

COVID -19 AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Violence against women is a global and perennial phenomenon which has claimed many lives and ruined many too. It includes domestic violence, sexual violence etc. The advent of Covid-19 has doubled its increase. This is because, with the stay-at-home order, the perpetrators of these crimes are now sitting down in their houses for several hours, battling with stress, frustration and joblessness. This gives them more opportunity and reason to be more violent than ever. Violence against women and girls is a grave violation of their human rights. Its negative impact ranges from immediate to long-term results, such as health, sexual and mental consequences, including death. It also affects women's general well-being and prevents them from fully participating in society. This paper used the analytical and expository methods and also noted that women do not suffer the effects of violence alone. Its consequences extend to their families, communities and even the country at large. Thus, the paper encouraged everyone to understand that violence against women and girls will not improve the well-being of anybody, including the society at large. Respect for women was highly emphasized.

Introduction

Since the spread of the coronavirus and the lockdown that was introduced by the Federal Government as a result, violence at different levels has increased. The most common forms of such violence include spousal violence, girl child violence, rape, landlord-tenant violence, neighbour-to-neighbour violence, parent-children abuse, homeowner-house help violence, boyfriend-girlfriend violence, violence on widows, police-sex worker violence, police-citizen violence, etc. This paper focuses more on domestic violence and rape. According to World Health Organization (WHO), violence is defined as "the intentional use of physical force or actual coercion against a person, or against a group or community that either results in

or has a high likelihood resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation".¹

Violence against women is prevalent in our society and discussions have been going on, on how to stop it. It is unfortunate that the advent of covid-19 brought increase to this menace. Experts actually warned in the Covid-19 outbreak that there would be an increase of violence against women and children.² It is a global problem, for example "Activists, journalists, and the United Nations (UN) have drawn attention to a so-called shadow pandemic, an allusion to rising global levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and girls, as a result of Covid-19 and state responses to it".³ More so, there are reports by global media highlighting the situations in Europe and different parts of Africa and Asia including Liberia, Nigeria, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda, China, France, and Spain. These are among the countries that have reported surges in violence against women and girls (VAWG)⁴ since the pandemic began. But this paper is concerned with African experiences. Just as it is in different parts of the world, women and children are experiencing double pandemic also in different parts of Africa. The double pandemic is that of covid-19 and violence.

Since the Covid-19 lockdown began in March, ActionAid Nigeria has seen an alarming increase in reported cases of rape and killings of women and girls as a result of the pandemic. Between March and June, we've documented 299 cases of violence against women and girls across seven states; 51 of these were sexual violence cases involving minors between the ages of 3 to 16. High profile killings like that of Tina Ezekwe who was shot by a

1 Abubaker A. L. Ibraheem. *Violence against Women and Harmful Traditional Practices are Divergences from Islamic Teaching*. Academia, 2013. P.56

2 Megan O'Donnel, (2020) "A Gender Lens on COVID-19: Pandemics and Violence against Women and Children" in Center for Global Development. Available at <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/gender-lens-covid-19-pandemics-and-violence-against-women-and-children>. Accessed on 01/08/2020.

3 Titilope Ajayi (2020) "Violence against Women and Girls in the Shadow of Covid-19: Insights from Africa". Available at <https://kujenga-amani.ssric.org/2020/05/20/violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-shadow-of-covid-19-insights-from-africa/>. Accessed on 01/08/2020.

4 Titilope Ajayi (2020) "Violence against Women and Girls in the Shadow of Covid-19: Insights from Africa". Available at <https://kujenga-amani.ssric.org/2020/05/20/violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-shadow-of-covid-19-insights-from-africa/>. Accessed on 01/08/2020.

trigger-happy police officer in Lagos, have traumatised the nation and led to country-wide protests and demonstrations.⁵

There are different forms of violence against women and children that are discussed in this paper, such as domestic violence which varies from physical, emotional, sexual, financial, psychological etc. child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence/ abuse and rape. As presented by Jacqueline, "violence against women wears many faces, aside from that of wife battery or beating".⁶ We will first, find out why Covid-19 brought an increase to the already existing problem and highlight the factors responsible for such. The paper further discussed the various forms of violence against women and girls and finally, points out the ways on how to stop them in order to have a healthier society.

