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## Perceptions of the Social Consequences of Rape in Ezinihitte-Mbaise, Imo State, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** Rape is a criminal act of obtaining sexual consent or submission forcefully or by use of threat. In many places, the scar of rape is perceived to be permanent and the female victims are usually stigmatized. The paper examined the perceptions of the social consequences of rape in Ezinihitte-Mbaise, Imo State, Nigeria. The paper is anchored on feminist theory, Marxian theory and rational choice theory. The sample size and study participants were 324 adult residents of the area. They were selected using multi-stage sampling procedure and purposive sampling technique. Questionnaire and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) were the quantitative and qualitative instruments of data collection used in the study. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and interpreted in tables of frequency/percentage distributions. Transcription of the recorded electronic and field note interviews provided data for the qualitative analysis. The result amongst others revealed that 20.3% of the respondents were of the view that stigmatization; withdrawal from social activities (18.6%), delay in getting married (25.2%) were notable social consequences of rape. However, the paper concluded that stigmatization or possible avoidance of marrying rape victims sustains the trauma and would also serve as a secondary victimization. It therefore recommended amongst others that government in partnership with NGO's should embark on adequate sensitization campaigns in rural areas to discourage stigmatization and thereby reorientate many on the wrong notion that rape scar remains with the victims for life. Females should avoid walking unaccompanied in the night and visiting of acquaintances at lonely places.

**KEY WORDS:** *perception, rape, sexual assault, social consequences, victim.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Sexual assault has a devastating effect on victims' social and physical health as survivors often experience rejection, stigmatization and even suicidal thoughts. Rape is a prevailing form of sexual assault; hence it is a criminal act of obtaining sexual consent or submission forcefully or by use of threat. In different places, rape is an ever present danger and the reality is not if, but when one will fall a victim (Ibekwe & Obiajulu, 2017).

Research has shown that rape victims are mostly females and 9% males, with 99% of the perpetrators being the males (Whatley as cited in Peter & Olowa, 2010). Statistically, the Department of Justice recorded about 212, 190 cases of rape in the United States as at 2006 (Peter & Olowa, 2010). In India, Olupohunda (2013) argued that a woman is being raped every 20 minutes, hence New Delhi was rated the 'rape capital of the world' by Ford Foundation. According to Peter and Olowa (2010), while South Africa has the highest child and baby rape in the world with about 67, 000 cases reported as at 2000; Nigeria has 10, 079 between 2001 to 2005, which the most affected females were aged 16-45years.

However, rape affects the body, mind and soul of the victims. It damages the humanity of the victim and dehumanizes our society. Aside the physical and psychological implications, there are also social consequences associated with rape (Esere et al, 2009). It could be total withdrawal, social exclusion or self isolation, difficulty for the victim to get married, suffering in silence, taunting etc ('Rape Victims', 2004). Additionally, Medecins San Frontieres (MSF, 2004) observed that most women are abandoned to fend for themselves in cases of divorce as a result of rape. Moreso, victims of sexual assault (rape) are 3 times more likely to suffer depression, 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol, 26 times more likely to abuse drug and 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide (Rape Abuse and Incest National Network: RAINN, 2009). In patriarchal societies, the girls are socialized to be passive, nurturing and receptive of male domineering attitudes. Consequently, they appear less likely to challenge men's aggression, even in sexual molestation.

In recent times, Ezinihitte-Mbaise has been in the media over rape related issues. On the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012, a mother of five in Umunama village of Ezinihitte-Mbaise was reportedly raped in the night by three-man gang before abducting her two children (Akpor, 2012; Eweka, 2012). Similarly, in Itu autonomous community, a grand-mother of 95-years-old was allegedly raped for the third time and the nonchalant attitude of the police when the first incident was reported discouraged the grandson from reporting subsequent ones. The suspect was said to be arrested and later released same day and the matter closed like that (Attah, 2014). Again, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, 2014 a 16-year-old female house-help of a pastor in Oboama, Ezinihitte-Mbaise was reportedly raped right at the church by a 27-year-old young man and that act was said to raise uproar in the community. Notable community leaders described that as a sacrilege and called for immediate prosecution of the matter (Adibe, 2014). In view of the aforementioned and other unreported cases due to fear of stigmatization, protection of family name, loss of confidence in the criminal justice system and possible delay in getting married; the study examines the perceptions of the social consequences of rape in Ezinihitte-Mbaise, Imo State, Nigeria. However, it is hypothesized that rape victims are less likely to get married in Ezinihitte-Mbaise than those who are not.

