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Gender, transitional justice and development

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Abstract

The study investigates the experience of sexual abuse, the right of women in sexual relationship and the prevalence of sexual violence among them. Using survey research design, a total number of 1,000 women were selected. Data was collected using a self constructed questionnaire. The research instrument has a construct correlation co-efficient of 0.762. Data was analysed using t-test, bar chart, frequency counts and percentage. The result of the analyses revealed that women experience sexual abuses. A significant difference in the decision making opportunities by men and women was observed. It was recommended that women's right must be protected.

Keywords: Safe sex, gender based violence, sexual violence, subordinate status, sexual rights.

1. Introduction

Nigerian women are critical partners in the sustenance of social, economic, religious and cultural well being of their communities. However, the status accorded to women in Nigeria is low (Dankelem & Davidson, 1997). Women play the second fiddle when men lord it over women. Men have more opportunities in reproductive issues in Nigeria. (Akanle, 2008).

Reproductive issues are not only about gender but about justice and human right. There is growing evidence that the reproductive health, pertaining to women needs attention. It seems most women find it difficult to say no to their husband when it concerns unprotected sex. In the Nigerian culture, it is hard for a wife to say no to her husband, most women do not have a say in safe sex issues.

Numerous reports such as UNAIDS (2002) have indicated that women and girls are increasingly victims of HIV/AIDS, sexual violence and other human right abuses. Violence is a threat to human security and justice for victims is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and human security.

Elisberge (1997) observed that women social, cultural and economic subordinate statuses further contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Extreme poverty often forces women to turn to prostitution and denies them power to dictate safe sex. The combination of gender and culture prevents women from enjoying their human rights and makes them susceptible to HIV.

The declaration on the elimination of violence against women adopted by the UN Orientation Assembly in 1993, UNAIDS (2002) acknowledged that violence against women occurs both within the general community and within the family. Violence may be perpetrated or condoned by the state. The declaration defines gender based violence as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or in private life’.

In spite of the declaration, there seems to be growing evidence of reported cases of frequent occurrence of exposure of women to infection of HIV/AIDS by the refusal of their husband to wear condom, prevention of women from discussing issues of sexuality and reproduction and preventing the female ones from negotiating safe sex in case of rape.

2. Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, many women suffer injustice, and lack equal power to safer sex in intimate union. There are evidences of sexual violence by intimate partners against women. It is not surprising that many women suffer in silence, simply because of lack of the ability to assert their right or lack of the knowledge of their right to negotiate safe sex or because it is hard for women to say no to their husbands because of the Nigerian culture. It is only when women are given the right information and empowered to have a say in safe sex that their right can be protected. To understand the degree of decision making over the sexual rights of women and whether women experience violence, there is need for this study.

- ❖ Do women experience abuse of their rights in sexual relationship?
- ❖ What is the prevalence of sexual violence among women?

3. Hypothesis

There is a significant difference in the ability to assert one's right over sex among married men and women.

4. Methodology

The study was carried out in the six states of south-west Nigeria between January to April 2006. Survey research design was used in this study. The population consists of married women in south west Nigeria who are currently living with their husbands. A sample of 1,000 women was selected using simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected using a self constructed questionnaire titled 'Gender and transitional justice questionnaire (GTJQ)'. The questionnaire was validated using face, content and construct validities procedures. Experts ascertained that the instrument measures what was studied, using Pearson product moment correlation, a test re-test method of establishing reliability was used. The construct validity was done by correlating the test score of the administration of the (GTJQ) with that of sexual abuse of gender-based questionnaire (SAGC) using Pearson product moment correlation. SAGC is an instrument known to have an acceptable level of construct. A correlation coefficient of 0.762 was obtained, which was significant at $p < 0.05$.

Data was analysed using t-test; bar chart frequency counts and percentages. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive analysis

Question 1: Do women experience abuse of their rights in sexual relationship?

This question was answered using frequency counts and percentages of responses of women concerned with whether women experience abuse of their rights.

