
**SOCIAL STUDIES: A PANACEA IN MANAGING THE
MENACE OF RAPE AMONG THE SCHOOL CHILDREN
AMIDST COVID-19 ERA AND BEYOND IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The paper looked at the Social Studies as a panacea in managing the menace of rape in Nigeria. Nigerian schools and other educational centres seem to have become a fertile ground for child rape or sexual abuse and a breeding ground for paedophiles. The rise in the reported rape cases is traceable to the nationwide lockdown orchestrated by the spread of COVID-19, because women and children have been locked down in the homes with their abusers. Between 2010-2019, 12 million girls in Nigeria have been raped and there are over 798 reported cases of rape within first quarter of 2020. The study revealed that, proportion of students reported to have been tricked into having sex and have experienced rape, unwanted touch of breast and backside. According to the findings, the educational implications of rape on school children among others include: emotional traumas, social stigma and shame,

sexual transmitted infections, termination of child's life, low academic performance, physical pains and injuries, school dropout, poor attendance to school. Social Studies is a discipline that would provide the child with skills, confidences, competencies and values which are employable in managing the menace of social problems and indiscipline among adults and youths in schools. Therefore the, paper suggested that, Parents should watch with who their children are associating with.

Keywords: School children, Rape, Social Studies, COVID-19, Education.

Introduction

Education it is seen as a process through which an individual is admitted into society by being taught what is worthwhile in order that the individual might play her part well in the society. Generally education involves learners or child, a child is someone who is a young individual between birth and adolescence. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child “defines a child as a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child” (Hammarberg, 1990). From the social psychological view points, a child is a human being from conception to adolescent. The age at which a person ceases to be a child depends on the culture, purpose and law of the land (Mallum, Haggai & Ajegbu, 1999).

Federal Government of Nigeria (nd) Under the Criminal Code of Nigeria (Section 357 & 358), rape is defined as “having unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman or girl, without her consent, or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force or using threats or intimidation of any kind, or by fear of harm, or through false act, or, in case of” (sic) (Criminal Code Act, nd, Tade & Udechukwu, 2020). These explains that, rape or Sexual assault encompasses a range of acts, including coerced sex in marriage and dating relationships, rape by strangers, organized rape in war, sexual harassment (including demands of sex for jobs or school grades), and rape of children, trafficking of women and girls and forced exposure to pornography (Njideka, 2020). In line with above

assertions, Agbo (2019) quoted the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka (2009) that; a “Child rape in Nigeria is a new dimension which has left many mouths open-mouthed and eyebrows rose. It is so embarrassing and heart breaking to hear that children who suck breasts are raped by beings who call themselves men. One begins to wonder what type of pleasure such worthless men derive from raping babies and children”. However, the Catholic Diocese asks the general public that as regards to the menace of child rape: How can a man with all his senses insert his manhood in the tender and undeveloped private parts of toddlers? Are these men human or beats? Apart from the fact that the female child due to her directional ability cannot make a decision about her sexuality, however, this episode makes affected victims vulnerable for rape in the future.

Kwaskebe (2020) is of the opinion that prior to the corona virus lockdown in Nigeria, the prevalence of the incidence of rape was standing at a terrifying frequency. As the cases of rape continued to persist, the declaration of COVID 19 lockdown brought a dreadful spike, a higher level of the cases of rape, which Onuah (2020) bemoaned as at an “alarming rate” with threefold increase of the typical level.

Love and Human Trafficking (2018) reported that, Nigerian schools and other educational centres seem to have become a fertile ground for child rape or sexual abuse and a breeding ground for paedophiles. Nothing worries parents more than that in the country. For instance, the Love and Human Trafficking (2018) reported the must three shocking events of paedophiles in the Nigerian schools thus: The first case was that of headmaster of a school in one of the State in south west region who were caught pants down having sexual intercourse with a Primary five pupil in one of the school’s toilets. That was not the first time,” the poor child reported. A second incidence was reported in 2015, as two Basic Three girls in a private school were found to be exhibiting some curious sexual behaviour. The report quoted the two Basic Three girls who are saying that, the teacher promised them no one would be disciplined them, thus, the evidences further, revealed that, a male teacher in their school had been showing them pornographic videos and materials. The girls also, narrated that, for several times the teacher fondled their private

parts and encouraged them to fondle his. He also urged them to fondle each other's private parts. Thirdly, a 15-year-old school girl was discovered to be pregnant according to the organization reports.

Moreover, it took a lot of persuasions to get the school girl to divulge the person who impregnated her. The impregnated school girl further revealed that, the person who impregnated her warned her that she would die if she told anyone that she had been having sex with him while the person who impregnated the school girl, he didn't know that, she was pregnant. He had been having sex with me almost every week," the abashed school girl said (Love & Human Trafficking, 2018). To this end, Nwabueze and Oduah (2013) reported that, a virgin school girl at Ikorodu Lagos was lured into a room forcefully stripped naked and raped to coma by a gang of three. Also, seventeen year old school girl was abducted in Benin, Edo State while returning from school by a gang of three men who confined her to their room and took turns of raping her.