## II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

### Rape

Rape has been a subject of considerable controversy in terms of its definition. Aniete (as cited in Kujenya, 2013, p:69) sees rape as a “skillful humiliation and display of complete domination of the person being raped in which case, the victim, mostly a female, feels helpless, terrified and very much alone and vulnerable. According to Igbo (2007), rape refers to the use of threat or force by a man to have sexual relationship with a woman, meaning it is impossible for a woman to rape a man. However, Stevens (as cited in Ashameri, 2014) argued that rape is an act of using power, manipulation or force to intimidate, humiliate, exploit, degrade or control another sexually.

In a more succinct view, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2013) defined rape as the penetration, no matter how slight of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person without the consent of the victim. This implies that rape could occur within same sex, among couples and even against animals (bestiality). Thus, the obsolete view of rape as the unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman or girl without her consent or her consent obtained by force, threat or fear of harm as enshrined in CAP 77, Criminal Code, Law of Federation of Nigeria, 1990 should be reviewed to accommodate contemporary sexual realities. This is because we have had cases where women raped the men, but not as frequent as the opposite. Just in October 2015, a 40-year-old South Korean woman was reportedly arraigned in court for locking her husband inside their home for 29 hours and forced him to have sex with her (Stanton, 2015). In Zamfara State, Nigeria three ladies were arraigned before a Sharia court in Gusau for allegedly raping a ‘man-o-war’ volunteer in a programme organized for female students until he lost consciousness (Kujenya, 2013, p.38).

### *Social Consequences of Rape*

These are the relational consequences of rape that could be detrimental to either the victim, perpetrator or even the society in general. They may include but not limited to withdrawal of rape victims from public or social activities, taunting of the victim, refusal to marry rape victims or delay in marriage, stigmatization, suicide or suicidal thoughts, reprisal attack on rapists etc. As observed by Oli (2012), when Mailer made his controversial statement that a little rape is good for a man’s soul, he probably understated its consequences. According to Notgrass and Newcomb in Fanflik (2007), despite legal reforms, educational efforts and the increasing public attention, sexual violence has garnered in recent times and little is known regarding the initial or aftermath effects on a victim’s adjustment to the experience.

According to Kujenya (2013), American criminologists observed that emotional damage of child rape often leads to girls growing up into lives of prostitution, crime and desolation or even promiscuity. To them also, low self-esteem could result, while at the other end of the condition in which a woman is incapable of enjoying sex. Buttressing the point, they posit that some die during or after the rape, others remain traumatized for life. Some contract Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD’s) like HIV/AIDS etc, others even bleed to death. In many cases, unwanted pregnancies and babies result, some of the pregnancies lead to crude abortions that cause permanent damage (Naaeke, 2006 as cited in Esere et al, 2009). In addition, the rampage of this epidemic has continued to wreck havoc in the society as it either kills or leaves its victim physically and psychologically traumatized (Ashameri, 2014). According to Campbell (2013), rape is a social problem that could easily lead to suicide or suicidal attempt. She noted that a gang raped female student survivor was rescued and hospitalized as she tried to hang herself. Another sexually assaulted female student by multiple young men who took photos and circulated them in the social media committed suicide as she became devastated and hopeless. The social media was identified by Campbell as a contributory factor to this. Rape gives a whole new meaning when images and slurs are posted, forwarded and spread endlessly online.

Beside the physical and psychological trauma caused by sexual violence, a raped woman often is stigmatized by the community and sometimes even rejected by her husband (MSF, 2004). The report further stated that a husband who is too ashamed and afraid to lose his honour may allow the woman to stay. However, the woman is daily subjected to anger of the husband which he usually expresses physically or mentally by reminding her of the event whenever tension arises between them. This is tantamount to breaking of a marriage.

In addition, rape could lead to inferiority complex, health hazards and even destroy the victim's future, especially those emotionally weak or lacking counseling (Okoye & Oporum, 2011). It also has incalculable costs to present and future generations and it undermines human development (UNAIDS, UNICEF & USAID, 2002 in Esere et al, 2009). It limits a woman's personal growth, her productivity, socio-economic roles and her physical or psychological health, aspirations and achievements are powerfully inhibited (Wengi et al, 2008; Esere et al 2009). More so, MSF (2004) noted that many female victims of rape found themselves in economic hardship once their husbands isolate or divorce them and they are left to fend for themselves. Compounded by the patriarchal institutionalized inequality, women tend to face untold social and economic hardship or violation, due to male dominance (Morolake, 2003).