Table 1: Experience of sexual abuse by women

S/N	Question	Yes		No	
		Number	%	Number	%
1.	Desired of the right to use contraceptives	455	45.5	545	54.5
2.	Sexual assault	150	15	850	85
3.	Prevented from making decision about sex	356	35.6	645	64.5
4.	Sexual exploitation	288	28.8	792	79.2

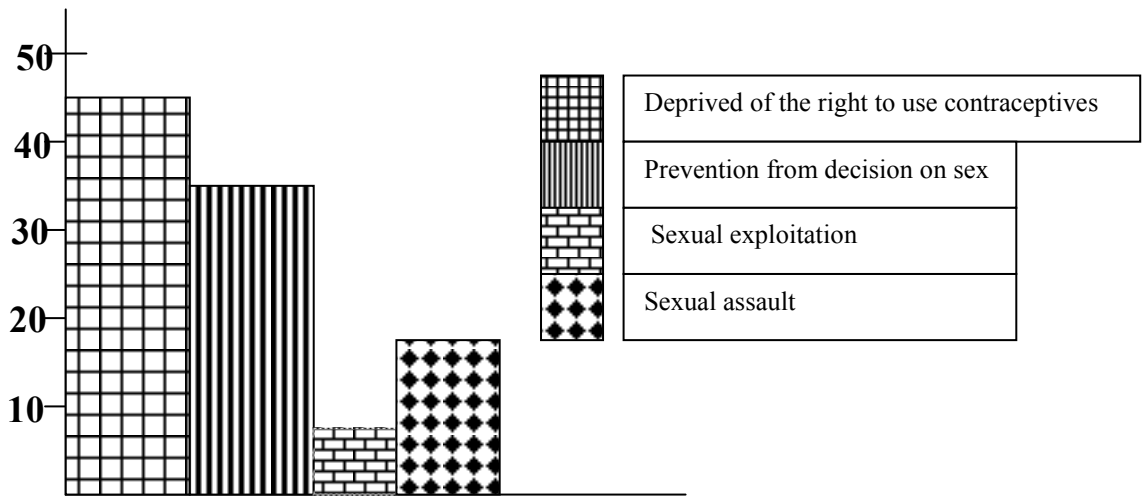
‘YES’ means ‘I have experienced sexual abuse’ ‘NO’ means ‘I have not experience sexual abuse’

Table 1 shows that women experience sexual abuse such as denial of the right to use contraceptives, prevention from decision making about sex, sexual exploitation and sexual assault.

Question 2: What is the prevalence of sexual violence among women?

To answer this question, responses of women concerned with their experience of sexual violence was used. The result of the findings is shown in the pictorial explanation of the various types of sexual violence.

Table 2:



Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference in the ability to assert ones right over sex among married men and women.

This hypothesis was tested using t-test. The score obtained by married people were subjected to t-test analysis. The result is shown on table 3.

Table 3: t-test analysis of right over sex among married men and women

Variables	Number	Mean	SD
Men	500	57.57	998
Women	496	57.57	5.111
			1.96

Provide the key to these - N, X, SD
 ‘SD’ represents ‘standard deviation’

Table 3 shows t-cal 5.111 and table 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Therefore there is a significant difference in the decision opportunity by women and men.

5. Discussion

The study investigated the experience of abuse of sexual right of women, the prevalence of it and the ability of the women to assert their sexual right as compared to men. The findings show that women experience sexual abuse such as denial of the right to use contraceptives, prevention from decision making about sex, sexual exploitation and sexual assault.

The finding of this study shows that there is a significant difference in the decision making opportunities by men and women. This finding agrees with that of Kuti (1999) and Akintoke (2006) who observed that women do not have equal opportunities in sexual matters like men and that women experience gender based violence, suffer injustice because many women do not know their right, because those who know their right might be avoiding conflict, misunderstanding or suspicion which can result if they claim their right, hence many women choose to take the risk of not claiming their right so as to avoid being labeled a non conformist or overly dominated by claiming their right. Sometimes it is hard for a woman to dictate safer sex.

6. Conclusion

Sexual violence, abuse of the sexual right of women is a violation of the sexual rights. Sexual violence has some serious implications on human security as well as justice process and human development. Violence is a threat to human security and justice for victims of violence is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and human development. Lack of the opportunity or equal opportunity concerned with sexual matter is lack of justice for women. Denial of women power to dictate safe sex is an infringement of their sexual right. Women rights must prevail so as to prevent the inevitable proliferation of such a disease such as HIV. Protecting the right of women include doing away with cultural or traditional practices that infringe on these rights. It is important that the presence of peace is important for human development. Gender violence that contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS has to be addressed and one must keep in mind that without justice there cannot be sustainable peace.

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