The number of rape cases has taken a flit in folds compared to the yester year's figures. So sadden, it is increasing every year. The survivors of rape are afraid to speak out. Nwabueze and Oduah (2013) among a wide range of culture-specific reasons why a woman might feel ashamed or guilt-ridden, the violation of the body ranks as one of the most common. This places rape as a factor which triggers off feeling of shame among victims of such incidents in any society. In Nigeria, there is no central database where incidences of rape cases or sexual assault are recorded as reports published online have conflicting data (Okereke 2020). However, the rise in the reported rape cases is traceable to the nationwide lockdown orchestrated by the spread of COVID 19, since women and children have been locked down in the homes with their abusers (Onuah, 2020) and a 12-year-old girl was raped by 11 men in Jigawa State, northern Nigeria among others (Obibuba, 2020).

However, in 2015, a United Nations Women survey carried out across 27 universities in the United States of America. The survey further revealed that, twenty-three per cent of female undergraduate university students reported having experienced sexual assault or sexual misconduct. However, the, rates of reports to campus officials, law enforcement or others ranged from five to 28 per cent, depending

on the specific type of behavior (Okereke, 2020 & Akanbi, 2020). Similarly, the trends of rape in the United Kingdom were 147,000 cases of rape annually and only a thousand plus are convicted. The trend is the same in India; where in every 20 minutes, a case of rape is reported and only less than 25% of these cases are persecuted (Obibuba, 2020).

Furthermore in Nigeria, David (2020) reported that there are 717 cases of rape within five months specifically between January and May, 2020 in Nigeria. It is reiterated by the police that there were 799 arrested suspects of the rape incidences and the total number of 631 have been painstakingly investigated and charged to the court of law and almost 52 cases are still under investigation (David, 2020). Similarly, in Lagos state Nigeria, about 78,079 cases, which constitute only 68% of the rape that occurred between 2019 and 2020 (Peters & Olowa, 2020). Alhassan (2020) and Obibuba, (2020) proved 170 rape cases between July 2019 and July 2020. This report is an indication of prevalence and severity of the rape especially in every parts of the country. The called for to end the menace of child rape in the country came as a result of the prevalence and increase in the rate of rape in the country, the activists from Women's Rights Organizations staged a peaceful protest on violence against women. As a result of the reactions and protest, authorities at the states level have concluded in declaring state of emergency on the incessant cases of rape in the country (Bukola, 2015; Gbemileke & Oladepo, 2020).

Therefore, this paper looked at the Social Studies as a panacea in managing the menace of rape among the school children in COVID-19 era and beyond in Nigeria. To achieve the above, the paper asks the following questions: Are there, the cases of school child rape in the Nigerian schools? And then, if the menace of school child rape exists? What are the educational implications of such social behaviours to the future of the child and how Social Studies would be used in curtailing this Menace? Finding answers to these principal questions constitute the primary focus of this paper.

Conceptualizing the Term Rape

The Nigeria communal code refers to rape as follows: Any person who has unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman or girl without her consent, or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force or by means of threats or intimidation of any kind, or by fear of harm, or by means of false and fraudulent representation as to the nature of the act, or in the case of a married woman by impersonating her husband, is guilty of an offence, which is called rape. Today however, rape is seen as an act of power or dominance of one person over another. Similarly, Obibuba (2020), stated that rape is an act of sexual violence that involves intercourse without consent or against someone being unwilling to engage in the act. However, the issue of rape cannot be trivialized. It cuts across race, tribe and class. It is a universal phenomenon. And it is endemic. It is an issue that has been subjected to debates by human rights bodies all over the world (United Nations Human Right, 1999). Rape is the most gruesome form of violence against women. It is a denial of women's right of self- preservation. It is an intrusion into the right of privacy of the victim. It is a particular kind of human violence which carries powerful meanings in any culture, ancient and modern.

The following are the types of rape as identified by Joseph (2018) refers rape to a situation in which there has been some sort of passionate or potentially sexual relationship between the two parties, Gang rape usually, it occurs when a group of people participate in the rape of a single victim, Marital rape, this is a non-consensual sex in which the perpetrator is the victim's spouse; it can also be referred to as domestic violence on a partner, ancestral rape, means the sexual activity between the same family members or close relatives, Child rape/abuse, refers to a sexual activity in which an adult use a child for sexual stimulation, Prison rape, it refers to rape occurring in prison, it has come into common usage to refer to rape of an inmate by other inmates, Acquaintance rape: is a rape that is perpetrated by a person who is known to the victim, War rape: this is a form of rape or sexual violence committed by combatants during armed conflict or war military occupation often as spoils of war and Statutory rape: is a sexual activity in which one

of the individuals is below the age required to legally consent to the behavior, although it usually refers to adults engaging in sex with minors under the age of consent.

