four teenagers gang-raped a girl at the Ejigbo area of Lagos. Report had it that the suspects, all 16 years old, raped the girl in a room. Amnesty International (2021) revealed that Boko Haram survivors and witnesses described attacks involving sexual violence in at least five villages in the Magumeri local government area of Borno State. During raids, usually at night, Boko Haram fighters raped women and girls who were caught at home or trying to flee. One woman was physically assaulted by Boko Haram fighters as she fled from an attack in late 2020. She crawled to a home and hid there with her children, and saw fighters return and enter a nearby home. There are different causative factors responsible for increasing cases of rape in Nigeria. Some of these are:

**Lax rape laws in Nigeria.** This is one of the major reasons why rapists in Nigeria are so free to perpetrate their inhuman practice. The laxity of laws against rapist can be a real problem for the safety

of women. There are scanty federal or state legislations criminalizing violence against women, and most bills initiated by non-governmental organizations on violence against women are still pending (Akinwale & Omoera, 2013). Often times, the laws made lack prompt implementation. Therefore, as long as justice will not be provided for everyone, there is no stop factor for rapists.

**Immoral TV shows and Pornographies:** As a result of series of revolution in the movie industry and the digital space, there are more production and peddling of immoral TV shows (such as BBNaija) and pornographies. These in a great deal induce unwarranted sexual urge and desires in people which could lead such into engaging in rape and sexual assault.

**Indecent dressing:** One of the striking factors that fuel the rise in the cases of rape in Nigeria is the issue of indecent and loose dressing. The modern way of dressing (fads and fashion) provides the exposure of sensitive parts on the body of ladies and women. Indecent dressing engineers sexual desires in men, culminating in sexual seduction which can provoke sexual harassment (Chiazor, Ozoya, Udume & Egharevba, 2016).

**Culture of silence:** Silence and inability to report cases of rape is another factor responsible for incidents of rape in Nigeria. A major problem encountered when dealing with issue of rape is that most victims simply refuse to come forward and report their experience of sexual violence (Chiazor, Ozoya, Udume & Egharevba, 2016). Lots of families in Nigeria would prefer to cover the crime, even against the will of the victim as a result of fear of stigmatization and the fact that the woman may not get married because of that. Therefore, women that are victims in Nigeria prefer to hide, rather than get justice.

**Alcohol and drugs:** People that take hard drugs or alcohol are more prone to committing rape. At least one-half of all violent

crimes involve alcohol consumption by the perpetrator, the victim, or both. Researchers have consistently found out that approximately one-half of all sexual assaults are committed by men who have been drinking alcohol. (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton & McAuslan, 2001). When people get drunk or are under the influence of drug, they sometimes become less aware of their environment and even the consequences of their actions.

**Declining moral values:** There is generally high level of moral decadence in our society today. According to Nyoku (2016), our society has witnessed a tremendous deterioration in its moral, social and educational values, especially among the youths. Decline in moral values in the society has led to increase in incidences of rape and other social vices like drug abuse, cultism and prostitution.

### **Purpose of Social Studies in Nigeria**

Social Studies is a problem-solving approach discipline that equips learners with the knowledge, skills and attitude required for solving societal problems. Man encounters different kinds of socio-economic and political problems in his daily interaction with the environment. Adediran and Olugbuyi (2013) posit that Social Studies teaches youth to imbibe the sense of inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making skills and rational social actions which are essential tools for the survival and development of the individual in the society for easy co-existence. The primary purpose of Social Studies is to help young people to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. The curriculum of Social Studies therefore could be said to be all the contents that are essential for a learner to be taught in order to make him a well-informed member of the community in which he belongs. In fulfillment of the goals of Social Studies in Nigeria, its curriculum seeks to achieve;

The creation of an awareness and an understanding of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole in its natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual resources together with the rational use and conservation of these resources for national development. The development of the capacity to learn and to acquire certain basic skills, including not only those of listening, speaking, reading and writing and of calculation, but also those skills of hand and head together with those of observation, analysis and inference which are essential to the forming of sound, social, economic, and political judgment. To ensure the acquisition of that relevant body of knowledge and information which is an essential prerequisite to personal development as well as to positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind.