Ways That Covid-19 Has Caused Increase In Violence Against Women And Children

Before the incidence of Covid-19, which was detected in Wuhan China by the end of 2019 and was declared by World Health Organisation (WHO) as a global pandemic, precisely in March 2020; many women have been frequently experiencing abuse in different ways. It can be at work through sexual harassment where their employers or male co-workers demand sexual favours in return for promotion or fair treatment, or on the street, in their homes, churches, schools etc. It can be verbal abuse or physical beating and worst of all rape. "Social scientists tell us that men frequently turn to rape, not so much out of strong and uncontrollable sexual urges, but rather, out of a sense of frustration and anger aimed at society in general and women in particular".⁷ These increased during the surge of this pandemic. The increase of frustration could be because of the economic strain of lockdowns, social isolation or distancing. People no longer go out. Most times when men are angry or overwhelmed by the troubles at home, they go out to socialize with their friends and by the time they come back to the

⁵ Lola Ayanda (2020) "Women are Fierce but Afraid. Covid-19 has exposed a Silent Pandemic of Violence". ActionAid Nigeria. Available at <https://nigeria.actionaid.org/stories/2020/women-are-fierce-afraid-covid-19-has-exposed-silent-pandemic-violence>. Accessed on 05/08/2020.

⁶ Jacqueline Dorr, M.M., *Women Seeking justice*. Pauline's Publications Africa, 1991. P.79

⁷ Ibid.

house, they are relaxed. But during this time of lockdown and (even till now), since coronavirus is rapidly increasing in Nigeria, it is risky mixing up with people. Hence, men are often at home.

Another point is that of “exposure to exploitative relationships. Others include reduced access to sources of support, whether because these are not functioning, because resources have been diverted to resolving the pandemic, or because of restricted movement”.⁸

Elements That Facilitate Violence Against Women And Girls In Our Society

I had the privilege of participating in an online conference on “Ending Rape and Sexual Violence in Nigeria: The Role of Religious Leaders” and some of the elements discussed in this paper were mentioned by Rev Fr. George Ehusani. These include:

- (a) *The propensity to Abuse Power*: according to Anne Borrowdale, “both rape and battering are acts which men do in order to reassure themselves of their power and potency; both include as a crucial factor in that reassurance, the fear and humiliation of the female victims”.⁹ As a nation, we have a long history of the human propensity in general to abuse all forms of power. Perpetrators of violence against women and girls are those who believe or claim that they have some power over those they rape or beat or abuse. So, the propensity to abuse power, (of course any kind of power) is one factor that we need to take into consideration. Whether a husband over the wife, or a religious leader having power over members of his or her congregation or a teacher having power over a student, an employer having power over an employee or potential employee, a father having power over a child, an uncle having power over a small child etc. This is why societies make and have laws and regulations to regulate the use of that power, the exercise of such power in order to protect the weak against the strong and the powerful.
- (b) *Male Chauvinism*: We have a long history of male chauvinism or primitive patriarchy in Nigeria and different places in Africa. Some have come to call or see male chauvinism as male privilege by which the female folk were often seen simply as objects to be possessed and treated as the male folk wishes, as if the female has a lesser dignity and honour than her male folk. And in the best-case scenario, people

⁸ Titilope Ajayi (2020). “Violence against Women and Girls in the Shadow of Covid-19: Insights from Africa”. Available at <https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2020/05/20/violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-shadow-of-covid-19-insights-from-africa/>. Accessed 28/07/2020.

⁹ Anne Borrowdale, *Distorted Images: Christian Attitudes to Women, Men and Sex*. SPCK, London, 1991. P.94

just think that female children are of less value or dignity and male children are of higher dignity. Men as a result treat their wives as if they possess them probably because they paid their bride price.

(c) *The confusion between sexual attraction and sexual satisfaction:* Sexual attraction as such can be innocent and natural but between sexual attraction and sexual assault there is a big chasm. As human beings we can experience sexual attraction and it is normal but what we do when we feel such is what matters. We need to train ourselves on how to handle our impulses and desires, to make sure that we do not behave like animals. Sexual desires need to be subjected to rationality or to reasoning. So, when that line between sexual attraction and sexual satisfaction is blurred or confused then we run into serious problems, as we are experiencing in our society today.

