

Sexuality in Africa

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BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE: BALABWA'S OWN

STORY : *Balabwa is a student from Cape Town. She tested positive for HIV two years ago. "I was infected with HIV by my uncle who raped me when I was 19", she says. Photo credit : © WHO /Pieter Hugo (<http://www.who.int/features/2004/aids/en/>)*

Forced Sex and Risk of HIV Infection Among South African Youth

Neil Andersson and
Ari Ho-Foster

Religion and Violence: the Suffering of Women

Suzan Rakoczy

Should Governments Compel Citizens to Take the HIV test?

By Busangokwakhe Dlamini



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In This Issue

Editorial

- 3 Sexuality, Violence and HIV/AIDS in Africa

Feature

- 4 Forced Sex and Risk of HIV Infection Among South African Youth

Issue in Focus

- 6 Religion and Violence: the Suffering of Women

Region Watch

- 9 Sexual Violence: Developing a Culture of Accountability

Research Notes

- 11. Sexual Harassment in Nigerian Educational Settings: Preliminary Notes from a Qualitative Assessment of Lagos State University

Viewpoint

- 13 Should Governments Compel Citizens to Take the HIV Test?
- 15 Notes to Contributors Guidelines for Submissions
- 15 About the Contributors
- 16 Web Resource on Sexual Violence



Sexuality, Violence and HIV/AIDS in Africa

Power underlines both sexuality and violence. As Baylies and Bujra [1] rightly opine: The hegemony of masculine definitions of sexual behaviour has become a problem for women. It is for men's pleasure and under men's control that sexual acts primarily occur and women generally have little to say. In other words, many women's experience of the sexual act has violent connotations. Building on the above and given the predominance of heterosexual transmission of HIV, it clearly appears that from a woman's perspective, sexuality, violence and HIV/AIDS are, sadly, intimately related.

At the macro level, the politics of sexuality and the social and moral battles to control human sexuality have regularly led to different forms of violence. In the last few decades, sexuality has increasingly been linked to violence; violence perpetrated on the one hand by those who want to enforce some forms of sexual morality and culture-linked sexuality, and on the other hand, by individuals and groups attempting to impose, defend or enforce their identity and power.

If anything, HIV/AIDS has brought to the public domain what may be termed an "African sexuality". With the continued spread of the virus, understanding human sexuality appears to be crucial for effectively addressing the pandemic.

Hegemonic masculinity and over-moralisation seem to frame responses to HIV/AIDS in Africa. Reaction to AIDS has been a concern about the perceived changing patterns of (hetero)sexuality and some sexual practices; namely 'the younger generations' perceived promiscuity, sex work and 'moral degradation'. However, what the fight against HIV/AIDS has brought seems to be more a revitalization of hegemonic masculinity and a deeply gendered moralization of sexual practice. As recent data have shown, the feminisation of HIV/AIDS is certainly more than a side effect of misguided policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS, and points to the misunderstanding of sexuality and the prevailing hegemonic masculine

approaches to sexuality.

There is arguably no other area where violence is persistently and regularly expressed than in human sexuality. Violence is used to control individual and particularly women's behaviour to ensure chastity, abstinence or copulation. The social and macro-economic contexts do also conspire in the promotion or tolerance of violence and infringements on reproductive and sexual rights. Hence poverty, insecurity and increasing fundamentalisms are breeding sexual violence. Conversely, poverty, gender-based violence, homophobia and conflicts are fuelling the spread of HIV.

There is therefore a need to break the link between Sexuality, Violence and HIV/AIDS. Breaking this link requires an informed policy and actions at family, community and state levels. Systematic and meticulous data collection and methodologically sound research on violence are needed if we are to comprehend and address this violation of human rights.

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Violence is used to control individual and particularly women's behaviour to ensure chastity, abstinence or copulation



1

Feature

Forced Sex and Risk of HIV Infection Among South African Youth

By Professor Neil Andersson, Scientific Director of Centro de Investigación de Enfermedades Tropicales (CIET), Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, Acapulco, Mexico and Ari Ho-Foster, Research Associate, CIET Trust, South Africa

Forced Sex Widespread

The mechanical basis for a link between HIV infection and forced sex is easy to understand: lacerations increase transmission of the virus [1, 2, 3, 4].

Forced sex is common in South Africa. Even using face-to-face interviews (a scenario in which many people would be unwilling to share their experiences), the Reproductive Health Research Unit (RHRU) 2003 study found 10% of females aged 15-24 years were forced to have sex [5].

Anonymous self-administered questionnaires allow more people to disclose. In 2002, CIET collected data from 269,705 school-going youth at 1,400 schools across the country. Overall 9% of male and female school-goers aged 10-19 years said they had been forced to have sex in the year prior to the study. Under the age of 15 years, male school-goers were more likely to report forced sex than were females of the same age, possibly because unwanted pregnancies reduce the number of abused girls in school. Rates of abuse climbed rapidly with increasing age of female school-goers, whereas it levelled out in males [6].

Forced Sex and HIV

To be sure about the relevance of forced sex to HIV infection, one

would have to know the details about the specific sexual contact when infection happened. This is difficult for obvious reasons. One type of circumstantial evidence is the female/male difference in HIV rates. RHRU found HIV prevalence rates much higher among women than men aged

15-24 years (16% compared with 5%). They noted a dramatic increase in prevalence rates between 15 year olds (4%) to 21 year olds (31%) [4]. These findings fit with the Mandela/HSRC 2002 study [7].

Another line of evidence links beliefs about HIV infection and sexual



Caption: High school students attend a DramAidE forum theatre performance at a high school in Kwazulu Natal, a province in South Africa with the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence. "Youth who had endured forced sex were also more likely to admit they would spread the virus if infected"

Photo credit: © 2000 Patrick Coleman/CCP, Courtesy of Photoshare



A young South African enthusiastically recounts a USAID-sponsored youth empowerment camp he attended. Empowerment programmes such as this are important for youth. A 2002 study involving 1,400 schools across South Africa found that "Overall 9% of male and female school-goers aged 10-19 years said they had been forced to have sex in the year prior to the study." Photo credit © R. Zurba/USAID.

violence. One in every three (33%) young respondents in the CIET study thought he/she was HIV positive. Those suffering forced sex were very much more likely to believe they were HIV positive, yet less likely to be willing to go for testing. And youth who believed they were HIV positive were more likely to say they would spread HIV intentionally (20% among those who believed they were infected compared with 13% who did not). Youth who had endured forced sex were also more likely to admit they would spread the virus if infected (odds ratio 2.39).