The development of a sympathetic appreciation of the diversity and inter-dependence of all members of the local community, and the wider national and international community. To develop in students positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship, and co-operation towards a healthy nation, the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development to the nation. To encourage learners to appreciate that all things they have learnt are interrelated. Through Social Studies, it is possible to present knowledge as a whole instead of being a series of specialised fragments. The promotion of effective and active citizenship.

### **Integration of Contents on Rape into Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum**

Social Studies was introduced into the Nigerian educational curriculum shortly after the independence to assist in understanding and finding solution(s) to the problems confronting Nigerian society. (Abdul Kabir, 2014). Social studies can be said to be the most encompassing of all school subjects embracing contents from a wide range of issues as they affect man and the environment. Ross, Mathison and Vanison (2014) are of the opinion that Social Studies is the most inclusive of all school subjects. Jekayinfa (1999) in Kabir, (2014) expressed that the apparent primary goal of the junior secondary school's Social Studies syllabus appears to

be the provision of knowledge to produce informed citizens who will translate knowledge and attitudes into desirable socio-civic behaviour. It is observed by Yusuf, Agbonna and Onifade, (2009) that the nature of the problems and aspiration of the society have always determined the nature of social studies curriculum and of course, determines the purpose which the curriculum is out to serve. It is therefore of high imperativeness that the Social Studies contents reflect the present need of the society in curbing the menace of rape in Nigeria and beyond.

Social Studies Curriculum requires constant review because man's realities keep changing over time. The society is dynamic with emerging issues and problems. Social Studies can only be relevant and useful when it addresses current issues and problems in the society. The current Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum was designed in 2012. Within the last few years, Nigeria, as a nation has confronted diverse issues, challenges, socio-economic and political problems which are not reflected in the current Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum. The table below shows the social problems that are listed in the current Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum.

**Table 1: Social Problems in the 2012 Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum**

<b>Class/Grade</b>	<b>Topics</b>
JSS1	*Common social problems like examination malpractice, cultism and HIV/AIDS
JSS2	*Meaning of drug/substance abuse, forms of drug abuse, consequences of drug abuse, ways of discouraging drug abuse* Meaning of drug trafficking, reasons for drug trafficking, Dangers of drug trafficking.
JSS3	*Meaning of human trafficking, factors responsible for human trafficking, consequences of human trafficking, preventing human trafficking*Harmful traditional practices: Child agric labour, uses of children for begging, female circumcision, early marriage.*Controlling cultism in our society: Meaning of cultism, consequences of cultism, solution to cultism.*Meaning of drug trafficking, reasons for drug trafficking, consequences of drug trafficking, prevention of drug trafficking

Extracted from NERDC (2012) National Curriculum for Junior Secondary School (Social Studies)

Table 1 shows social problems that are listed in the current Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum. The listed social problems are relevant and applicable to the current realities in Nigeria. However, contents like meaning and reasons for drug trafficking are listed for Upper Basic 1 and again repeated at Upper Basic III. There are some social vices that are currently threatening the Nigerian society which are not listed in the curriculum. Among these are: rape, kidnapping, herdsmen's attack etc.

Rape is one of the social vices that have become prevalent and worrisome in Nigeria. Cases of rape in Nigeria are becoming alarming and its scourge is becoming unbearable in the society. In the language of Chiazor, Ozoya, Udume and Egharevba (2016) it is quite glaring that rape cases are shocking realities in the Nigerian society today. Social Studies being a multi-disciplinary subject is a vital tool in combating the scourge of rape in the nation. There is need for the inclusion of contents on rape in the Social Studies curriculum in order to effectively solve the problems arising daily as a result of this malady. According to Oladapo (2020) Social Studies has, as one of its objectives to correct the ills of the society and produce a better generation and a new breed of disciplined citizens.

