

FOR A WORLD FREE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA

JULY 2002



Foreword

“FOR A WORLD FREE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA” was drafted by WiLDAF/FeDDAF-NIGERIA under the supervision of the WiLDAF/ FeDDAF Sub-Regional Office for West Africa. It is designed within the scope of the **“Sensitisation and capacity building of judicial and extra judicial stakeholders for the effective implementation of the rights of women in West Africa”** project, which aims at contributing to improve the effectiveness of women’s rights in Nigeria as well as in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Togo.

In an easy to understand manner, this document is designed first and foremost for medical doctors, traditional rulers and religious leaders, and will be useful during the national sensitisation and information days organised for them. We are counting on the trained stakeholders to in turn, circulate it among their peers.

It can also be profitably consulted by Magistrates, lawyers, and police officers who constantly use the texts of the law in their daily activities, for a better understanding of women’s rights and appreciation of the gender implication when addressing the needs of women who solicit their services.

WiLDAF/FeDDAF in producing this material, wanted people to understand and admit that today, the respect and effective implementation of women’s rights really contribute to the well-being of all and that every society must strive to achieve a human-faced and sustainable development with the effective participation of women. The acceptance of this vision is the fruit of the protests of women’s rights organisations that demanded and obtained recognition of the fundamental rights granted to every individual at the international and national levels. The evidence of this is the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 and ratified by all West African States.

For over two decades now, this Convention has been implemented and successes recorded, however women in reality continue to face difficulties pertaining to the effective enjoyment of their rights. The analysis reveals that this situation does not solely depend on them and women’s rights organisations, but also, to a large extent, on other stakeholders who intervene in the legal or informal settlement of conflicts generated by the violations they suffer. These stakeholders are those targeted by the project in whose scope this document has been drafted.

By devoting a great part to the problems arising in the daily lives of women, this document advocates for the implementation of rights recognized by the various actors. It is hoped that it will not leave any reader indifferent but rather incite them to action along with other actors in their determination to take up this challenge for a society free of discrimination based on sex.

Our ultimate goal is a society working together for the well-being of all.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was developed as part of the project: “**Sensitisation and Capacity Building of judicial and extrajudicial Stakeholders for sustainable implementation of Women’s Rights in West Africa**”.

The **WiLDAF /FeDDAF-NIGERIA** is, especially, indebted to the European Commission for its financial support which enables WiLDAF to make available to judicial and extrajudicial Stakeholders, a valuable tool of sensitisation for non legal practitioners who participate in the implementation of women’s rights.

WiLDAF also expresses its warm gratitude to all the people who, in one way or the other, contributed to the publishing of this *document*.

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Printed by
New Testament Printers-Lagos Nigeria

This document was prepared with the financial support of the European Union. The views hereby presented here are those of WiLDAF /FeDDAF and in no way reflects the official view of the European Union.

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INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of Nigeria provides for equality under the law and guarantees the rights to protection from inhuman and degrading treatment in its fundamental human rights provisions. International Instruments, such as Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) which Nigeria has signed and Ratified and the African Charter on human and People's Rights already domesticated as part of Nigeria law also guarantee these rights to all human beings. Women being human beings are therefore entitled to enjoy all these protections guaranteed by our local domestic laws and international instruments.

Unfortunately, although women make up over 49% of the Nigerian population according to the 1990 National Census, women suffer various forms of violence contrary to the equality guaranty by the Constitution and the International Instruments.

Nigerian women like their counterparts in other parts of the world are constantly harassed, battered, maimed or killed simply because they are women. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Report "Up to 70% of female murder victims worldwide are killed by their male companions and as many as one-third of girls are forced into their first sexual experience.

Project Alert for violence against women a Nigerian NGO in its survey also indicates that in the year 2000 it recorded 25 cases of women murdered by their husbands in Nigeria.

Violence against women in Nigeria starts from the conception of the female foetus, through a woman's lifespan until old age.

Violence against women is an issue, which cuts across all social, economic, educational or political strata. Recently in Lagos a well-known multimillionaire threw his medical doctor wife from their storey - building and she died as a result of the injury sustained in the fall. Today the man is walking free on bail while awaiting trial.

Most of the violence perpetrated against women are based on societal orientation as well as cultural and religious practices, the effect of which hampers the health, well-being and productivity of women.

Many men still beat their wives and perpetrate other forms of physical and psychological abuse to prove their masculinity and superiority. The low perception of women as second-class or persons inferior to men has further perpetuated the justification for various forms of violence.

A culture based form of violence is Female genital mutilation (FGM) or female circumcision of women which is still practiced on women, in many parts of Nigeria. The female genital mutilation can be performed on the female at infancy or age of puberty or even on older women during child birth. FGM is said to affect 40.5% of Nigerian Women according to National Baseline Survey in 1998.

