Ekiti randy teachers

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Ekiti randy teachers  
  
•44 years in jail without option of fine will serve as deterrence to others  
  
For Gbenga Ajibola (43), and Ayodele Olaofe, (52), their career as teachers ended on Tuesday when an Ekiti High Court sentenced them to 44 years in prison for rape of two minors and gross abuse of office. They committed the offences in 2019. The victims were lured to a hotel where the crimes were committed.  
  
For Justice Adeniyi Familoni, the presiding judge, “the defendants, seared their minds and mulled the voice of conscience as they took advantage of the victims with reckless abandon; they deserve severe sanctions for their misdeeds to serve as a warning to others who may want to follow in their footsteps”.  
  
He gave them no option of fine.  
  
The alibi of political witch-hunt by the two teachers was not enough to free them from the clutches of the law.  
  
We commend the successful prosecution of this case in a country with very high incidents of sexual violence, especially against minors, some of which often do not get enough reportage or even successful prosecution.  
  
Ekiti State stands out in the fight against sexual violence, with the prompt establishment of the Sexual Violence Register which documents names of perpetrators of sexual violence in the state. This is one of the legacies of the former Ekiti State First Lady, Erelu Olabisi Fayemi, whose tireless fight for gender justice and human rights is well documented.  
  
Again, this case, to us, highlights the fact that sexual violence in schools is not limited to tertiary institutions. There have been several reports of sexual violence happening even in primary schools.  
  
In 2019, Adegboyega Adenekan, a supervisor in one of the Chrisland schools was jailed for 60 years, for sexually violating a two years and eleven months old child. Again, kudos to the Lagos State Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences agency that prosecuted the case successfully.  
  
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Sexual violence is a global issue, but we feel that the only solution is a concerted effort of the people and law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to do the needful to stem the tide by making sure that the laws are implemented.  
  
In this Ekiti case, we must commend the mother of the victim who possibly took up the case when her daughter reported the persistent harassment by one of the teachers on her daughter. She possibly damned the fear of stigmatisation by the society that often victimises victims, to seek justice. For too long, suspects rely on such social misnomers to perpetrate evil.  
  
We equally commend the judiciary in Ekiti State for standing tall with the government’s fight against sexual violence. To successfully prosecute this case is commendable and will inspire a lot of the other states to step up. On the part of the schools, there must be more vigilance and sexual education of children at all stages, about the possible clues of lasciviousness in predators. There must be departments that handle reports without victimising the victims.  
  
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We however feel that the two minors in this case must also be cautioned for falling into such sexual situation. While the teachers abused their power and office, the two girls willingly went to meet them. The fact that one of the girls reported being given N200 to wear mufti and go wait at a filling station where she met the second girl and thereafter proceeded to a hotel is very telling. They were minors but not toddlers. Why did they not raise the alarm at the instructions of the teachers?  
  
While we condemn the actions of the teachers, we must point out some gaps in the actions and inactions of the girls too.  
  
Here, we must, through this address the parenting gaps. Mothers especially must be very sincere in guiding their children, particularly the girls who are more susceptible to being sexually abused. Parents must be thorough and deliberate to tell the girl-child about the red flags in male behaviour. There must be clear teachings about how to avoid the pitfalls like accepting monetary or material inducements. Raising the alarm when inappropriately being touched by men, and totally avoiding being alone with older males in isolated environments helps.  
  
Accepting to go wait for your male teacher at a filling station, going with another girl with two male teachers into a hotel is a bit of deliberate acquiescence. While the law recognises their ages as minors, at 17 and 15 years, they are not too young to refuse such instructions.  
  
While we don’t intend to blame victims, we also want realistic acceptance of errors by both parents and victims. Sometimes, victims’ actions and inactions, especially with no proofs of influences like being drugged, facilitate abuses. We hope this incident enhances the curriculum of our schools to include clear sex education to prevent such incidents.