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Adeola had gone to see her childhood friend, Dan. They had been friends for over 15 years. They used to regularly study together. On one of those days when Dan came to her house to study, he began making unsolicited compliments on her body. Sensing danger, Adeola swiftly cautioned him.  
  
  
  
Offended by her audacity to dismiss his compliments, Dan decided to teach her a lesson by beating and forcing himself on her. And she told no one. She has been living with the scar ever since.  
  
Dele’s case is a bit different. His mother, as usual, dropped him at her sister’s place and left home for the East for 3-day training. Alone with Dele, her sister started to perform sexual acts on him. And that has been the trend for the past four years.  
  
Now that Dele is 18, he has grown accustomed to it and is often eager to spend time with his Aunty. This soon became detrimental to his education as he couldn’t concentrate on his studies again. All he now desires is the erotic moments he spends alone with his aunty.  
  
A couple of years back, a popular musician’s wife spoke extensively about how she was raped by someone whom her family had trusted. In the end, she was blamed. However, her courage marked the birth of people who began to find their voices whether they were believed or not.  
  
In 2021, the case of popular actor, James Olanrewaju Omiyinka, aka Baba Ijesha, swam the media space and it further revealed the existence of several rape apologists. It, however, equally showed that a lot of other people are willing to go to any extent to support rape victims.  
  
More worrying is that a good number of suspected rapists move freely on the streets after committing the heinous act. Also worrisome is the fact that not much is being done in respect of strengthening our weak law to incisively deal with perpetrators of rape.  
  
Most experts believe that the primary cause of rape is an aggressive desire to dominate the victim rather than an attempt to achieve sexual fulfillment. They consider rape an act of violence rather than principally a sexual encounter. This is the opinion of experts. But one is of the opinion that besides the desire to dominate, rape can also be situated in the perpetrator’s state of mind.  
  
The brazen manner rape is often committed indicates that the perpetrators still have a stone-age mentality of women as chattels who are to be used without independent thoughts. It also portrays some as pure lunatics. Or what do we think of such a recent reported case of a 14-year old, who was gang-raped to death by some miscreants in Lagos?  
  
  
  
The Junior Secondary School 3 student on holiday was said to be alone at home when the mad hoodlums fiercely gained entry into her parent’s apartment and took turns to rape her. The miscreants, according to the report, usually hang out in smoking joint in Abule-Ado area of Lagos State.  
  
Rape victims suffer a sense of abuse that goes beyond physical injury. They may become skeptical of men and experience feelings of embarrassment and disgrace. Victims who suffer rape trauma syndrome experience physical symptoms such as headaches, sleep disturbances, and fatigue.  
  
They may also develop psychological disturbances related to the circumstances of the rape, such as intense fears. Fear of being raped has social as well as personal consequences. For example, it may prevent women from socializing or traveling as they wish while worried and un-enlightened parents can use it as an excuse to limit the educational progress of girl-child.  
  
If not promptly tamed, rape might become a pandemic that is worse than COVID-19. The heinous crime is a violation of the mind and human independence. It robs the victim of the ability to choose when and with whom a person wants to have a consensual relationship.  
  
In order to frontally combat the evil of rape, more prominent folks in society need to stand up and be counted. They need to raise their voices against the menace.  
  
Fortunately, the First Lady of Lagos State, Dr. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, is one of the strong advocates against rape. Over the years, she has firmly lent her voice and resources to combat the morbid crime of rape. She has vowed to even do more, by becoming the voice of the voiceless.  
  
Similarly, the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) has succinctly represented what it stands for, especially in terms of survivor advocacy, legal representation and counseling for rape victims.  
  
  
  
The weak stance of the law towards rape needs to be seriously addressed. Women and girls who are raped in Nigeria have little hope of obtaining justice and reparation. Victims are sometimes pressured into withdrawing the case or parents of victims prefer financial settlement out of court to criminal prosecution.  
  
Where cases are brought to court, prosecution sometimes fails because police refer cases to a court lacking appropriate jurisdiction and progress is then obstructed by the slow administration of the judicial system. In some cases, the alleged perpetrator is charged with a different and less serious criminal offense.  
  
Sadly, perpetrators of rape have continued to enjoy the crime because the onus of proof lies only with the victims. The victim is the one that must provide the bed sheet used to rape her.  
  
She must provide her underwear and not clean herself before going to the police station and the hospital even when it is sure that there would be delays in getting and presenting the report of medical tests because of the nature of our health facilities. She must not urinate, drink liquid or take any other bodily action as these could threaten her evidence.  
  
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