Rape and sexual violence are also prevalent in the home and in public but largely unreported because of the social stigma attached to rape victims or victims of sexual violence. For instance the Police Headquarters' records in Lagos in 1982 showed 2805 cases of rape and indecent assault reported. The figure reduced to 2608 in 1985; by 1991 it has further reduced to 2,227. It should be noted that these figures do not represent the actual figure of cases of sexual assault but the negligible percentage of the number of cases reported and how the figure of reported cases reduces over the years.

Sexual violence against women exposes women to various health hazards such as unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and the infection of sexually transmitted diseases such as the deadly HIV/AIDS virus. Records show that there is an estimated three million Nigerians suffering from the incurable disease of HIV/ AIDS increasing the risk for women victims of sexual abuse.

Women also face violence through the application of obnoxious widowhood practices. Many societies practice de-humanising and degrading customs on the widows.

In Nigeria, especially amongst the Igbos of the South Eastern part, age long customs which range from shaving of the hair deprivation of personal hygiene by the widow for several days to forcibly making the widow drink from the water used to wash the corpse of her deceased husbands are meted on the widows. Incidentally no similar obnoxious practice is performed on the men.

A contemporary form of violence against women and which is most disturbing is the emerging incidents of trafficking of women and children. This trend has been growing at an alarming rate turning women and children into slave-like bonded labour of domestic service farm work and prostitution. Nigeria has become a source, transit and destination country for women and children trafficked within and outside the country and from outside Nigeria. Statistics have it that Nigerian women and children constitute between 60-80% of those in the sex trade in Italy while of the 12 million children in labour in Nigeria over 80% are trafficked victims.

This form of violence has diminished the status of women and brought international shame to Nigeria. Yet the incidents of trafficking in women are still going on unabatedly with Nigerian society only addressing the issue from a moralistic point of view rather than sympathizing with the victims and recognizing the abuses the women and children suffer.

Another form of violence is the one usually suffered by old women who are at increased risk of abuse in Nigeria especially if childless. They are branded as witches and subjected to all kinds of abuses. This form of violence is not peculiar to Nigeria but is also witnessed in many African cultures. In Tanzania, for example, 500 elderly women accused of witchcraft are killed annually according to WHO report.

Many forms of violence are not recognized as violence in Nigerian society and under the law. Notable of such violence is sexual harassment, domestic violence Female genital mutilation except in some States recently, Early marriage and economic violence to mention a few.

Indeed Violence is often only addressed in the context of war or the context of crime by so doing some of the violence that have not been recognized as crime within the law such as those violence in the home, wife battery, verbal abuse and sexual harassment are missed out of consideration. That is why the United Nations in the UN Declaration on Violence Against Women defined “Violence Against Women as a crime and must be treated as such including when it occurs in the family”. Unfortunately violence against women is still regarded as a domestic matter when it occurs in the family.

Every form of Violence against women therefore should be treated as a crime that it is and taken seriously by all concerned.

Gender based violence is becoming a problem that requires a multi-sectoral approach if it must be stopped in Nigeria. The Police for instance still treats cases of violence in the home with triviality while medical doctors do not take

their duties of giving evidence during criminal cases seriously enough. The traditional Rulers and the Religious leaders still enforce those age-long male-dominated cultural practices which are contrary to the Nigerian Constitution and other contemporary laws protecting the rights of women such as CEDAW.

The Judges and Magistrates also interpret the laws in a manner, which is prejudicial against women's rights guaranteed not only in the Domestic and International laws but also in the case law (previous decisions) which should guide them.

Lawyers on their part do not give preference to the enforcement of women's rights as they do in their pursuit for the enforcement of other forms of human rights.

In view of the need to seriously address the ways to combat the elimination of the various forms of violence against women for a better society, steps such as the reformation of the Domestic laws especially criminalizing the violence such as marital rape and making laws to prohibit domestic violence should be taken. In addition the laws need to abolish such parts of the customs and religious practices, which are contrary to natural justice equity and good conscience and discriminate against women.

These domestic laws need to conform with the Nigerian Constitution, the International Instruments such as CEDAW. More importantly the key judicial and extra-judicial stakeholders need to be sensitised. Consequently, this training manual is directed at medical doctors, traditional rulers, Police officers, Lawyers and Judges/Magistrates who are judicial and extra-judicial actors who administer justice, shape societal perception and orientation which is critical to actualization of women's rights.

This Manual will assist in sensitizing the various actors to recognize women's rights especially for women to live in a world free from violence and promote the principle of non-discrimination and equality before the law in cases of violence against women. It is hoped that after the training and sensitization Nigerian women will begin to enjoy their rights in private and in public to enable them impact positively and contribute effectively in national development.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA

I. Definition

What is violence against women?

The United Nations defines Violence against women as **“an act of gender based violence that results in or likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering of women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liability”**.