Forced sex is not the only cause of HIV infection; but the attitudes and mindset that underline the act of forced sex, the disrespect for the rights of others (for example, failure to disclose one's HIV status), all contribute to the spread of HIV.

Response to Messages

Sexual abuse may also affect the way survivors interpret education attempting to reduce their risks [8]. With South African youth regularly exposed to dozens of HIV risk awareness initiatives, planners need to understand both their impact on individual risk reduction and how a

history of abuse might further affect this.

Attractive Proposition

What would answer the question about a link between forced sex and HIV? With the impossibility of monitoring the exact nature of the sexual encounter where infection occurs, the only way is through an intervention study: reduce the rate of forced sex and the HIV incidence should fall. Although not as easy to implement as, for example, male circumcision [9], this approach has the advantage of equity (circumcision only protects men). In the worst of cases, if reducing forced sex does not reduce HIV risks, the gain would still be considerable. In the best of cases, we might reduce forced sex and HIV risk. That should be an attractive proposition.

Acknowledgement

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2

Issue
in Focus**Religion and Violence:
the Suffering of
Women**

· *By Susan Rakoczy,*
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Women singing and dancing at a religious ceremony. "The oppression of women through patriarchal social structures increases in the religious context". Photo credit: © 1999 Sammy Ndwiga, Courtesy of Photoshare

My boyfriend was a respected member of (a religious organisation) on campus... He beat me regularly... I eventually told my (religious instructor), who told me I shouldn't provoke him... and should pray for his forgiveness. [1:21]

I must show my wife the way. And if she is out of line, I must discipline her... Its (sic) my duty and responsibility, my God-given right. The man is the head of the wife. (A male pastor and activist) [1: 92].

Introduction

These quotations should shock us but probably do not because violence

against women has become pervasive in South African society, penetrating every social and economic class. The fact that this violence involves people with a strong religious commitment is not unusual [2].

The world religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam teach peace and peace-making but their adherents are frequently violent and warlike, whether on the battlefield or in the home.

This paper will discuss how patriarchy penetrates Christian belief and structures and thus undergirds violence against women.

Meaning of Patriarchy

Societies past and present are structured according to patriarchal norms [3]. Patriarchy means the 'rule of the father' and according to Rakoczy [4], Gender violence ... denotes the legal, economic and social system that validates rule by men over women; it is systemic in every aspect of society to the point where it is experienced as normal.

In patriarchy, the male is superior and women are understood to be inferior in every way. Since patriarchal structures are and have been 'the way life is', they have been considered to be ahistorical, eternal and (for religious believers), sanctioned and ordained by God. However, the 'rule of the father' need not be everlasting and feminist history and analysis has demonstrated how historically conditioned these structures are [3].

Since women are more than half the human race, how has it been possible for so many to cooperate, or be forced to cooperate, in their own subjugation? This has happened because women 'have been psychologically shaped so as to internalise the idea of their own inferiority' [3: 218]. Ties of kinship, responsibilities for children and the home, need of physical and economic protection, the lack of other opportunities in education and work,



have, until recently, exerted pressure on women to participate in their own subordination.

Religion and Violence

Nessan [5: 13] provides a useful definition of violence as: ... the attempt of an individual or group to impose its will on others through any nonverbal, verbal or physical means that will inflict psychological or physical injury.

Rene Girard [6] has analysed the intricate relationship between religion and violence. He argues that through the process of 'mimesis' or imitation we learn what is desirable from the models of behaviour around us. But this process places us in conflict; if our imitation threatens the position of our model, we become dangerous rivals.

This rivalry leads to violence of action or word or thought. In his work on primal religions, Girard determined that the force of the violence becomes so great that it needs to be unleashed – so one person is selected to be killed or banished in order to calm the community. This person is the scapegoat for the whole community's violence.

Girard [6:8] states: *The sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from its own (sic) violence: it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itself.* In these societies, the risk of violence is so overwhelming that it needs to be prevented. These measures, according to Girard (6:19): ... *naturally fall within the domain of religion, where they can on occasion assume a violent character. Violence and the sacred are inseparable.*

Girard excludes Judaism and Christianity from his mimetic theory. Lefebure [5: 19] states that the God of Israel and Jesus' Abba: ... *is not a mimetic rival of humans and does not demand sacrificial victims. Instead, God rather expresses solidarity with victims even to the point of dying on the cross.* However, violence is no stranger in Christianity.

Sexuality and Violence

Girard [6: 36] also describes the relationship between sexuality and violence. There are direct forms of violence such as abduction, rape, and various sadistic practices; these lead

to 'quarrels, jealous rages, mortal combats'. He extends his argument (6:36-37) about violence and surrogate objects to sexuality: *Like violence, sexual desire tends to fashion upon surrogate objects if the object to which it was originally attracted remains inaccessible... And again like violence, repressed sexual desire accumulates energy that sooner or later bursts forth, causing tremendous havoc.*

Use of Symbols

Violence is symbolic language. It says and does more than it realises as it harms and/or destroys its victim. The violent perpetrator may be trying to exorcise a sense of shame or inferiority or establish dominance through power. Christianity has used certain symbols to justify violence, for example the phrase 'God wills it' in the Crusades

...like violence, repressed sexual desire accumulates energy that sooner or later bursts forth, causing tremendous havoc

of the European Medieval era became a war cry.

Violence and Patriarchy

Violence is also embedded in social structures, including those of religion. Patriarchy, as an ideology and structure of domination, is a clear example of this dangerous synergy. In the private sphere of the family, patriarchy exerts its violent power (whether or not it results in actual physical violence) through social control of the women – wives and daughters – and the restriction of opportunities for education and creativity. Patriarchy also exerts its power over women through economic control, shaming and blaming.