There is urgent need for the review and inclusion of contents of rape in the Nigeria Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum. The reasons for the advocacy of the inclusion of contents of rape in the Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum are: To create awareness and consciousness in the mind of the learners and the society at large about the effects and dangers associated with rape. This is because it is assumed that awareness about social vices like rape, cultism, drug abuse and violence will be created through classroom teachings with attendant possibility of eliminating them. (Udoh, 1999 in Oladapo, 2020).

To inform learners about the need and means of early prevention of rape around them. Vital contents that can help learners to become aware of the need and means of prevention of

rape should become classroom dialogue in Social Studies classes. This will serve as a means of better informing learners on what to do when there is any perceived threat of rape around them. For instance, Eze (2013) cited that a simple measure like well-lit walk ways could make a lot of difference, even though there are more factors to sexual assault than just dark places.

To develop civic and moral values such as togetherness and respect for people's feelings and views in every member of the society through the instrumentality of education in the school. The available contents of rape in Social Studies curriculum at present is not adequate to tackle the present problems associated with rape. According to Abdul Kabir (2014) there is general concern regarding the nation's moral problems. Current approaches to moral education in Nigeria are inadequate to cope with this moral crisis. If every member of the society is trained to develop civic and moral values that can further assist to be productive citizens of the country, the menace of rape would be tamed to the minimum.

To inculcate into the learners, sense of love and acceptance of traumatized and affected rape victims that may be living with them. It is a usual experience that many rape victims are neglected and ill-treated by close relatives and associates. As reported by Omoniyi (2013) in Falade and Ishola (2020) the relationship with family, friends, a lover or spouse could become problematic as the survivor might be irritable with those with whom she was close to prior to the rape. The contents introduced in Social Studies curriculum for the upper basic classes will help learners to develop sense of love and acceptance for rape victims around them

From the foregoing, there is an urgent need for the review of Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum. It is imperative that contents of rape be included in the Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum and curriculum planners with social studies experts should develop contents that can be taught in the upper basic I-III in our secondary schools to further help in curbing the menace of rape in Nigeria. Some of the contents on rape that can be taught in the upper basic I-III are highlighted below:

**Table 2: Plausible Contents on Rape to be Included in Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Contents on rape</b>	<b>Teaching and learning resources</b>
JSS1	Meaning of Rape, Types and Forms of Rape, Factors responsible for rape, Effects of rape on victims and their families; Means of reporting rape	1. Relevant posters and pictures 2. Video clips 3. Cartoons
JSS2	Effects of rape on the society and the nation; Reasons why people rape; Legislations on rape; Dangers of rape on perpetrators; Punishment for rapists; Ways of curbing rape in the society	1. Newspapers 2. Films 3. Copies of legislations
JSS3	History of rape; Incidents of Male rape; Campaign against rape, Agencies for advocacy for sexual morality; Treatment of rape victims; Respect for dignity of others.	1. Books 2. Newspaper stories 3. Cartoons

Table 2 presents some contents on rape that should be included in the Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum. Students should be made to have proper understanding of the meaning, forms, effects, punishments, prevention of rape etc. Appropriate methods and resources that will enable learners to acquire expected skills, attitudes and values should be adopted. When learners develop preventive skills and values of sexual morality, they will become change agents in the family and society.

### **Conclusion**

In Nigeria and some other parts of the world, rape has become a source of threats and fear to individuals, families, the community and governments. Incidents of rape have continued to increase in Nigeria despite legislations against the crime. Education is machinery used for achieving desired changes in the society. The school curriculum is therefore an important instrument to develop

in learners problem-solving and values for responsible citizenship.

### **Way Forward**

Social Studies was introduced into the Nigerian educational curriculum as a problem approach discipline. It intends to develop in learners problem-solving skills. Social Studies Curriculum therefore requires constant review because man's realities keep changing over time. The current Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum which was designed in 2012 should be reviewed to incorporate emerging social problems in Nigeria.

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