Cases of Rape Among the School Children in Nigeria

There have been cases of school children being raped by their teachers or supervisors in the educational institutions in Nigeria. Rape amid school students is a worldwide problem with overwhelming consequences. Olatunji and Agunbiade (2020) conducted an extensive review of the Nigerian anti-rape law and identified shortcomings in the provisions which make rape prevention challenging in Nigeria. Kanmodi, Fagbule, Ogunniyi, Ogbeide, Samuel, Aliemeke, Olatunji, Isola, Adewuyi and Musa (2020) investigated the determinants of sexual practices among secondary school students in Nigeria. The study discovered such factors to include: geographical locations, age, ethnic groups, gender and religion. Ethier, Kann and McManus (2018) discovered that, Collaboration between the sexes in the classroom helps the students to develop confidence so that they feel comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions in any life situation. Prosper, Adogu, Echendu, Adinma, Victor, Onyiaorah and Ubajaka (2014) carried out an assessment study on the perception, prevalence and predictors of rape among female students in a tertiary institution south east Nigeria. The study revealed the causes of acquaintance rape with school type. Also study revealed that those students who attended single gender schools were more predisposed to rape than their counterparts who attended co-educational colleges. These indicates that, single students are more likely to be raped, and are more vulnerable to such attacks than their married counterparts. Envuladu, Umaru, Banwat, Lar, Lassa and Zoakah (2013) found factors to be significantly associated with sexual abuse among school students to include: Age, alcohol consumption and children not living with parents Oshiname, Ogunwale and Ajuwon (2013) alcohol is a common substance used in carrying out the act of rape. Alcohol is widely believed to increase sexual desire and capacity, and also increase aggressive behaviour, especially in men.

However Ajiwon, Olaleye, Faromaju and Ladipo, (2006) studied on the sexual behavior and experience of sexual coercion among secondary school students in three states in north eastern Nigeria. The mean age of the respondents was 16 years. The percentage of students reported that they had been tricked into having sex, 9% had experienced unwanted touch of breast and backside, and 5% reported rape. Eke, Ofori and Tabansi (2011) studied on the perception of rape amongst secondary school students in Port Harcourt. The study compressed one thousand and fifty students. The ages varied between 10 and 20 years, the study discovered that intercourse between an adult exist especially acquaintances rape. To this end According to Obibuba (2020) and Olusola & Ogunlusi (2020) rape of this nature are scary because these children are innocent, tender, vulnerable and they are most times raped by people they trust and look up to such as teachers, uncles, fathers, step-fathers, grandfathers, neighbours, in-laws, family friends.

Educational Implications of Schools Child Rape in Nigeria

Rape extremely has serious unpleasant implications on the education of the children in Nigeria. Therefore, it is important to note that the overall consequences of pupils and adolescents rape can affect learning and educational outcomes directly or indirectly, hence rape hampers all children's life activities including learning. The social stigma and shame associated with child rape is capable of causing truancy or school dropout for the rape victim (Obibuba, 2020) the victim can develop suicide thoughts, anxiety disorder".

Furthermore, such a child may feel valueless, guilty, hopeless, and regretful which may result to little or no interest in life including education, difficulty in concentration in learning, and recall of memories. All these may affect learning and academic performance. If the rape involves school environment or a male teacher, the child may develop school phobia and lack of trust on her male teachers forever (Adebola 2019, Bolade, 2019 & Alakija, 2020). Emotional trauma generally impairs physical health as well as mental efficiency, both of which impede learning outcomes. Academically, children with emotional traumas are noted for low grade in school work,

failure in school examinations, repeating of class or grade and school dropout. There is no gain-saying that physical consequences of child rape may involve fever, loss of appetite, injuries, pains and hospitalization and death, which of course affect attendance to school and life adversely, it is significant to note that the health risks of pupils and adolescents are detrimental to their education (Obibuba, 2020). A child who is infected with sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, gonorrhoea, syphilis and or cervical cancer through rape may have her life and education endangered sooner or later during their lifetime (Obibuba, 2020).

Conclusion

One of the primary aims of teaching Social Studies in Nigeria is to inculcate right type of attitude which is desirable for pupils. To do this effectively, Social Studies teachers, at what level of education in Nigeria, (nursery, primary, secondary or tertiary) must be conversant and knowledgeable with national values. And this can be derived from the national objectives thus: A free and democratic society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a just and egalitarian society, a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (Kazi, 2012). The above objectives call for developments of social skills, groups' skills, social values, desirable's attitude and behaviours in the learners to shun social vices for national development, by using the following strategies. Through games and simulation, Social studies teachers can teach or promote positive values and attitudes like cooperation, tolerance, respect for human dignity and commitments to group activities and goals through simulation games among classes in the upper, middle and lower education (Kazi, 2012).

Suggestions

An adage says, "show me your friend, and I'll tell who you are". To tackle the disheartening menace of rape in our school the following were recommended: the family, parents need to educate and enlighten their wards on rape, its atrocities and implications. Children, both male and female, should be given adequate knowledge

of sex education. Schools being the second agent should be used to get rid of rape in the society. Parents have a path to play here. Parents should know and be ready to investigate who their children are associating with. Also, religion is an important medium to curb the act of rape. Clerics should preach against rape and admonish the worshippers on the sins attached to the act. On the government side, the government needs to strengthen our judicial system so that the implementation of already made laws on rape should be well established and given a fast approach too. Perpetrators should face the wrath of the law.

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