(d) *The Objectivation of the Female Body:* There is the terrible scourge in our day, that of the objectification of the female body. What this means is using the female body for advertisement. The female body has been turned to an object of entertainment. The female body has been turned to an object for selling products. The female body is used to advertise products ranging from toothpaste to wine, cars, perfume, cream, soap etc. The objectification of the female body violates the sacredness and dignity of the female body.

(e) *The emptiness in our public square.* This is what we can call moral decadence. What it means is that today, our public square appears empty, meaning naked of values. What we are seeing today with violence against women and girls cannot be taken in isolation. It has to be taken in union with what we see with corruption where somebody is the governor today the next day he is paraded or charged to court for monumental corruption. That is not good for the psyche of young people. Today somebody is a governor tomorrow he is in prison. This is very bad. There is emptiness in our public square. Morals have gone, values have gone and what we have, with our young people particularly is sheep without shepherds.¹⁰

(f) *Cultural Factors:* Violence against women and girls in different parts of the world and in Nigeria in particular is based upon cultural and historical practices. In some parts of Nigeria, one discovers different forms of violence or deprivation against women in some cultures. I was just reflecting over some areas where many people pay little attention in their culture, which portrays serious marginalization of women. It is not understandable why some part of animal parts is strictly reserved for men in

10 George Ehusani, (2020). Webinar on "Ending Rape and Sexual Violence in Nigeria: The Role of Religious Leaders." From Community Life Project.

Igbo culture; the gizzard and some parts of goats for example. I have tried to ask the rationale behind this, but nothing reasonable. If one observes closely, you discover that such parts are the most valuable of such animals.

Furthermore, we look at female genital mutilation which is one of the common forms of violence against women. I have tried to investigate why mutilation is carried out in some cultures and was informed that it is done to avoid women promiscuity. The outcome of mutilation is more than that. In my investigation, a woman told me that it makes women not to enjoy sex and causes painful delivery. In the name of culture women are punished for life. Why is it that no one cares about men that are unfaithful in our society? Why always women? Some cultures perform forced arranged marriages and bride kidnappings. There are even sometimes dowry-related deaths and violence. Women are at risk of bride kidnappings or marriage by capture, in which a man abducts the woman he wishes to marry. All these are deeply rooted in some cultures where women are considered the property of the male.

(g) *Silence on Rape Cases*: since in most cases the perpetrators are not arrested and punished accordingly, they continue playing their game. Many victims refuse to come forward and report to the authorities the incidences of sexual violence. This could be because of a sense of shame or guilt or self-blame. Etc.

(h) *The Nigerian Constitution*: The Nigerian authorities at both Federal and State levels have failed to address adequately gender-based violence, including rape. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria seems to contribute in a way to the growing cases of rape in Nigeria; even though that the House of Representatives approved life imprisonment for any person convicted of rape on March 5, 2013. They equally approved a minimum of 20 years in jail terms without an option of fine for persons convicted. In the same Nigeria, it is common knowledge that the existing Customary and Sharia laws which encourage contrary religious and cultural practices other than the ones stipulated in the Nigerian constitution directly or indirectly affect female folks in no small ways. For instance, the toleration of Sharia law in Nigeria makes the prosecution of rape cases in Northern Nigeria very difficult.¹¹

¹¹ Chiazor, I. A., Ozoya, M. I., Udume, M. & Egharevba, M. E. (2006) "Taming the Rape Scourge in Nigeria: Issues and Actions" in *Gender & Behaviour*, 14 (3). P. 7775

Brief Analysis Of Violence Against Women And Girls

Some of the ways women and girls suffer violence are briefly analysed here. They are: Domestic violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, cultural violence, and social violence.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence which is the most invisible of all the crimes because it takes place most often behind closed doors is defined as "any act or omission committed within the framework of the family, by one of its members that undermines the life, the bodily or psychological integrity, or the liberty of another member of the same family, or that seriously harms the development of his or her personality"¹². The origin of domestic violence in most of the African communities is found in the norms of African customary traditions and practices. For them wife-beating is identified as the right of the husband because he paid the bride-price of the woman. Paying of the bride-price includes treating the woman as the man deserves, since there is no difference between her and the other properties in the house. They are all bought and so have the same value. This is one of the reasons why paying of bride-price should be looked into. One of the justifications why a wife deserves to be beaten is to make her to be submissive to the husband.

