How indecent dressings, exposure to other cultures heighten rape cases

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Imagine a teenage girl in one of the private secondary schools in Lagos who enjoys unhindered benefits of hanging out with her friends on many occasions, dressing seductively; all in the name of “trending lifestyle’’,  
  
Her indecent modes of dressing and behaviours, even with the permission of her mother, have been a source of concerns to neighbours but the mother believes that her daughter’s lifestyle is the one in vogue; the western way.  
  
For mother, her ways of life is always “satisfactory’’ in her view until the mother got a phone call one day that a group of boys drugged and raped her daughter during one of her outings to a friend’s party.  
  
It was at the hospital where her daughter was taking treatment that she realised the implications of her viewpoint on child’s training, regretting how indecent exposure and belief in western lifestyle have affected her only daughter.  
  
This case is just one of several cases of rape across the country although many are not reported for some personal reasons.  
  
For instance, in Lagos State alone in 2016, 180 cases of rape and sexual violence were reported out of which 162 cases were rape and defilement.  
  
Mr Fatai Oweseni, former Commissioner of Police in Lagos State, who gave the number, described the situation as pathetic and advised victims of rape to speak out and bear the shame to stop recurrence.  
  
But concerned citizens argue that rather than advise rape victims to speak out or report such cases, the causes of increase in rape cases and how to check the practice should be paramount in the agenda of stakeholders.  
  
In the light of this, perceptive observers have noted that western lifestyles have telling effects on Nigerian youths so much so that the lifestyles have increased the rate of indecent practices, including rape.  
  
A psychologist, Dr Charles Obaze, noted that when a lady dressed to seduce in the public, she might be susceptible to rape.  
  
“We see indecent dressings all over the places; social functions, weddings, churches ladies that are almost nude in the name of fashion; this behaviour promotes rape and violence against women,’’ he said.  
  
Sheikh Muhammad Bashir, the Deputy Chief Imam of Area 10 Abuja Mosque, therefore, advised the Federal Government to disallow people from indecent dressing in public places to check cases of rape.  
  
According to him, indecent dressing has become a major factor responsible for high rate of rape cases in Nigerian society.  
  
He also called on governments at all level to evolve strategies that would boost the moral value of the people in the society.  
  
But sociologists note that culture is an integral part of life that is dynamic and its changes ought to add value to the existing cultural values, rather than destroy it.  
  
Mr Femi Olopade, a sociologist, argued that in civilised countries, the law and its regulations guarantee the safety of the citizens and their lifestyles unlike in developing countries where there are no such regulations.  
  
In the absence of such laws and regulations on modes of dressing, Prof. Ishaq Akintola, the President of Muslim Rights Concern, therefore, called on ladies to avoid provocative ways of dressing and presenting themselves in the public to reduce the rate of rape cases.  
  
According to him, rape is an affront to the dignity of womanhood and should not be taken lightly.  
  
“Rape is on the increase mainly because moral bankruptcy has hit its peak; women are no longer ashamed of exposing sensitive parts of the body in public.  
  
“Even dresses which do not expose the sensitive parts are sewn so tight that no one is left in doubt about the objective.  
  
“It is the age of dress-to-kill but women forget that many of them will fall victim of rape because the dressing is seductive,’’ he said.  
  
Sharing similar sentiments, Mrs Sa’adat Babire, the Founder of Saab Foundation, appealed to all levels of governments to step up campaigns and efforts against rape and other domestic violence against women.  
  
She also advised rape victims to speak out and seek for help as the trauma if not properly handled, could last for a life time.  
  
Expressing concern that no fewer than 1,000 women were raped in Kwara in 2016, quoting the Ministry of Women Affairs in the state, Babire called on the National Assembly to make laws against rape and other violent conducts against women.  
  
She said that there should be review the laws, observing that “although there are laws against rape but they are rigid, they actually favour the rapists.  
  
“Because you have a law that says there has to be an evidence of penetration and this favours the rapist; the law needs amendment,’’ she said.  
  
In his view, a clergy, Pastor Ephraim Adeyemi, said cultural values seem to have broken down completely to the extent that some ladies did not even know what had been the African culture and practices.  
  
“So many pastors avoid preaching sermons on morality, but would rather concentrate on sermons that suggest people should be coming to church in any manner of dressing just to keep them in the congregation,’’ he observed.  
  
However, a resident of Abuja, Mrs Grace Isah, recently observed that parents should do more work on their daughters, especially the younger ones in the area of dressing.  
  
She observed further that some ladies were in the habits of wearing skimpy dresses that exposed inner parts of the body which could lead to sexual harassment from the opposite sex.  
  
She expressed concern that cases of rape were prevalent as result of the ways some ladies dressed and conducted themselves in public places.  
  
In his view, Malam Audu Haruna, an Islamic educator in Kuje, Abuja, said a woman was expected to cover her entire body with the exception of her face and hands because Islam considered the body of a female too special and important to be displayed in public.  
  
According to him, some females sometimes copy dressing modes that are alien to African culture and tradition.  
  
He, therefore, insisted that although there could be other reasons for rising cases of rape, exposure of sensitive parts of female body, especially among the youth through indecent dressings, is a one of the major causes of increase in rape cases and sexual harassment.(NANFeatures)