Furthermore, there is the problem of incarceration and rapists awaiting trial. On a given day about 234,000 offenders convicted of rape or sexual assault are under the care, custody or control of correctional agencies (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999). This is contributing to the issue of congestion with its burden on the correction agencies. In Kano (Ahmad, 2015), Enugu (Nwannekanma et al, 2014) and some other places in Nigeria, rapists are said to await trials in police or prison custodies. It is equally a burden to the government to feed and accommodate them. They contribute to the overstretching of these confinement facilities which are already accommodating more than its capacities.

Rape could equally cost a perpetrator of his professional career. In England for instance, Addley (2015) noted that Ched Evans's football career was brought to a halt as a court convicted and sentenced him to five years imprisonment for raping a 19-year-old lady he met in a night out. Having completed the prison terms, his prospect of returning to football was not sure as negative reactions trail any possible move to reinstate him. Addley argued that almost 150,000 people signed a petition on *Change.org* urging his club not to reinstate the player, saying that to do so would be a great insult to the woman who was raped and to all women like her who have suffered at the hands of rapists. According to Addley, rape threats were made on Twitter against television presenter Judy Finnegan and her daughter as she provoked outrage of protest during a broadcast that the player should be allowed to retake his place since he had served his sentence and that Evans was not violent, pointing that the victim was drunk. The problem therefore is that by the virtue of his profession, Evans was a campaigner of 'Say No' to violence against women and racism'. The public therefore appear to be uncomfortable seeing the footballer back to a large platform to promote the same campaign he was convicted of. Russell (as cited in Addley, 2015) thereby called on football clubs to make clear statements condemning sexual violence and to enlighten and educate fans about the meaning of consent and respect in relationship.

There is also the issue of modifying and abandoning of what has over the years become a way of life in some quarters. In Nigeria for instance, the culture of night travels or vigils are gradually affected by insecurity. Fear of rapists and incessant attacks of the Boko Haram and other men of the underworld are therefore altering these in most parts of the country, especially the north-eastern part. In a recent online video and report by Human Rights Watch, Nigerian women escapees narrate their rape ordeal and abuse of girls abducted by Boko Haram insurgents (Premium Times, 2014). The fear of the terror group is therefore altering patterns of movement as people are now very much conscious of means and where they go to. The communal cultural way of life Nigerians were known for is gradually eroding and what is prevailing is individualism as people; especially young girls are embracing the orientation (culture) of avoiding unknown persons and even to be careful in their dealings with the opposite sex. This is in turn affecting people of goodwill or in need of direction or assistance. This is a problem attributable to fear of the unknown. Additionally, the alien culture of using security personnel during church services has become the order of the day due to several attacks, massacre and even raping of female worshippers in most northern states (Maduabuchi, 2015). In the views of Onwukeme (2014), the act of rape has equally made many married career women not to engage the services of female house helps in their homes anymore; they rather prefer to bring their husband's relatives to stay with them.

However findings of the study by Wengi, Phoko, Letshwiti and Ntswanenge (2008) in Botswana on the economic, social and situational factors that contribute to girl-child abuse indicated that out of the 95 key informants sampled, 15% were of the view that the major consequence of rape is the wide spread of 'HIV/AIDS' based on the erroneous belief by men in the country that engaging in sexual intercourse with a girl-child will not only ensure that they do not get infected, but also that they are cured if positive. Others (15%) held the view that rape leads to 'frequent divorces and increased number of single-parent families', while 13% of the respondents were of the view that sexual abuse of the girl-child is a great socio-economic exploitation. Similarly, Essere et al (2009) conducted a study in Lagos State, Nigeria which tried to ascertain the causes and consequences of intimate partner rape. The study employed qualitative approach in collecting data from

experiences of 22 respondents. The result showed that consequences of intimate partner rape include physical injury (31.87%); constant headache (27.27%); sleep disturbances (18.18%); excessive fear and anxiety (9.09%); suicidal ideation (9.09%) and hatred for men (4.55%).