When religious language is used to justify these patriarchal structures of oppression, which are inherently violent because they violate women's human dignity, the circle is complete.

Language and Image

Use of God language to defend the oppression of women, 'this is God's will', traps women of faith. The images of God in –Scripture and liturgical prayer are overwhelmingly male: Lord, King, Father. The oppression of women through patriarchal social structures increases in the religious context since the presumed 'maleness' of God and the male identity of Jesus are used to justify women's subordination.

The assertion of women's humanity and dignity as truly created in God's image through the work of feminist theologians is a very recent development in Christian theology.

Both Augustine of Hippo (d 430) and Thomas Aquinas (d 1274) struggled to explain how women are the image of God. Augustine (De Trinitate, 12:10 in [7]) argued that women by themselves are not the full image of God but only through their husbands.

Aquinas [7] argued that man: ... *has a natural superiority because his soul is ordered to intellectual activity, while woman, although she has a rational soul, was created to help him in the work of procreation.*

Greco-Roman Order

The letters to the Colossians and –Ephesians, begin to diminish the equality of men and women in Christ in Galatians 3:28 which states that in Christ Jesus 'there is neither male nor female' by substituting the Greco-Roman household order as the norm of Christian relationships.

Wives are told to 'be subject to their husbands as to the Lord' (Eph 5:22), since Christ is the head of the church and thus the husband is also 'the head of his wife' (5:24). The author introduces a new element in the husband-wife relationship by exhorting the husband to 'love their wives, just as Christ loved the Church' (5:25-26). Social mores prove more powerful than the equality of all men and women baptised into the new life of Christ.



Incredible Suffering

These household codes have led to incredible suffering down the centuries. Slavery was justified by literal readings of these texts. The model of headship and subordination finds fertile soil in patriarchal and hierarchical African cultures. Culture and scripture collude in women's misery and women who protest are told by their husbands that 'the Bible tells you to obey me'.

Church structures are overwhelmingly hierarchical. While women now are ordained in many Christian churches, they have not yet taken their rightful place in the leadership structures of the church in sufficient numbers in order to transform them into more collegial models.

Suffering Servants

Other Christian teachings also reinforce the power of violence. To share the sufferings of Christ is deemed a virtue and thus women have been socialised to be suffering servants (Heggen, quoted in [2]). In her study of Christian women who have experienced domestic violence, Phiri discovered that they often spiritualised their sufferings and spoke of sharing in Christ's suffering [2]. They forgave the man each time he hurt them, but this forbearance did not lead to change on the part of the abuser. Rather, the cycle of violence continued because the abuser was not held accountable for his actions.

There is Hope

There is hope because of resources within society and the Christian tradition. In society as a whole, as the extent of the problem becomes more widely known and the causes described, a private experience of violence now becomes a shared experience.

One woman's suffering is linked to the sufferings of her sisters and gradually society experiences outrage. This is beginning to happen in South Africa thanks to initiatives such as the Tamar Campaign, 16 Days of Activism against domestic violence (which runs each year from November to 10 December) and Human Rights Day.

From Outrage to Action

Imagine for a moment that a man in South Africa got raped every 26

seconds or that one in three men was battered by his partner. Would this not be a cause for a national emergency? ...So why are we so indifferent? Is it because the victims happen to be women? (Colleen Lowe Morna, *The Sunday Independent*, 24 November 2002).

Secondly, the emphasis in the South African Constitution on the equality and dignity of each human person, female and male, is a strong foundation from which to condemn domestic violence.

Thirdly, as analyses of the causes of domestic violence are exposed, it is becoming clear that the key to change is not only women's willingness to file for domestic

Culture and scripture collude in women's misery and women who protest are told by their husbands that 'the Bible tells you to obey me'

protection orders, but the necessity of a radical change in men's attitudes.

Resources for Hope

Within the Christian tradition, there are also resources for hope. The first is the example of Jesus in the Gospels who treated all people, women and men, with love and compassion. His was a community of disciples of persons equal in dignity. His injunctions to his followers to be peacemakers (Mt 5:9) and to love their neighbour as themselves (Mk 12:31) are a strong challenge to the patriarchal violence in any society.

The Galatians text (3:28) that 'there can be neither male nor female – for you are all one in Christ Jesus' does not deny the distinctions of gender but rather affirms that the believers' union with one another in Christ is the root and foundation of the life of the Christian community.

Conclusion

South African society is a violent

society and the very high level of domestic violence against women is a clear indication of this tragedy. Real and radical change begins to happen when men acknowledge their roles as perpetrators and change their attitudes and actions, and when women have the courage to say 'enough'. Clergy and other leaders of Christian communities must take the lead to denounce all forms of violence against women. The Christian churches must be active in these processes of transformation through using stories from Scripture that affirm and respect women, creating safe environments for women to tell their stories, using inclusive language in prayer and worship, and organising support groups for men to talk about the patterns of socialisation that encourage violence. Knowing the truth is the first step. Doing the truth is a lifelong journey.

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3

Region Watch

Sexual Violence: Developing a Culture of Accountability

“the condition upon which God hath given liberty to man (and woman) is eternal vigilance” John Philpot Curran July 1790

Introduction

To address the issue of accountability with reference to sexual violence one needs to be awake to the culture of mystery and silence that shrouds sexuality in most African practices and traditions. This is informed by patriarchal attitudes that allow gender-based abuse within our intimate relationships, to go on silently and unchallenged. Denial and victim blaming, which prop up and support continued gender-based oppression and violence remain deeply rooted within our consciousness, assumptions, attitudes, and actions or inaction.

The focus here will not be on the scientific definition of accountability but rather on the conventional definition of accountability and the application of its tenets to sexual violence. Accountability is defined as *“...an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one’s actions...”* (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). The questions that need to be considered here are three-pronged: Who is supposed to be accountable? What mandate do the various accountable players have? What is the gap between what is being done and what should be done?