In the past, violence against women and girls was very silent and hidden because it was identified as evil act, and therefore, people were ashamed to be identified as a perpetrator of such. But today, the story is different. "Domestic violence has become a public issue".¹³ And "a report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1990 called it the most common cause of injury to women. It reported that 22 to 35 percent of women who visit emergency wards have abuse-related symptoms, either physical or stressed-related".¹⁴

¹² Jan Cooper & Aflene Vetere, *Domestic Violence and Family Safety: A Systemic Approach to Working with Violence in Families*. Whurr Publishers, London and Philadelphia, 2005. P.1

¹³ Alice P. Tuyizere, *Gender and Development, the Role of Religion and Culture*. Fountain Publishers, Kampala, 2007. P.147.

¹⁴ Paula Kamen, *Feminist Fatale: Voices from the "Twentysomething" Generation Explore the Future of the Women's Movement*. Donald L. Fine INC. New York, 1991. P.236.

Covid- 19 pandemic has not only exposed the pandemic of violence but also that of inequality. It has truly shown that women and men's need differ especially in the face of the existing crisis.

One example cited in a recent article relates the experience of a 22-year-old woman known as Halima Bulama in Kasaisa community in Damaturu, Yobe State, in northeast Nigeria, who was attacked by her husband with a machete for attending the wedding of her relative around mid-April 2020. According to the story told by the police, Mr. Abacha who is her husband said that his wife disobeyed him in attending the ceremony, and for her punishment, the man hacked off the woman's right hand with a machete. Such attacks are very common in Nigeria and other parts of Africa and lockdowns imposed by the federal and state governments across the country to curtail the spread of coronavirus actually caused a spike in incidents that target women and children, activists say. This is because the restrictions have forced vulnerable persons to stay more closely to their attackers.¹⁵ In Uganda "a local magazine of 16th April 2020 reported that police had far recorded 328 cases of domestic violence since the COVID-19 lockdown"¹⁶

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence has become something of a great cause of concern amongst people of integrity in our society especially amongst women themselves. Fear of sexual violence affects both their minds and behaviour. According to Anne Borrowdale, "sexual violence tends to be seen in isolation as the act of a few perverted sex-monsters. But we have to see its connection with more widespread male behaviour towards women".¹⁷ There are many forms of sexual violence, but this paper concentrates on rape, which is the most common, painful, and dreadful sexual violence against women and girls. According to Catharine, "rape is a crime of

Cf. 15 Ejio Umukoro, (2020) "Amidst COVID-19 Lockdown, Nigeria Sees Increased Sexual and Gender Violence". Pulitzer Center. Available at <https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/amidst-covid-19-lockdown-nigeria-sees-increased-sexual-gender-violence>. Accessed 28/05/2020.

16 Consolata Kabonesa & Fredrick Immanuel Kindi, (2020). "Assessing the Relationship between Gender Based Violence & COVID-19 Pandemic in Uganda. Accessed on 14/09/2020. Retrieved from <http://www.kas.de/documents/280229/8800435/Assessing+the+Relationship+between+Gender-based+Violence+and+the+COVID-19+Pandemic+in+Uganda.pdf?8d5a57a0-3b96-9ab1-a476-4bcf2f71199d?version=1.0&t=1588065638600>

17 Anne Borrowdale, *Distorted Images: Christian Attitudes to Women, Men and Sex*. SPCK, London, 1991. P.92

violence, not sexuality; sexual harassment is an abuse of power, not sexuality.”¹⁸ When I dialogue with friends sometimes about the bondage that women are experiencing in our society and how they are deprived of one fundamental human right (of freedom) when it comes to their body, they keep denying and I keep wondering why they cannot see things as they are. Where actually does the woman’s freedom lie? When she cannot decide what she can do with her body, when she cannot live without being tortured by fear every day, simply because, she is a woman! She is afraid in her husband’s house, because she is being used whenever the man needs her, the man does not care whether she is mentally disposed for sex or not, after all, that is the reason why she is married, to satisfy the man. This is the impression many men have out there.