A more elaborate definition is contained in the 1993 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women which defines violence against women as **“encompassing in addition to violence perpetrated by the state, physical, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, mental rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non spousal violence and violence related to exploitation physical, sexual and the general community including rape and intimidation at work in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution”**.

Alemika, quoting a United Nations Report (1995) on a study in Nigeria states that **“the explanation for violence against women in the home go beyond the individual characteristics of the man, the woman and the family. It must look to the structure of relationships and the role of society in underpinning that structure. Violence against wives is a function of the belief fostered in all cultures that men are superior and that the women they live with are their possessions or chattels, that they can treat as they wish and as they consider appropriate”**.

Which ever angle one looks at it violence against women is a violation of women’s fundamental rights and freedom guaranteed by the UDHR, CEDAW and the Nigeria Constitution

There are different forms of violence against women which span through a woman’ s lifespan from cradle to the old age.

The forms of violence could be categorized into (i) physical violence (ii) psychological violence (iii) cultural violence and (iv) economic violence.

It should be noted that this categorization is merely for convenience as some of the elements constitute one category may be found in other categories.

There are however some forms of violence that are recognized by the Nigeria Laws and those not recognized by the Nigerian laws but do exist in the country.

A list of the forms violence against women in Nigeria both recognized and not recognized by the Nigerian laws are as follows;

- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Harassment
- Female Genital Mutilation (**not recognized until recently, by some State laws**)
- Early Marriage (**not recognized except for marriages under the Act**)
- Widowhood Practices (**not recognized until recently by some State laws**)
- Economic Violence
- Violence in Conflict situations
- Psychological abuse
- Trafficking in women
- Incest, Defilement, other sexual violence
- Unsafe Abortion
- Rape

1.1 FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA

1.1.1 Domestic Violence or Family Violence

The commonest form of violence against women is that which occurs within the family usually referred to as **“Domestic Violence”** or **“Family Violence “ or” wife battery”**.

This is a form of violence, which occurs between persons who share or have shared, special or familiar relationship such as husband and wife, or couples with intimate relationship. The privacy in such intimate relationships creates the domesticity in this. This form of violence is sometimes referred to as “wife battery” because of the prevalence of husbands beating their wives.

Domestic violence could be an armed or unarmed attack. Most women irrespective of their social status or religious affiliation especially in marital or intimate relationship have been at some point in time being victims of various forms of physical abuse causing the women victims physical injuries some of

which amount to grievous bodily harm, psychological and emotional trauma which effects may last throughout the lifetime of the women victims.

From world records evidence abound that a major reason for the breakdown of all types of marriages whether monogamous or polygamous is domestic violence. According to United Nations Report 1991.

“In Austria in 1985, domestic violence against the wife was cited as a contributing factor to the breakdown of the marriage in 50 percent of 1500 divorce cases. Of those instances 38 percent of working-class wives called the police in response to battering, while only 13 percent of middle-class women and 4 percent of upper class women did”.

The phenomenon of domestic violence in Nigeria has not only increased but has assumed frightening dimension with cases of acid bathing of women by husbands or disappointed lovers. In some cases such violence has resulted in physical deformity or even the death of the women or femicide.

A case in point is the acid bathing of a Miss Agba a beautiful and promising young Nigerian University of Port Harcourt under-graduate by her ex lover which not only affected her education but also caused her psychological and physical trauma. She in fact lost an eye.

Another tragic story is that of Ego Osadebe a graduate with a successful carrier. Ego' s Husband was a businessman whose business had a downturn shortly after there. Ego supported her husband by buying him a car and providing him with money to run to run his business. Soon after Ego' s husband became jealous of her success he alledged that her success must be due to the support from other men. Despite Ego' s denial of infidelity and assurances of her love for the husband one day Ego' s husband poured acid on Ego because according to him **“she should not be attractive to other men”** After suffering serious burns Ego was hospitalized for several weeks until she lost the battle for her life. Ego' s promising life was cut off in her prime.

Domestic violence is so tolerated by the society and it cuts across every social strata, it is irrelevant whether the parties are poor or rich, educated or illiterates, urban or rural dwellers, Christians or Muslims or Traditional religionist or from particular ethnic background.

The societal tolerance makes men get away justifying this violation of women's rights with sometimes very flimsy excuses. Excuses have ranged from **“disrespect to husband or husband's family members” ‘ provocation through nagging,” “infidelity or suspected infidelity”, “untidiness”, “inhospitality to husbands friends’ “lateness in preparing food”, “refusal to have sex even where the woman is ill”, refusal to bear more children or failure to take preventive measures for birth control.”**

Domestic violence is predicated upon some gender bias, age-long cultural beliefs which discriminate against women. The subjudication of women resulting from Domestic violence is a gross violation of the fundamental rights of women to life, dignity, and freedom from cruel and degrading acts guaranteed by the Nigerian Constitution and covenanted in the various International Instruments which Nigeria has endorsed.