Face of Violence

The face of sexual violence has changed over the years. In Kenya, male-to-male sexual violence is on the increase; perpetuated in situations of violent crimes such as car jacking and armed robberies. Further, whereas the legal system relies a lot on evidence; that is, the presence of spermatozoa on the survivor or victim, the practice now is such that the perpetrators use condoms and carry away with them the spermatozoa that are meant to be used as evidence. African countries need to set up

forensic departments capable of beating the rapists and abusers at their “innovative” attempts to elude justice. This is to facilitate gathering of evidence to hold perpetrators accountable.

Case Study

In January 2004, the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) completed investigations involving 118 peacekeeping personnel, including civilians and civilian police, according to Anna Shotton, DPKO’s focal point on sexual exploitation and abuse. The investigations have so far resulted in five UN staff being fired, and 68 being returned to their home countries. These include six in managerial or command positions. The process is meant to not only hold the individuals who have been involved in sexual exploitation accountable, but also to hold the commanders responsible for their failure to put the right measures in place to prevent sexual exploitation.

The UN’s response and action has been criticized for being slow since it was only at the beginning of 2004 that the UN began showing some seriousness in enforcing accountability. Nevertheless this remains a good example of how issues of accountability should be dealt with.

Who is Accountable?

States: State power in Africa is seen through the apparatus or organs of power and security. These organs operate within a patriarchal framework that upholds male values and principles and treats these as the norm. To address issues of sexual violence and to be accountable to the survivors, states need to realize that sexual abuse no longer belongs in the “private” sphere, and accountability is demanded of them because they have legitimate power and owe their legitimacy to both men and women. Further, states have to begin to

By Jacqueline Anam-Mogeni, Gender and Advocacy Advisor, SNV, Kenya and Chairperson Coalition on Violence Against Women, Kenya

adopt a rights-based approach to addressing women’s rights violations and must view women’s rights as a state obligation and not as a favour from the state. This means that resources have to be allocated to establish facilities that states can use to hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable; for example, forensic laboratories.

Civil Society Organisations: Civil society organizations in various countries have been considered progressive and radical especially in holding government agents like the police and the judiciary accountable. However, like a “double-edged” sword, the civil society organizations (just as the government apparatus) have been pretty good at blaming the victim, and others who call for accountability when sexual violence occurs.

Women rights and women empowerment organizations, and their members have received the greatest bashing. Women-led organizations who raise the issue of sexual violence have been labelled “elite”, “urbanites”, “divorcees”, “bourgeois”, and have even



Changing the Face of Violence Prevention. *The Global Campaign for Violence Prevention is transforming the way people think about health and violence. Each year, over 1.6 million people worldwide die as a result of violence. Photo credit © WHO <http://www.who.int/en/>*



been blamed for taking the civil society away from the "real" or "serious" work. The civil society organisations have therefore failed to be accountable by failing to take collective action to seriously challenge sexual abuse.

As a result, there has developed a culture of silence and indifference amongst civil society organizations on the issue of sexual violence.

Family and Community: Sexuality is not generally discussed openly in African societies. Criminal sexuality issues are even less openly discussed. It is apparent that by not addressing the issues, society in general and the criminal justice system in particular deny the extent of the problem and insulate themselves from its realities. Indeed those who force the society's attention on the subject are often deemed to be male haters, of loose morals or idlers. Cultural mores and social traditions subordinate women to male values and principles thus perpetuating a culture of abuse of women. Women and girls who suffer sexual violence have suffered double abuse within the family especially in cases of incest.

The family and the larger community have devalued women and girls through denial, silence, unwillingness to take any action and by viewing issues, acts, or patterns of sexual abuse as individual, personal or private rather than as acts requiring collective societal responses and solutions.

Some communities seek to discredit survivors and victims of abuse by isolating or discrediting persons who raise concerns and/or call for accountability. They also do this through questioning the legitimacy of the concerns, thus, failing to be accountable, especially at the level of the family.

Corporate responsibility:

Governments are not the only perpetrators of human rights violations against women. Corporations and private individuals should also be held accountable and, indeed, states have a responsibility to intervene when these entities violate rights.

Creating Accountability

There is need to institutionalise the principles of accountability at state, individual and organizational levels in both private and public organizations. For a start, civil society organizations should develop strategies and analyses that address both state and interpersonal sexual violence, particularly violence against women. Currently, activists and movements that address state violence (such as anti-prison, anti-police brutality groups) often work in isolation from groups that address domestic and sexual violence. The result is that women, who suffer disproportionately from both state and interpersonal violence, have become marginalised within the broader human rights movements.

The human rights movement has been critically important in breaking the silence around violence against women and providing much-needed services to survivors. However, the movement has increasingly relied on the criminal justice system as the front-line approach for ending sexual violence against women. It is important to assess the impact of this strategy.

Individual and Organizational Accountability

There is need to understand the impact of unequal power relations because gender oppression, abuse and sexual violence take place within the context of patriarchal (and other forms) of power. Organizations and individuals need to define certain concepts such as patriarchy, oppression, power, abuse and violence and ensure that they are on the same "page" regarding these issues. Once this is clear, then one will be better placed to address unequal power relations within the context of accountability processes and act to correct unequal power dynamics. In addition, individuals and organisations would then be able to make responsible use of the unequal power relationships which exist, and/or minimize its negative impact on the accountability process.

Survivors' Safety

The safety of survivor(s) of sexual violence should also be a priority. To enhance safety for women and girls who have suffered sexual abuse, one needs to consistently emphasize self-determination and choice over the process of accountability. (Does she want to be a central part of it? Does she want to leave the process in the hands of others while she is provided briefings and updates? How often will she be updated? Does she want specific space(s) to be provided for communication and for incorporating her input in the process? Does she want to directly meet with the abuser?). Ensuring the safety of survivors calls for an enabling socio-cultural environment. Such an environment would guarantee and protect the voice survivors and reduce stigmatisation.