Furthermore, Peter and Olowa (2010) carried out a study that examined the causes and incidences of rape amongst middle aged and young adults in Ojodu, Lagos state, Nigeria. The study utilized the descriptive cross-sectional approach. The findings revealed that out of the 100 respondents sampled, 92% were of the view that unwanted pregnancy is a major consequence of rape, 90% of the respondents linked it to self-withdrawal, while 78% were of the view that rape leads to stigmatization and self-blame. Ward et al (1991) undertook a research survey in Durham, United States. The study aimed at finding the level of prevalence and consequences of acquaintance rape in the college social scene. A total of 623 respondents were sampled and the findings showed that 57% of the respondents were of the view that rape leads to psychological injury and 15% attributed it to taunting.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The study is anchored on the feminist theory, Marxian theory and rational choice theory. The theories are suitable and relevant in explaining the topic of discuss.

#### ***Feminist Theory***

The strand of feminist theory used in this study is liberal feminism. Liberal feminism explains gender inequalities in social and cultural parameters (Charles, 2005; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014). They traced the root cause of women's oppression in patriarchal gender relations as opposed by legal systems. The theory seeks to challenge this arrangement by rejecting standard gender roles and male oppression. The emphasis focused on establishing and protecting equal opportunities for women through legislation and other democratic means, as against radical feminists who call for an overthrow of existing system (Giddens in Charles, 2005, p.290).

On gender oppression, they describe women's situation as the consequence of a direct power relation between them and men, in which the latter (males) have fundamental and concrete interests in controlling, using and oppressing the former (females) in the display of dominance (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014). They also traced women situation to structural oppression in the society. According to Ritzer and Stepnisky, these are structures of patriarchy, capitalism, racism, and heterosexism; they locate enactments of oppression in the interplay of these structures as they mutually reinforce each other. These oppressions towards women are often expressed through sexual harassments both within and outside the home. A husband feeling ownership and entitlement to sexual gratification violates his wife and those institutionalized structures of patriarchy had never questioned that as a pervasion.

On tackling the issue of gender inequality, liberal feminists posit that men and women are not only situated in the society differently but also unequally (Morolake, 2003). They further argued that women get less of the material resources, social status, power and opportunities for self-actualization than the men who share their social location (Charles, 2005). Female passiveness is seen as the social construct of the patriarchal society in order to keep the female folks on perpetual control and exploitation (Rape online, 2014), thus, very consequential in their relation with the opposite sex.

#### ***Marxian Theory***

Karl Marx (1818-1883), a Jewish revolutionary writer and materialism ideologist is the lead icon of this school of thought. Others are Ralph Darendorf, Lewis Coser etc. The Marxian theory is based on the premise that women are sexually violated because the human society is unequally structured. The doctrine of class struggle is the cornerstone of Marxian thought. The theory states that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of struggle between two opposing classes. One of the contemporary paradigm shift of this school is that power and economic privileges are at the base of social relations and its distribution is unequal and coercive (Wallace & Wolf, 1991). The males are seen as the oppressors of the females (exploited class) in social relation for sexual gratification. Women are not only seen to be oppressed or exploited economically, but also deprived control of their body (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014; Charles, 2005).

Here, rape was examined at a certain developmental stage of the human society when capitalism has set in and removed from family the sentimental vale and has replaced family relationship with monetary relationship. Many who are biologically matured and desired to marry are therefore constrained by economic resources. They find it difficult to marry because of the poor material condition of their existence. In other words, rape can be a reaction to one's position in the historically determined mode of production. Looking at the social relationship in Ezinihitte-Mbaise, it is evident that the existing endogenous cultural values are no longer restraining rapists. The new value system is money and no longer the respect of inherited conduct norms. As a result of graft and bribery, the police are seen to turn their face the other way round as though nothing bad has happened, thus rapists are moving freely in perpetrating rape.

Due to this same prevailing value and loss of confidence in the law enforcement agents, people feel reluctant to report to existing methods of social control and many parents equally compromise by resorting to money settlement in such a heinous crime. There could also be intra-class relational struggle or violation in the society and not necessarily between two opposing classes as proposed by Marx. Considering the emerging debate over same sex marriage, it is possible for gay (male to male and female to female) rape to occur. Unlike Marx, the perceived weaker vessel or oppressed class in this sexual relation (females) could turn to be the oppressors and even rape the men. Hamlin (2005) noted that men fall victims for the same reasons as women; overwhelmed by threats or acts of physical and emotional violence.