As a result of the cultural tolerance to Domestic violence, a large percentage of the incidents go unreported. Even the few reported cases are treated as **‘Trivial’ or ‘Domestic’** by the Police. The tendency of the Police is to maintain a policy of non-interference so as not to be seen to be instrumental to marriage break-ups or family rifts. This evidently has discouraged many victims from reporting.

Contrary to the general belief customary laws do not prescribe wife beating as a norm but rather a ground for divorce. However men under customary marriages generally believe they have the right to correct their wives by refusing to eat the food she cooked, and where they deem necessary by beating. They often ‘chastise’ or beat their wives for failing to perform their duties, laziness, wastefulness and stubbornness and under a range of excuses.

The Islamic laws (Sharia) on the other hand in-fact give indirect justification for Domestic violence by authorising “reasonable chastisement of the wife by the husband as provided in the Holy Quran.

“as for the women who show rebellion, we shall first enlighten, then desert them in bed and you may beat them as a last resort. Once they obey you, you have no excuse to transgress against them”.

What constitutes reasonable chastisement is of course determined by the Sharia court judges who are male.

It is a ground for divorce under Sharia for a man to assault his wife. Where there is need for beating, the instrument used must be symbolic with a toothbrush (chewing stick or flower) and must not leave a mark on her body. Beating will be a sign of discord between husband and wife, which is a ground for divorce if there are witnesses.

The Penal Code of Nigeria which is applicable in the predominantly Muslim northern part of Nigeria also validates wife beating in Section 55(1) which permits a husband to chastise his wife. **These laws need to be reformed to protect the rights of the women.**

Since the system of justice does not protect the woman as it is, the only option for a battered wife is to endure the violence until she suffers further harm or she seeks for divorce or separation. If she is married under the Statutory laws, that is the monogamous English type of marriage, then she can succeed if she can prove that she finds it intolerable to live with the husband' on account of the battery. Under the Islamic law she needs to prove that the battery was unreasonable which is sometimes very difficult though there are some few cases of success.

Nigerian laws have not been favourable to women on this issue. First there is no specific legislation against domestic violence. Unless of course the battery is such that causes grievous bodily harm the laws ignores such violence against women. There is a Bill on the abolition of the domestic violence now before the National Assembly which hopefully when passed can be used to prosecute offenders.

Many women have also been socialized to believe they are to be blamed for the violence perpetrated against them.

Consequences of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence may result in death, injury, physical and mental disability, low esteem, psychological disorder, psychosomatic defects. A woman victim of

violence cannot contribute effectively to the development of her community and the nation.

Beating, Acid bathing, grievous harm and other such forms of beating cannot be justified by Sharia laws or even customary laws because they are acts against the criminal code and the constitution of Nigeria and CEDAW.

Tolerance to domestic violence is evidence of discrimination because there are no reciprocal customary or religious practices, which **permits a woman to beat her husband**. In some cultures in fact this is considered an abomination. The criminal code which is recognized by the constitution outlaws assaults or battery. The chastisement allowed by the Penal code has to be reasonable. Even though what is reasonable is not stated, it can be assumed that beating that results in death or grievous bodily harm is not reasonable.

Although Domestic violence is prevalent in the society there is a culture of silence on the part of the women victims leading to inability to get accurate statistics.

Attitudes of Stakeholders

The attitude of the Police is lukewarm to reports of women victims of violence as such matters are usually treated as private, personal matters. The women therefore do not get their cases or the violence redressed a situation which has resulted in perpetuating the practice.

The police should exercise their duties as specified under the criminal code and penal code to prosecute the cases of domestic violence reported to them, in particular physical and sexual violence committed in the home. This will go a long way to avoid the escalation of violence, which may lead to the death of the woman.

Reports of domestic violence should be treated seriously and the perpetrators at first instances warned. Failure to heed to warning should be treated as assault cases and necessary prosecutions should be carried out.

Traditional and religious leaders should take up reports by women and ensure that perpetrators are not allowed to go unpunished even where they occur in the home. They should recognize equality of men and women under the constitution and religious laws (holy bible and Koran)

Medical doctors should be vigilant in assessing women victim survivors. The victims should be treated in a sympathetic manner.

Medical doctors usually try to avoid cases of violence against women involving the police because the inconveniences, which are occasioned by delays in court trials and rigorous and sometimes embarrassing cross-examinations that lawyers, subject them to.

Doctors need to persevere and not be discouraged by delays in court cases but need to assist the Police and Prosecutor in establishing evidence to prove cases of violence against women'. Doctors should also prepare and tender in courts medical certificates of the victims, which are vital to the evidence in the Courts.

Cases of victims of violence against women should be treated as cases in service of the society therefore should not demand for high medical charges.