Some organizations have cultures and conditions that condone sexual violence. These need to be identified and action taken to change any organizational cultures, structures, and practices which tolerate, condone, encourage or perpetrate gender oppression, abuse, and violence. This means that we have to transform organizational cultures, structures, and practices to those that prevent gender oppression, abuse, and violence; and encourage those who are survivors/victims of abuse, witnesses, and perpetrators to come forward.

Community Accountability

Sexual violence is often exercised as individual, interpersonal, and private acts. This framework keeps the blame on individual victims/survivors (and

individual abusers) and helps to keep these violations out of the public eye and outside of the boundaries of collective action and responsibility. This is erroneous because violations taking place within an organizational, constituent, or community context are also the responsibility of that collective group. To enhance accountability, the community needs to take collective responsibility to come up with principled and effective accountability processes to address sexual violence, stop it, and prevent it in the future.

In acknowledging the presence of abuse, the community needs to create an accountability process whereby the oppressor/abuser fully understands and acknowledges the impact and consequences upon the survivor/victim, their friends and family, the organization, and the community. There is need to further create accountability processes whereby the oppressor/abuser can make sincere and meaningful reparations which could include a full public apology, payment for damages and counselling, visible behavioural change, amongst others. The idea is not to focus only on the criminal justice system.

The accountability process should also include a scenario whereby the oppressor/abuser can receive and take action towards meaningful and long-term personal education regarding his or her attitudes and actions, learn alternatives to abusive attitudes and actions, and where such a person can be held accountable to a plan for long-term follow-up and monitoring which takes into account the consequences if the stated conditions are not met.

Most importantly, the overall goal for community accountability should be to transform all individuals and collective groups towards gender equity and respect for women's rights and gender equality. Further, what is critical is to initiate internal discourse around the issue by those people who are appreciated as opinion leaders or custodians of culture within the community.

Religion is a critical factor within the community that facilitates transformation and initiates change. Religion can reinforce community accountability by helping to build and heal 'fractured' communities so that these communities are in a position to hold members accountable.

State Accountability

Develop community-based responses to violence that do not rely entirely on the criminal justice system and which have mechanisms that ensure safety and accountability for survivors of sexual violence. Transformative practices emerging from local communities should be documented and disseminated to promote collective responses to violence.

A criminal justice system that over-relies on prisons is not likely to have strategies for addressing the rampant forms of sexual

(cont'd on page 14)



4

Research Notes

Sexual Harassment in Nigerian Educational Settings: Preliminary Notes from a Qualitative Assessment of Lagos State University

By Olaide A. Adedokun, Associate Professor of Sociology, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria

Introduction

Violence against women by men is widespread and may take physical, verbal, psychological, economic and other forms. Sexual harassment is one of such forms that women and girls are subjected to in varying situations.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when: (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement; (b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual

is used as the basis for employment decisions or academic decisions affecting such individual; (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment. [1]

Sexual harassment includes sexual jokes directed at women and girls, catcalls to embarrass them in public places and sexual assault and violations in places of training and work.

Sexual harassment in educational settings and the workplace (formal and informal) in Nigeria and other parts of Africa has in the last two decades received local and international attention and condemnation [2,3,4] but it remains the least understood, documented and focused on, of all forms of violence; and policies and legislation against it are yet to be put in place.

Key Questions

An identified barrier to understanding and confronting sexual harassment in educational settings in Nigeria is the absence of reliable information, and inadequate documentation of the nature and extent of the problem across educational settings. What, for example is the nature and extent of sexual harassment in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions? How widespread is it? How vulnerable are different categories of women to sexual violence and coercion? In what circumstances is sexual harassment not likely to occur? What precise forms of power (social, legal, economic) do girls and

women need to combat sexual harassment? How much of sexual choice and rights do women have and exercise in Nigeria? What elements of the culture encourage sexual violence? And how seriously implicated is sexual harassment in increasing the risk of exposure to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS?

These are crucial questions that need answers through specially designed studies as the ones conducted in Lagos State University (and five other Nigerian universities). Pilot studies were first conducted and thereafter followed by the ongoing and more comprehensive national studies undertaken by the Abuja-based Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria (NWSN).

Objectives

The objectives of the pilot study (2004) were: to establish the existence of sexual harassment in the university, determine its form and degree, document current efforts at addressing it and explore the link between it and the risk of exposure to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

Methodology

The qualitative data was obtained from focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and social mapping of the more than 30,000-strong population of the main campus of the Lagos State University. The target groups were male and female students who had spent at least one academic session in the university, academic and non-academic staff including staff of the Students Affairs Unit of the university, administrators, parents and guardians. In addition, existing documents related to the issues (University Senate records, Disciplinary Committee reports of departments and faculties) were accessed and reviewed.



A young girl applies herself to her school assignment. Many young women and girls experience sexual harassment in institutions of learning. Photo credit: © Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System



Students and staff interviewed were selected from all the faculties; and included students enrolled in part-time programmes. The discussions and interviews were centred on understanding the issues of gender violence including its occurrence; perceptions and experiences of sexual harassment; factors promoting and preventing sexual harassment; perception of perpetrators and victims, consequences and management of sexual harassment in the university.

Preliminary Findings

The findings reveal that sexual violence is associated with the physical, emotional and sexual violation of women by men in circumstances of unsolicited sexual advancement towards women; usually by an aggressive male and in an exploitative manner. Discussants and interviewees variously described it as a type of rape, sometimes preceded by and disguised as friendship but more often than not accompanied by force, intimidation, disagreement and threats. It may or may not culminate in sexual intercourse.

The data provided evidence of the prevalence of sexual harassment on the university campus, as every discussant and interviewee had either had an experience or knew of other peoples' on the university campus. There was also a general perception by respondents that sexual harassment is prevalent on most other university campuses in Nigeria. This view was based on respondents' interactions with other Nigerian students. There was also a consensus that the phenomenon had been on the increase in the last 10 years.