Alice Tuyizere affirmed the above concern with the following words: “women cannot demand sex in marriage but have to submit to their husbands’ demands. If women demand for sex, they are regarded as little better than prostitutes. The sexual act only considers a man’s satisfaction”.¹⁹ She is afraid on the road because she can be kidnapped and raped at any time. She is not safe in her place of work, with some of her friends, she is not safe in school, etc.

During the Webinar conference on “Ending Rape and Social Violence in Nigeria” Fr. Ehuasni severally identified rape as a plague or pestilence. This depicts the seriousness of the matter in question. It is true that human history has always had incidences of rape, but they were few and rape at it were, was considered an abomination. Anybody cut in rape in my village, Oberete -Asa in Abia State then, was severely punished and disgraced. But today, cases of such are handled differently or swept under the carpet. Rape has always belonged to those crimes that are considered abominable, meaning that we should not hear of it and perhaps that is part of the reason why there was a lot of the regime of silence.

Today, education and social media have helped so much that people are now more able to speak out about rape. Victims are able to come out to say that they have been raped, neighbours are able to report. But the long history of rape and perhaps what is behind the regime of silence is that it is such a heinous and abominable crime that families would not want to hear that any of their member was involved in this accursed behaviour. Now what we have seen in the last few years in our

¹⁸ Catharine A. Mackinnon, *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*. Harvard University Press, United States, 1987, P.85.

¹⁹ Alice P. Tuyizere, *Gender and Development, the Role of Religion and Culture*. Fountain Publishers, Kampala, 2007. P.159.

country is that there appears to be an upsurge, from high level people to low level people. We are hearing of big executives raping their house girls, raping their staff, of teachers and professors raping their students etc. This is abominable, this is perverse, and this should not be heard²⁰.

According to report in premium Times, the Nigerian police recorded 717 rape cases between January and May 2020. The Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, said this to State House Correspondents after meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari at the State House in Abuja. He further said that 799 suspects had so far been arrested while 631 cases had been conclusively investigated and charged to court. He said 52 cases were still being investigated.²¹

It was during the period that the entire world was still pondering on the possible justification for the gruesome killing of the American, George Floyd that the news of the rape and murder of Vera Uwaila Omozuwa filtered in the month of May 2020. Vera was a 22-year old, 100 level student of the University of Benin, Edo State. She gained admission into the higher institution after 5 years of seeking for admission into the university. Despite the indefinite closure of learning institutions as part of the preventive measures against COVID-19, she chose to keep abreast with her studies and resorted to her usual serene and study-enabling environment of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Benin City. The church was indeed empty and without distractions. She was not only raped but was also murdered in cold blood with a fire extinguisher cylinder. Her mother mournfully cried: when I saw my daughter, I cried. They raped her, the dress she was wearing that morning was white, but it had turned to red; all her body was full of blood. Her mouth and eyes were tied; the hoodlums used a fire extinguisher to hit her head which left a deep cut.... She was unable to say anything till she died; it was just tears that were coming from her eyes.²²

²⁰ George Ehusani, (2020). Webinar on "Ending Rape and Sexual Violence in Nigeria: The Role of Religious Leaders." From Community Life Project.

²¹David Mutua, (2020). "Nigeria Records 717 Rape Cases in Five Months – Official". Retrieved from [https:// allafrica.com/ stories/202006150851.html](https://allafrica.com/stories/202006150851.html)

²² Ugochukwu Ejinkeonye, (2020). "UWAILA Omozuwa: Rape and Murder So Gruesome". Sahara Reporters. Available at <http://saharareporters.com/2020/06/05uwaila-omozuwa-rape-and-murder-so-gruesome-ugochukwu-ejinkeonye>. Accessed on 15/08/2020.

While the country was also in a bid to understand the crime of Vera Uwaila for deserving such a horrible end even in the house of God, another case came up of a 12-year old girl in Jigawa State who was gang-raped by 11 men.²³ Shortly after that, a 15-year old boy in Ekiti State was nabbed for raping a 3-year old baby. As if those were not enough, a 17-year old hawker was reportedly raped by two men who are presently in detention. Furthermore, Barakat Bello, 18-year old female student of the Institute of Agriculture, Research and Training, Ibadan was raped and stabbed to death in her own father's house in Ibadan. Four masked men reported in Lagos raped a 12-year-old girl while a 25-year-old man allegedly raped an 85-year-old grandma in Niger State. It was learnt also that in Kaduna, four assailants drugged a girl and after gang-raping her, dumped her in a car parked outside her home.²⁴ These developments on sexual violence against women sent shocking waves down the spines of every right-thinking Nigerian. Of course, we know that out of each case reported, there could be more than 10 cases not reported because "women have a tendency to keep quiet and suffer in silence. This is because society has always prescribed silence, reticence, complaisance, patience and gentleness as the greatest virtues of the feminine gender"²⁵