Lawyers need to advocate for law reform to criminalise domestic violence as it obtains in other countries. They should also in meantime prosecute cases on Domestic violence using the Constitutional guarantee on human right the African Charter CEDAW and other applicable International instruments in protecting the rights of women to equality and freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment. Some of these cases should be taken free of charge as legal Aid cases.

Judges should not hide under the non-availability of specific laws on domestic violence but can exercise their judicial powers to enforce the rights of women in accordance with the Constitution and International laws.

1.1.2 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment has been defined as “**Any behaviour that is unsolicited, unwelcome and of a sexual nature that results in victimization, job loss or working in a hostile environment**”.

Many girls and women are subjected to this form of violence, which impedes women's progress and advancement educationally and in other spheres of human endeavours.

In many Nigerian tertiary institutions, there are reports of female students who have been harassed sexually by their Male lecturers resulting in the premature exit from the institutions by the student victims. Many young women also face unemployment and loss of work because of sexual overtures by their prospective employers or their employers or senior co-employees in their places of work. Female applicants are sometimes denied employment unless they succumb to sexual advances of their prospective employees. In some cases the Male colleagues through verbal and suggestive gestures continuously harass women to the point of frustrations, psychological and mental breakdown.

Unfortunately sexual harassment is not recognized as an offence by Nigerian laws unlike in other countries. The incidence is however rampant in the workplace, educational institution and public places but not redressed because there is no cause of action in the courts for them.

CONSEQUENCES.

It has resulted in truncating the educational opportunity for women and limits their opportunities to employment. It also limits freedom of women to move around and associate freely with their male counterparts at work, in school and other places.

International instruments such as Beijing platform for action and the declaration on the elimination of violence against women both of which Nigeria has endorsed and is committed to their enforcement, recognize the harmful and criminal effects of the practice.

STAKEHOLDERS ATTITUDES

In many cases, law enforcement agents, employers and families ignore such harassment especially because there is usually no physical evidence. Lawyers and Police do not take victims seriously, in many other countries however, the practice attracts damages and reparations for women.

Lawyers should take up such cases as a form of enforcement of fundamental rights of women to non-discrimination.

Where there is physical contact, it becomes a form of assault or battery that is actionable under the criminal code. Where there is coerced sex it becomes rape and liable to prosecution under the criminal law.

Medical doctors should be able to assess the mental impact on the victims of such harassment so as to support civil claims for damages or reparation.

Judges/ Magistrates should consider cases of Sexual harassment as an infringement of the fundamental human rights of women as contained in Nigerian Constitution and CEDAW.

1.2.3 FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a customary practice in many parts of Nigeria, which involves the removal of the female clitoris, labia minora and labia major and the body parts of the vagina.

FGM could be practiced on a baby girl, an adult woman, or a woman at childbirth.

The operation is done by traditional practitioners who remove the most sensitive parts of the vagina. The cultural explanation is that it prevents promiscuity of the woman.

There is however no physical evidence that a circumcised female is less promiscuous than an uncircumcised female. In-fact there is evidence that the circumcision prevents full sexual enjoyment of the circumcised female that she seeks more partners in search of enjoyment.

Consequences of FGM include inability to enjoy sexual relation and satisfaction.

Medically, Female circumcision has been found to cause serious health hazards such as tetanus infections and other infections injurious to the reproductive health of women.

There are no federal laws against genital mutilation, but some States have passed laws against it such as Edo, Cross River and Ogun States.

The Police should enforce the laws against FGM in the States where they exist.

The religious and traditional rulers should ensure that the practice is stopped in their areas of domain and where possible give social sanctions against defaulters.

Medical doctors should be sympathetic to victims and assist with medical treatment and medical reports where needed.

Lawyers should take up the cases of violence as an enforcement of the rights of victims using instruments such as CEDAW, African Charter while

Judges and magistrates should ensure that they do not shy away from assuming jurisdiction to adjudicate on cases of FGM on the basis that some States do not have specific laws against, but rather have recourse to the African Charter particularly Article 18 which empowers them to use International Convention to base their jurisdiction and the application of CEDAW. They should also ensure that persons convicted are given adequate penalty, according to the law to serve as a deterrent.

1.2.4 EARLY MARRIAGE

This is the marriage of girls below the age of eighteen. A lot of families across the nation give out their girls for marriage before adulthood. This is usually justified as custom or religious practice and since there is no minimum age limit for marriage in Nigerian Constitution this practice is very rampant. Even the constitution recognizes a married child as a wife.

Consequently, children are thus forced into marriage, some at birth, others between ages 8-15. Even though society justifies the practice under the cloak of

tradition or religion there are no standard rule of the minimum age. The Yoruba culture insists that a person can only get married when she has reached the age of puberty. Assessment of age of puberty defers from place to place. Sometimes the age is determined by the physical properties of the child especially whether she has started her menstrual cycle, or she has full-blown breast. In reality the physical features of a person does not determine once age without scientific tests but could be health situation of such person

It has however been shown that the reasons for early marriages centre around the low status of women who are regarded as sex symbols for which the men want to have exclusive control as their property. This desire to have virgins or the desire to have virgins as wives and the erroneous belief that children do not have HIV Aids had of recent fueled men's desire to marry young children.