Forms of Harassment

The phenomenon of sexual harassment is complex, not always unidirectional, played down by all concerned, unreported and considered a serious moral and social problem on the university campus. Sexual harassment and violations on Lagos State University Campus take six main forms: male lecturers to female students (by far the commonest), male students to female students, male lecturers to female non-academic staff, male non-academic staff to female students, male lecturers (usually senior) to female academic staff and male non-academic staff to female non-academic staff.

Female students are at great risk but so also are other females in the university. The male academic staff is likely to be the main perpetrator but other males - students and non-academic staff who oversee admission, registration, record-keeping, examination registration and student disciplinary committees are all possible perpetrators of sexual violence in the university.

Promoting Factors

There are varied and complex reasons why sexual harassment thrives in Nigerian institutions of learning. Some of these are highlighted below:

(1) cost-benefit analysis in which male lecturers exploit the vulnerability of female students. For example, respondents cited the poor performance of some of the girls in tests and examinations, and inability to cope with the demands of courses registered

for as factors that put them in vulnerable positions; predisposing them to the risk of sexual harassment.

(2) Certain failures in the Nigerian educational system promote sexual harassment in the universities. For example, it was suggested that (mal)practices that repeatedly accompany the Senior Secondary School Examinations and Joint Admissions Matriculation Examinations expose university applicants (and their parents and guardians) to exploitation in the desperate bid to gain admission into Nigerian universities. Female applicants in search of 'favours' sometimes initiate or succumb to sexual relationships with males who have assisted them in various ways.

(3) Integrity, self-esteem and intellectualism were cited as virtues not properly cultivated by some lecturers, hence, they may be involved in the sexual harassment of females. The exercise and abuse of power by males in positions of authority such as lecturers, administrators, class representatives may also lead to sexual harassment of females by these authority figures

(4) The perception was that female dressing and attitudes increase their vulnerability to sexual harassment.

(5) Lack of respect for the female gender was reported as a fundamental reason for sexual harassment. This lack of respect may emanate from existing, although changing, perceptions of the status of women in the Nigerian society

Consequences

Cases of sexual harassment are not often reported for fear of victimization and stigmatisation. Some of the consequences of sexual harassment cited by respondents include anger, distrust and hatred for the male perpetrator (and possibly other males), loss of confidence and self-esteem by the female, psychological trauma and powerlessness. Sexual harassment may also lead to the contracting of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. Victims may also be unable to concentrate on their studies in which case, their schoolwork suffers. For the university, consequences of sexual harassment cited by respondents include a poor image and failure to achieve the institution's objective of graduating wholesome graduates for the Nigerian society.

Case Management

Management of sexual harassment cases was reported as poor. Discussants and interviewees said that while regulations and guidelines for managing cases do exist misconduct, these are hardly enforced as none, to their knowledge had been tried and ultimately sanctioned.

Recommendations made include the need for orientation courses to sensitise students on their rights and obligations within which issues of sexual harassment must feature. These would swell on issues of sexual harassment as well as other forms of misconduct such as examination

malpractices and theft. Dismissal from employment was one of the recommended penalties for a staff who has been found guilty of harassment - to act as a deterrent.

Others recommended the strengthening of existing structures (the students affairs unit, counselling units etc) that can respond to issues of sexual harassment. Better still, it was suggested that a special unit could be instituted to deal with such cases. Such a unit would be empowered to develop guidelines and regulations to curb sexual harassment and create accessible avenues for laying of complaints which also safeguard the privacy of the complainant.

It was also recommended that the university makes it possible for staff and students to dialogue on the issues periodically, away from the lecture rooms. It was suggested that sexuality as well as religious and moral issues be included in the General Studies programmes for all students.

Some other recommendations include the introduction of a dress code, reforms in the conduct of examinations and release of results, the establishment of Female empowerment groups, increased commitment and will on the part of the university and Lagos State Government, the proprietor, which may be expressed by a concrete Plan of Action to eradicate the problem of sexual harassment and violations in the university.

Conclusion

The preliminary assessment revealed the existence and prevalence of sexual harassment in the Lagos State University. While advocates are pushing the need to address gender violence issues into the national agenda, supportive data on the nature, extent and consequences of sexual harassment would ensure that appropriate action is taken.

Acknowledgement

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Viewpoint

Should Governments Compel Citizens to Take the HIV Test?

By the Rev Dr. Busangokwakhe Dlamini, a member of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) and head of the Working Party on Homophobia, Ideology and Religion in Africa (ILGA WP)

Introduction

Sometimes, the question arises whether governments, in their fight against HIV and AIDS, should not make everyone take the test. This would suggest some kind of binding legislation or a ruling compelling a country's citizens to go for a test.

Fear of Stigma

While it is recognized that governments must play a key role in the fight against HIV and AIDS, I personally would be opposed to a legislation making it binding or compulsory to take the HIV test. Taking the test for HIV is best left a choice of individuals. The reality is that there is still denial and fear of discrimination and stigma that cannot be addressed and controlled by legislation.

Making it binding to take the test would be merely glossing over a whole lot of burning issues. Some of these issues were examined at the 2005 Africa Sexuality Institute held in Johannesburg, South Africa from October 2nd - 8. The Institute is a programme of the Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre (ARSRC), which has its corporate office in Lagos, Nigeria and was hosted by Health Systems Trust (South Africa) the ARSRC's partner institution in Southern Africa.

No Easy Answers

In addressing Sexual Violence in Africa, which was the theme for the 2005 Institute, participants raised key issues that have also been addressed in other forums. Albertyn [1] suggests that there is need to understand the link between HIV and AIDS, gender inequality and the actual conditions of women's lives. There is need to understand how, for example, a poor woman is more vulnerable to HIV infection because she is reliant on a man for access to resources. This may mean that she will engage in unprotected sex (within or outside of marriage) in order to be able



Broader availability of AIDS treatment boosted HIV testing, offering more people an incentive to know their HIV status. The young mother had an HIV test and is being counselled on AIDS treatment. TASO Clinic in Uganda, 2004. WHO/Michael Jensen

to feed her children and pay school fees. Her economic and social inequality shapes her bodily vulnerability to abuse, HIV infection or non-consensual sex.