### ***Rational Choice Theory***

Rational choice theory, also known as choice theory or rational action theory is a framework for understanding and often formally modeling social and economic behavior. Hayward (2007) traced its origin to the eighteenth century 'classical ideas of Cesare Beccaria (1764-1963) and Jeremy Bentham (1789-1982), who were inspired by the then radical utilitarian philosophies of Locke and Hume. The theory assumes that an individual has preferences among the available choice alternatives that allow them to state which option they prefer. These preferences are assumed to be complete (the person can always say which of the two alternatives they consider preferable or that neither is preferred to the other) and transitive (Wikipedia, 2017).

The rational choice theory involves the belief that crime is a direct result of the choices made by offenders based on their personal perceptions and calculations of the risks and rewards or benefits to be gotten from that (Brown, 2013). He noted that it is often said the offenders commit without much long-term thought or planning and that offenders choose their victims/targets on the chances of getting caught (risks and rewards). This theory suggests and shows that offenders put a lot more effort and thought into the crime than in actuality or consequences. The crime is usually performed to meet the specific needs of the offender. In this case, it could be the choice or desire for sexual gratification by the perpetrator, while on the victim's part it could be to discipline or deal with the lady. Whichever way, it is assumed to be a choice.

Brown further argued that the offender is usually preoccupied by the desire for short-term, simple benefits with little cost and accessibility, rather than thinking critically on long-term implications and rational thought. Sexual assault therefore appears more important in the moment than getting caught or going to prison at a later date. Elements of opportunity such as being with a female acquaintance in a lonely or dark place, and (or) unguarded behaviour of the target who may be walking unaccompanied in the night could explain why people rape or become victim. The possibility of being a perpetrator or victim of rape in these instances could therefore be perceived as a choice based on the opportunistic situation on ground.

### **III. MATERIALS/METHODS**

Ezinihitte-Mbaise Local Government Area (LGA) is in Imo State, Nigeria and was created in 1993. It is a congruent of two areas, 'Ezi and Ihitte'. The following communities made up Ezi na Ihitte: Akpodim, Amaumara, Chokonaeze, Eziagbaogu, Umunama, Ife, Ihite, Itu, Obizi, Okpuofe, Onicha, Owutu, Oboama and Udo. Ezinihitte-Mbaise lies within Latitude 5.5<sup>0</sup> and longitude 7.3<sup>0</sup> people in this area usually experience dry season from December to late February; while raining season starts from April through September. Ezinihitte-Mbaise is a predominantly Igbo-speaking society, with English as the official language. Majority of the people are Christians of different denominations, but mostly Catholicism and a very small proportion that practice traditional African religion. The people are mainly farmers, artisans, traders and public servants. They are widely known to be very enterprising, hard-working and hospitable (Wikipedia, 2014; Osuji, 2014).

The population of Ezinihitte-Mbaise is put at 92,462 (National Population Commission-NPC, 2006). The study participants were adult residents, aged 18-years and above. A sample size of 324 was used and multi-stage sampling procedure which involved successive random sampling was employed in selecting communities, villages, households and individual respondents. Therefore, 162 households were randomly selected from six autonomous communities. In each of the households, two participants (a male and female) were selected, making a total of 324 study participants. Three In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) were conducted on a community leader, police and social welfare officer. This limitation of choice was based on the fact that these categories of persons do handle related cases of sexual offences. The first author and a research assistant conducted the interviews which provided the qualitative data that complemented that of the quantitative.

Structured set of questionnaire and in-depth interviews guide were the major instruments used for data collection. Face and content validation were carried out on the instruments by two research experts. The first part of the questionnaire covered the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the other part consisted of general questions on the social consequences of rape. However, out of the 324 questionnaires administered, 18 copies were discarded and were not part of the analysis and 306 copies which represent 94% response rate were retrieved and used for analysis.

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire were edited, coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The qualitative data generated from the interviews were content analyzed and the thematic views as collected from proceedings of the interviews were extracted and used to complement the quantitative findings.

#### IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/DISCUSSION

The majority (51.6%) of the respondents 158 were males and 148 (48.4%) females. Their average age mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) was 37; meaning that many of the respondents fell within the range of 34-49 years. Majority 158(51.6%) of them were married, while 129(42.2%) were single, 17 (5.5%) widowed, separated and divorced were 1(.3%) respectively. However, the educational level of the highest participants was SSCE/GCE 114(37.3%), and this was followed by 108(35.3%) that had First School Leaving Certificates (FSLC); implying that they were knowledgeable or literate to answer research questions. Others HND/BSc. 45(14.7%), NCE/OND 29(9.5%), MSc./PhD. 6(2.0%) and just 4(1.3%) that had no formal education. They were virtually Christians 287(93.8%), with just 13 and 6 of them that were African traditionalists and atheists respectively. None was a Muslim. It is not surprising having close to 95% of the respondents as Christians since the study was conducted in Mbaize, which is predominantly a Christian community. More still, a good number of the respondents 105(34.3%) were into business/trading, and 51(16.7%) were unemployed. Those into civil service were 33(10.8%), farming 22(7.2%), artisans were 8(2.6%) and others into various forms of occupation were 19(6.2%).

Furthermore, the findings showed that stigmatization 62(20.3%) is a prevailing consequence of rape in the area. This was followed by withdrawal from social activities 57(18.6%). Others are emergence and proliferation of community watch (14.1%), unwanted pregnancy (9.8%), females' avoidance of the opposite sex (9.5%), hatred for law enforcement agents (7.5%), reprisal attack (7.2%), death (6.9%). Additionally, 69(22.5%), believe it leads to STD's, Abortion 100(32.5%), delay in getting married 77(25.2), suicide or suicidal attempt 33(10.8%), while incarceration and its burden on corrective agencies were 27(8.8%).

Corroborating the quantitative result, data from the qualitative interviews indicate that rape could lead to infection, emotional swing, and also affects social life as females will be cautious of whom they walk or relate with. There is also the problem of delay in getting married, because men will always like to raise their egos high when it comes to marital issue. Most men will be reluctant to marry a female victim of rape. Where they even unknowingly marry the person and along the line know, they might always use it as a point of abuse against wives whenever there is misunderstanding (Social Welfare Officer, *female*). Again, there are social and legal consequences. Legally, the perpetrator may be sentenced to imprisonment or incarceration. A victim's social status may be downgraded or taunted with derogatory comments (Police officer; Community Leader).

However, the hypothetical result shows that rape is statistically significant to victims delay in getting married at  $p > .091$  level of significance. This suggests that the chance of marrying a perceived rape victim in Ezinihitte-Mbaize is very narrow. This is not surprising in a patriarchal society like Ezinihitte-Mbaize where the scar of rape is perceived to be permanent. This finding differs with others as none appears to have looked at how perception of rape victims could delay them from getting married on time. The findings align with that of Kujenya (2013), Wengi *et al* (2008), Kawu (2013), Campbell (2013), Peter and Olowa (2010) who separately found stigmatization, unwanted pregnancy, death and suicidal attempt as prevailing consequences of rape. Akodugha (2015) reported that business and relaxation activities in Mbaize have been greatly affected since the discovery of the unclad corpse of a female rape victim in the area. Theoretically therefore, it is clear from the Marxian and feminist perspectives that females are at the receiving end of social relations in the society. Again, the tenet of the rational choice theory is validated as the act of perpetrating rape or being victimized could be a choice based on an opportunity or the unguided social habit of walking alone in the dark and lonely places.

#### V. CONCLUSION

In spite of several attempts and efforts by government and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to control the high rate of rape in the society, the problem still persists in Imo state in particular and the other parts of the country. Rape is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the society. The criminal justice system particularly the police, do not handle cases of rape properly rather they regard it as a trivial issue thereby encouraging perpetrators of rape.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for policy implementation;

1. Government in partnership with NGO's should embark on adequate sensitization campaigns in rural areas to discourage stigmatization and thereby reorientate many on the wrong notion that rape scar remains with the victims for life.
2. Females should avoid walking unaccompanied in the night and visiting of acquaintances at lonely places.

3. Law enforcement agents should partner with local authorities in providing adequate security, especially at night. This is because an unsecured society is a safe haven for rapists.
4. Where rape is identified, the social welfare officers and social workers should give the victim necessary support (medically, legally and even materially) and counseling services to help them to cope with the trauma and reinstate their sense of belonging.
5. Females should also be trained by parents not to enter vehicles belonging to strangers all in the name of giving them free ride. They may fall victims to these people who parade themselves as good Samaritans.
6. Females should be encouraged by parents, guardians, teachers and other members of the society to dress decently since indecent dressing attracts the attention of rapists.

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