The cultural belief that having sex with children regenerates the life of older men. Poverty also encourages the practice of early marriage, because when the parents are poor, they give the girls out to rich husbands or at least husbands who can afford to give them shelter and food.

Consequences

The consequences are deprivation of girl-child education, health hazards such as Vasico Vigna Fitual (VVF) (a condition which makes the victim loss the control of their blassed and excretory organs) **and** maternal mortality.

Strategies

It is therefore important that

- **Traditional rulers discourage the practice of early marriages through sensitisation on the harmful effects of early marriages within their communities.**
- **There should be a law making 18 years the minimum age for all types of marriages as it is for marriages under the Act.**
- **The Laws of the Universal Basic Education which requires free and compulsory education for at least primary and junior secondary school levels should be enforced by the police and lawyers.**
- **Medical doctors should assist victims of such violence, such as victims of VVF and pregnant children through counseling and treatment.**

- **Lawyers should enforce international laws that say that marriages must be by consent such as Article 16 of CEDAW and the Convention on the rights of the Child (CRC). These laws provide for the consent of the women to marriage consequently since our laws recognize that a child cannot give consent legally, then giving a child in Marriage means permitting marriage without consent and as such negates the principles of the fundamental rights of female children. This makes marriages by minors who are not legally capable of giving consent illegal. Section 18(3) of the African charter enables our courts to use international treaties when cases come before them. This can be supported from the decided case of Gani Fawehim V. Abacha¹**

1.2.5. WIDOWHOOD PRACTICES

Widows² in many part of Nigeria are subjected to various forms of violence. Some of these are: aggravated mourning period, forced shaving of hair, routinised crying, drinking of water used to wash the corpse, denial to change her clothes or have her bath for a period of time, denial of right to inherit property of deceased husband and prohibition from participating in economic activities for upkeep of herself and her children.

This form of violence has serious physical, mental and economic adverse implications on the widow and her children. There are no specific national laws abolishing these widowhood practices. However some States have recently passed laws to prohibit and punish offenders. Examples are Enugu and Ebonyi States. Bills are before the Anambra and Abia State Houses of Assembly.

Reasons for the practices are said to be traditional and are usually enforced by women as in the case of the “**Umuadas**” (daughters of the deceased husband’s family). Despite the fact that the Constitution guarantees freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment and the fact that there is case law which prohibits enforcement of cultural practices which goes against the principles of Natural Justice, equity and good conscience under the repugnancy doctrine, these practices continue to thrive. It is therefore necessary to abolish them so that women can enjoy their rights as guaranteed by our laws.

¹ (1996)9nwlr pt 475 at 710

² women whose husbands are dead.

Strategies

Traditional and religion leaders should work for the abolition of these practices, which are rooted in traditional and religious norms in their communities. Lawyers should take such cases to court for prosecution and test litigation.

Mojekwu V Ejikeme³

Facts:

The case tested the ‘Nrachi Nwanyi’ custom of Nnewi in South East Nigeria, which enables a man keep, one of his daughters in his family to raise male issues to succeed him. Once the traditional custom is performed, the daughter is regarded as a wife or son of the man and her children can inherit as children of the man. The custom is performed by the presentation of a goat, four gallons of wine and eight kolanuts to his larger family by a man who has no male issues. Reuben Mojekwu performed this ceremony for his daughter- Comfort.

Sarah and Reuben Mojekwu had three children Samuel, Comfort and Virginia. Samuel predeceased his father in 1938. Reuben died in 1966. Comfort died in 1967 unmarried and childless. The remaining child Virginia, a female gave birth out of wedlock to Chinwe in 1954 and Uzoamaka.

Virginia later got married in 1957 to one Mr. Eze. When she got married, Chinwe and Uzoamaka remained with parents until their deaths. Chinwe was unmarried but gave birth to Izuchukwu Mojekwu 2nd appellant. Uzoamaka also while unmarried gave birth to the 1st appellant. Uzoamaka is the 3rd appellant.

The respondents who are distant cousins of the deceased claimed

³ 2000 5 NWLR 3

That the lineage of the deceased became extinct due to the fact that he had no surviving male children.

- **That the Nrachi ceremony was not performed by the deceased for Virginia and so she was not positioned to inherit as a man. Her children were thus not "legalized" to inherit from her father through her.**
- **That the ceremony was performed by Reuben for his daughter comfort who died childless. That they are entitled to inherit the estate of Reuben who had no male heir and who died intestate.**
- **That they being distant male cousins are entitled by the Oli-Ekpe custom of Nnewi. To inherit the properties of Reuben to the exclusion of his daughters, because they are sons of Bennet a distant cousin of Reuben.**

The appellants as plaintiffs sued and claimed that as heirs and direct descendant of Reuben Mojekwu being their grandfather and great grandfather, they were exclusively entitled to his estate by virtue of Oli-Ekpe custom of Nnewi.