Gender Inequalities

Access to health is determined by access to resources. Types of interventions and messages may, therefore, need to be revised to better address actual needs of the African community. One such revision would place a greater imperative on governments to raise the status of women and address gender inequality.

Albertyn takes her cue from the 1998 HIV/AIDS and Human Rights International Guidelines [2] which identifies women as a vulnerable group (Guideline 8). She observes that the International Partnership Against HIV/AIDS in Africa goes further to call specifically for the strengthening of the status of women through legal and other means to reduce vulnerability (policy area 10). She thus argues that, despite

these statements of principle, there is less evidence of practical and effective actions, at both the national and regional levels, to address the issue.

If gender inequality lies at the core of women's vulnerability, then the AIDS epidemic presents a new imperative to identify and remove the many causes and manifestations of this inequality.

In Ewing [3] there is a suggestion that measures like testing, abstinence, being faithful and condomising attach blame to survivors of sexual abuse for not saying "no." Ewing asserts that the people who are able to say "no" are generally adult men. She admits that there have been some worthy attempts to motivate responsible behaviour among men but maintains that the burden of "virtuous" behaviour has remained largely on the shoulders of young women.

Ewing deems such measures, therefore, to hold individuals fully responsible for HIV infection, making it a moral and



personal issue instead of an economic, political and social issue.

A Peculiar Problem

This presents a particular problem when viewed from the children's perspective. Testing, in this instance, becomes entirely irrelevant to all South Africa's children and most of the women who are not in a position to say no to sex or to negotiate safe sex. Many women cannot choose to Abstain, Be Faithful or use a Condom even after taking the test.

Testing is rendered irrelevant too for adolescents who are encouraged to resist what we call "peer pressure." "Peer" however means equals and age mates, and ignores the unequal power relations between boys and girls. Girls are coerced into unprotected sex. This happens mainly because adolescents are inundated by media messages and by the behaviour of older men and women which reinforce the need to be sexually attractive and the "normality" of abusive sexual relations. Girls are not just under pressure from peers but from educators, as Ewing [3] reports based on the study by the Midlands Women's Group in the greater Maritzburg area of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Male Responsibility

Among the worthy attempts to motivate responsible behaviour among men, as referred to in the above paragraph, is the Network of EngenderHealth and the South African Men as Partners. In a brief chat with the coordinator of this network, he highlighted the role that the church and faith-based organisations could also play as they themselves are sorely affected.

The Church

The church is likened to a human body that is being ravaged and weakened by AIDS [4]. While Catholics overwhelmingly support the use of condoms to prevent AIDS, Catholic official teaching remains ever divided. This was evident in a meeting of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference in July 2001. When there had been hopes that a more merciful and more compassionate statement would emerge from that meeting the Conference refused to change its policy toward condoms. Padovano [5] and Miller [4] examine the ramifications of this refusal. The refusal not only casts doubt on the effectiveness of condoms in fighting AIDS but goes as far as suggesting that condoms are to blame for the spread of AIDS, in the sense that they encourage immorality which exposes people to the risk of contracting the virus. The impact of the church's teaching is so great that even non-church goers are affected by it.

Tests Important

Testing is an important intervention to encourage safer sex practices, according to both Albertyn [1] and Ewing [2]. Testing would lead to greater awareness and provide opportunity for early interventions. This, however, often does not have an immediate impact, as other factors like culture and religion, also hold

sway. There was a view during the recently held Africa Sexuality Institute that the influence of culture and religion is not being given adequate attention.

Testing does not necessarily prevent AIDS. Behaviour change would. Such behaviour change would have to take its cue from the culture and religion and the influence and pressure that these exert. Testing, alone, will not necessarily lead to behaviour change. Moreover, Albertyn [1] and Ewing [3] suggest that some people get infected while giving care to dying parents and siblings. What would be the significance of HIV tests for this category of persons?

Testing and taking responsibility for one's lifestyle are two different things. Many may take the test, be well aware and be well educated about the dangers of AIDS and yet be prevented from taking responsibility for their lifestyles. There is a suggestion from *Conscience* [4] that it is impossible to counter the crisis of the epidemic if there are no people on the ground to implement effective education programmes. The church impedes such implementation. Given such a situation, what purpose would be served by taking the test for HIV?

Conclusion

Testing should promote prevention practices. The problem is that those who promote prevention tend to divorce it from treatment. The availability of treatment would serve as an incentive to find out one's HIV status. Governments could come up with more incentives but cannot make everyone in their countries take the test for HIV. This would be failure to respect the human dignity of their citizens.

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Sexual Violence: Developing a Culture of Accountability

(cont'd from page 9)

violence that women face in their everyday lives; including sexual harassment at work or on the streets, rape, and other types of abuse. Women feel short-changed by the criminal justice system because it focuses on the individual alone forgetting the larger community. The state must seek alliances with activists and the rights movement because it is not possible to assure the well-being and safety of women in an isolated struggle.

Connections must be made between interpersonal violence, the violence inflicted by domestic state institutions such as the police and armed forces, and strategies developed to end violence. These strategies must address how entire communities of all genders are affected in multiple ways.

In tackling sexual violence, provisions must be made to facilitate forensic processes. It is critical for states to adopt a rights-based approach to addressing sexual violence. Honouring of state obligations contained in signed and ratified international human rights instruments will be a first step in the right direction.

The Challenge

Men as individuals and groups have to be challenged to take particular responsibility to address and organize around sexual violence in their families, organizations and communities, as a primary strategy for addressing violence and patriarchal power oppression. Men have to focus on how their own histories of victimization have hindered their ability to establish gender justice in their families, organizations and communities.