Consequences Of Violence Against Women And Girls

The effects of violence against women and girls are many but the paper highlighted few of them. There is an Igbo proverb which says that 'if one finger touches oil, it spreads to other fingers.' This implies that, the impact or consequences of the discussed violence affects not only the victim but the society at large. Beginning with the family and friends. For example, in the case of the intimate partner violence, the children are negatively affected. Most often, they copy what they have learnt from their parents, it affects families and friends. Society is affected due to loss of production or economic loss. Under physical violence (battering) or rape, women suffer trauma, physical injury, sickness and sometimes it can lead to death. A raped woman suffers so much pain during childbirth as many of them have testified. Women psychologically experience

Cf. 23 Khaleel Muhammad, (2020). "Court Remands 11 for allegedly Gang-Raping 12- year-old Girl in Jigawa" Daily Post.Ng. Accessed on 15/08/2020.

Cf. 24 Ibrahim Hassan Wuyo, (2020) Vanguard News "10 Rape Incidents in a Row: Girl, 13, drugged, gang-raped, dumped in car in Kaduna". Available <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/06/10-rape-incidents-in-a-row-girl-13-drugged-gang-raped-dumped-in-car-in-kaduna/> Accessed on 15/08/2020.

25 Mobolanle Sotunsa. *Feminism & Gender Discourse: The African Experience*. Ojoko -Biri-Kale Press, Sagamu, Nigeria, 2008. P. 105

intense fear. They are afraid of their husbands, thinking always that violence will happen again. The fear limits their freedom in the house and the society at large. It makes many of them to suffer from low self-esteem, guilt, shame and depression. They often feel that society is treating them unjustly. Many of them harbour feelings of hatred and revenge. Obviously, violence undermines the woman's confidence and security, socialisation and development²⁶

Preventive Measures Of Violence Against Women And Girls

The first point of concern is that Africans need to promote respect for human dignity. Our educational systems at all levels should "promote self-respect, mutual respect and cooperation between men and women".²⁷ Parents should take this as maximum priority to teach their children to respect one another. There is a saying that 'charity begins at home'. If it is learnt from home, it will become a way of life that will be difficult to terminate. Secondly, in as much as we cannot avoid hawking because of the level of poverty in the land, parents should stop exposing girls to danger in the name of hawking. More so, it is not enough to have laws written down without implementation. To stop violence against women or minimize it, every perpetrator of such must be exposed and made to take full responsibility for his or her actions. Under no circumstance should such a one be shielded or protected by parents, teachers, religious institutions, non-governmental organizations, governments or the media. All Nigerians / Africans must rise up in condemnation of this social epidemic. ²⁸

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is evident that our authorities have not played sufficient role to stop domestic violence at all levels. Partly, because some of those in authority are guilty of the offence in question. What it means too is that our families, educational institutions, Churches and Mosques have failed in their roles of teaching their members about self-control and self-discipline. The idea that beating a woman is a way to discipline her is in total disrespect of womanhood. Some persons maintain that a man will harm himself if an erection is not followed up by ejaculation. This is a convenient myth that erroneously implies that men cannot control their sexual urge. What about the majority that are not involved in

²⁶ Alice P. Tuyizere, *Gender and Development, the Role of Religion and Culture*. Fountain Publishers, Kampala, 2007. P.183

²⁷ Alice P. Tuyizere, *Gender and Development, the Role of Religion and Culture*. Fountain Publishers, Kampala, 2007. P.184

²⁸ Chiazor, I. A., Ozoya, M. I., Udume, M. & Egharevba, M. E. (2006) "Taming the Rape Scourge in Nigeria: Issues and Actions" in *Gender & Behaviour*, 14 (3). P. 7779.

this evil? The onus still lies on government implementing already existing laws. If the perpetrators are punished as the law requires, it will go a long way to stop violence against women and girls in our society.

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