The high court held upholding the custom:

- **Reuben's lineage became extinct on the death of his daughter comfort for whom Nrachi was performed the appellants are not heirs (cannot inherit) to Reuben and therefore not entitled to succeed him or his estate since Nrachi ceremony was performed for Virginia and her children were not direct issues of late Reuben, they were not entitled to inherit his estate. Since Reuben lineage became extinct, Bennet Ejikeme should inherit the estate through Oli-Ekpe custom**

The appellants appealed the decision at the court of appeal where it was held that:

- **The Nrachi custom discriminates against women as a daughter with the custom performed on her has upper hand over the others without it she can inherit her fathers property while the others cannot.**
- **Is against the dictates of equity and good conscience**
- **Is not worthy of application it enforceable in the judicial realm and no court of record should countenance or take judicial notice of it**
- **Is in consistent with public policy, repugnant to natural justice equity and good conscience.**
- **Is Otiose, as it is absurd and fantastic in the main, it is a force and sort of window dressing designed to oppress and cheat women folk.**
- **It is no longer of the moment. It is irrelevant. It is no longer worthy of application with modern day trends.**
- **No elite would agree that it should be performed on his daughter as at now when the making of a will, can readily take care of situations calling for care. Nrachi Custom is rendered otiose, as it is absurd. It subjects Virginia to disabilities or restriction, which the provisions of section 42(1) of the Constitution and articles 2 and 5 of CEDAW forbid.**

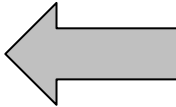
Case: MOJEKWU VS MOJEKWU⁴

In Mojekwu Vs Mojekwu (Supra), a nephew of the deceased went to court to claim that under the Nnewi Customary Law, he is the one entitled to

⁴ (1997) 7NWLR pt 512,

inherit the estate of his uncle who died intestate leaving a widow and two daughters. The Court of Appeal Enugu division held that the *Oli Ekpe* custom, which permits the son of the brother of the deceased to inherit his property to the exclusion of his female child is discriminatory and repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience. The Hon Justice of the Court of Appeal held as follows;

In my humble view it is the monopoly of God to determine the sex of a baby and not the parents.....For a custom or customary Law to discriminate against a particular sex is to say the least an affront Almighty God himself.....On my part I have no difficulty in holding that the “Oli-Ikpe” custom of Nnewi is repugnant to Natural Justice Equity and Good Conscience.”.... Per Justice Niki Tobi Judge of the Court of Appeal in

In the two cases, the Nigerian court of appeal declared certain inheritance practices discriminatory against women based on CEDAW and the fact that they are repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience. 

The police should prosecute cases of assault and injury arising from these practices

Magistrates and Judges should be prepared to use the repugnancy clause, the constitution and international laws CEDAW, UDHR to redress such injustice where there are no specific local laws.

Medical doctors should provide medical assistance to victims of such practices and provide medical report and opinion to support cases arising from such practices.

1.2.6. SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Women are also victims of sexual violence such as rape, marital Rape, incest, defilement. These are prohibited by the Criminal and Penal Code. Penalty for offenders range from 1 year to life imprisonment. The consequences are physical and mental and the psychological trauma may be life long. Other

consequences include societal stigma, trauma, low self-esteem, and mental trauma.

Although the law provides that rape is forceful sexual intercourse that having sex with another without the woman's consent consequently any non-consensual sex even where it occurs between Married Parties is illegal and constitutes rape.

The exclusion of marital rape on the ground that marriage implies consent perpetuates the idea that a woman is property.

In spite of the fact that there are laws very few offenders are prosecuted and the incidences of these acts increase by the day. Because of societal stigma many of these offences are not reported.

The rules of evidence make the offences difficult to prove. There is usually the requirement for corroboration in addition to the rigorous cross-examination to which victims are subjected by defence lawyers. This Court's procedure and strict evidential rules further traumatizes the victim.

The fact that cases are conducted in the open, witnesses and victims are exposed to public ridicule. The facts that there are no witness protection laws discourage successful prosecution of cases.

For the few cases that are prosecuted, offenders usually get away for lack of proper investigation by the police and by the insistence of judges on strict compliance with the rules of evidence

INCEST

Although incest is a form of sexual assault it is treated separately because it is a form of violence which occurs between blood relations.

As for example sexual relationship between father and daughter, brother and sister or son and mother or cousins. It is usually perpetrated by males in some position of authority or advantage over their female relations.

Our laws do not specifically categorise incest as a criminal offence. However religion such as the Christian religion prohibits incest .