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Notes to Contributors

Guidelines for Submissions

The editors welcome submissions on the thematic focus of future issues of the Magazine, as well as other areas of sexuality, sexual health and rights. Themes for upcoming 2006 issues include:

2006

- * Youth, Sexuality and Marriage in Africa
- * Sexuality Beyond Reproduction
- * Cultural, Religious Beliefs and Healthy, Pleasurable Sexuality
- * Healthy and Responsible Sexuality: Lessons from People Living Positively

ARSRC seeks articles for submission which are objective, analytical and mirror current / contemporary issues and debates in the areas of Sexuality, Sexual Health and Rights in Africa. Articles should reflect a holistic /comprehensive approach to sexuality; taking sexuality discourse beyond health to

incorporate broader issues of the expression of sexuality without guilt, fear or ill-health. While priority would be given articles that have not been previously published, already published material may be considered depending on how relevant the subject area and focus is to ARSRC's work. However, for already published articles, full details of previous publication and where to seek permission for reprint must accompany the article.

We particularly welcome articles related to our thematic focus for the following sections :

Region Watch: Topical issues with a country or sub regional focus

Programme Feature: best practices from programme implementers

Research Notes: Focus on relevant research and methodologies

Viewpoint: Reactions to previous magazine issues or on a subject area that a reader wishes to express very

strong views or opinion.

Length

Feature articles: 1,000 -1,500 words

Research issues: 800-1,000 words

Opinion articles: 400-500 words

Photos

We welcome photos with or without articles and will give appropriate credit when photo is used.

Presentation

Please submit initially, an abstract with your name, contact address, phone number, email address and details about yourself as you would wish it to appear on the list of contributors.

*****All contributors will receive a copy of the issue in which their contribution has been published.

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Web Resource on Sexual Violence

1. Papers, Briefs, Policy Documents.

- Scared at School: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African School Human Rights Watch 2001
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/safrica/>
 - Guidelines for Medico-Legal Care for Victims of Sexual Violence WHO 2003 <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2004/924154628X.pdf>
 - The Right to Survive: Sexual Violence, Women and HIV/AIDS Françoise Nduwimana. International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 2004.
<http://www.dd-rd.ca/english/commdoc/publications/women/hivAIDSviolEn1.htm>
 - Intimate Partner Violence and HIV/AIDS WHO Information Bulletin Series, 2004
<http://www.who.int/gender/violence/en/vawinformationbrief.pdf>
 - Just Die Quietly: Domestic Violence and Women's Vulnerability to HIV in Uganda. Human Rights Watch, 2003
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0803/index.htm>
 - Dying of Sadness: Gender, Sexual Violence, and the HIV Epidemic UNDP HIV & Development Programme, 2000
<http://www.undp.org/seped/publications/dyingofsadness.pdf>
 - Sexual Coercion and Reproductive Health: A Focus on Research Lori Heise, Kirstin Moore, Nahid Toubia, Population Council 1995
<http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/scoer.pdf>
 - Kenya: Rape—The Invisible Crime Amnesty International, 2002
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/engaf320012002>
- ## 2. Websites
- Gender and HIV/AIDS

A Comprehensive web portal on the gender dimensions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, including violence against women. A collaboration between UNIFEM and UNAIDS.
<http://www.genderaids.org/>

- Human Rights Watch

Women's Rights Division includes publications on violence against women, trafficking of women and girls, and rape as a weapon of 'ethnic cleansing'.

<http://www.hrw.org/about/projects/women.html>

- International Center for Research on Women

Nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting socio-economic development with women's full participation. Conducts research on violence against women and on women and AIDS.

<http://www.icrw.org/>

- Research, Action and Information Network for the Bodily Integrity of Women (RAINBO)

International nonprofit organization working to promote and protect the reproductive and sexual health and rights of women and girls. Includes information on female circumcision/genital mutilation.

<http://www.rainbo.org/>

- The Sexual Violence Research Initiative

A WHO initiative which aims to build an experienced and committed network of researchers, policy makers, service providers, activists and donors to ensure that many aspects of sexual violence are addressed from the perspective of different disciplines and cultures.

<http://www.who.int/svri/en/>

- Coalition on Violence Against Women

A Kenyan non-profit Women human rights organization that is committed to the eradication of all

forms of violence against women and the promotion of women's human rights.

<http://www.covaw.or.ke/>

- Gender based Violence Prevention Network

A Virtual community and network of people interested in violence prevention in Africa.

<http://www.preventgbvafrica.org/>

- Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

This is a South African nonprofit organization with a mission to develop and implement human security interventions based upon a commitment to social justice and fundamental rights of people who are vulnerable.

<http://www.csvr.org.za/>

- South African Gender-based Violence and Health Initiative

Is a national, specialist partnership of organisations and individuals working on gender-based violence and health issues.

<http://www.mrc.ac.za/gender/sagbvhi.htm>

- People Opposing Women Abuse

Is a specialized multi-service provider nonprofit organization that contributes towards the complete eradication of violence against women in society in order to enhance women's quality of life.

<http://www.powa.co.za/>

- HIV InSite

Developed by the Center for HIV Information at the University of California San Francisco. Its mission is to be a source for comprehensive, in-depth HIV/AIDS information and knowledge. It has an extensive collection of original materials, and links to HIV/AIDS Information.

2nd Africa Conference On Sexual Health And Rights

The African Federation for Sexual Health and Rights (Fédération Africaine pour la Santé et Droits Sexuels) in collaboration with the Africa Regional Office of Planned Parenthood Federation of America-International (PPFA-I) is pleased to announce the 2nd Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 19th -21st June 2006. The theme of the conference is "**Sexuality,**

Economics and Development in Africa."

Some of the identified thematic areas for the Conference are: Sexuality and Sexual Health; Sexuality, HIV/AIDS and Emerging Therapies; Sexual and Domestic Violence (Child Abuse, Vulnerable Groups); Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights; Abortion; Culture and Sexual Rights; Sexuality Education and Contemporary Issues in Sexuality.

Other areas of focus include: Sexuality and Religion; Family Planning in the Era of HIV/AIDS; Partnerships in Sexual Health and Rights; Sexuality and Economics; and Programming for

Sexual Health and Rights .

For further information, please contact the following: Conference Organizer, Africa Regional Office, Planned Parenthood Federation of America-International, 1st Floor, Chaka Place, Argwings Kodhek Road, P. O. Box 53538-00200, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: 254 20 2727049-52 / Fax: 254 20 2717013 / Email: conference@ppfa.or.ke

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