The Holy Bible strictly forbids incest in Leviticus Chapter 18, verse 6-18 and provides the penalty in verse 29.

Due to the fact that incest occurs in the confines of the home and within a family relationship the incidents are very rarely reported. Nonetheless the physical and psychological abuse is no less traumatising than other forms of violence. Yet most of the incidents remain unheard and hidden in the mind of the victims.

Strategies

The police should be victim friendly and investigate reports thoroughly. They should keep proper records and advise the victim of the appropriate steps to take to enable them prove their cases.

Lawyers as defence lawyers should protect the interest of women during cross-examination. They should be ready to enforce the rights of women and hold watching brief for victims of sexual violence.

Judges in applying the rules of evidence should be liberal and avoid unnecessary rigidity in applying technicalities. Where the rules insist on corroboration for sexual offences, torn clothes, medical reports and appearance of the victim can be accepted as corroboration since sexual offences are usually committed in privacy.

Traditional and Religious leaders should be sympathetic with victims and sensitize their communities on the need to assist and console victims rather than ridicule or stigmatize them.

Medical doctors should realize the importance of medical evidence, which is crucial in such cases

1.2.7 TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND FORCED PROSTITUTION

Trafficking in women is the recruitment, transportation or transfer of women from one place to another by means of force, threat, fraud or deception for purposes of exploitation.

There are different forms of trafficking in Nigeria. There is the internal trafficking, which involves the recruitment and transportation of women and children from the rural areas to the cities for purposes such as domestic labour, prostitution, to work in plantations etc.

External Trafficking involves the trafficking of Nigerian girls and women to neighbouring countries such as Benin, Togo, Ghana, and to Europe and the Middle East for prostitution and domestic work. The incidence of trafficking of women for prostitution has increased in recent times leading to massive repatriation of Nigerian women from Europe and neighbouring countries.

Strategies

Roles to be played by different stakeholders;

Traditional rulers should dissuade parents and girls from fallen victims of uninvestigated ventures.

The Traditional rulers and Religious leaders should sensitise parents to be vigilant about the company their daughter keeps

Police should investigate and prosecute traffickers and their collaborators.

Judges must be very strict with the cartel of traffickers when convicted by imposing stiff penalties and awarding compensation to survivors

1.2.7 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

In most cases women play no part in decisions leading to conflicts but they bear the brunt of the effects of such conflicts.

In times of conflict, women face various forms of violence against them ranging from physical disability including loss of lives to permanent physiological trauma which persists long after the conflict is over.

In recent times in Nigeria especially in the cities internal conflicts or even riots arising from agitations for certain services women are raped, sexually assaulted, wounded and maimed. In recent times in Nigeria, whenever a riot occurred, for example when there was a riot over petrol price increase women and girls are waylaid and raped during the fracas.

When armed robbers strike, the trend is that they do not stop at robbing and killing but rape women. On one occasion in Onitsha, a young boy was forced by armed robbers to rape his mother.

Sexual assaults such as rape increases the tendency the spread of HIV/AIDS in addition to the trauma and dehumanization of women.

There are no specific laws on violence against women in conflict situations but existing laws on sexual assaults in the criminal code as well as international laws on human dignity and war crimes can be used to prosecute offenders.

All stakeholders have a part to play to bring an end to this practice

Strategies

Traditional rulers and religious leaders should sensitise their communities on the inherent danger of violence against women in such situations

The police should arrest and prosecute offenders using available laws in the criminal code where necessary.

Doctors are expected to counsel and treat victims and issue medical reports when needed.

Lawyers should assist victims to enforce their fundamental rights where our criminal laws are deficient. They can use international laws and the constitution to do this. This can be done by applying international laws where there are gaps they can also help by not hindering judges through over insistence on compliance with strict requirements for proof and technicalities.

Judges and magistrates should be gender friendly, when handling such cases coming before them and refrain from unnecessary compliance with technicalities.

1.2.8 UNSAFE ABORTIONS / CAUSING MISCARRIAGE

The rate of death resulting from unsafe abortions increases by the day, but our laws prohibit abortions and provides for stiff penalties for offenders but at the same time permits the performance of abortions to “save the life of a woman”

The law did not specify who may perform such abortions. This law has opened a floodgate for quacks to perform abortions under the guise of saving the life of women while trained medical personnel are prevented by the law from performing them where unwanted pregnancies occur.

This has resulted in resort to clandestine abortion sometimes in non-sterilized and unhygienic environments. This has resulted in high rate of maternal

mortality and the maiming and destruction of wombs of adolescents during criminal abortion.

“There are an estimated 75000 maternal deaths in Nigeria every year and 20000 of this is in abortion related incidents. 80% of them involving adolescents aged between 10 and 19 years”.⁵

The two predominant religions in Nigeria, Christianity and Islam prohibits abortion and thereby indirectly contributes to the violence occasioned by unsafe abortions which is a deprivation of women’s reproductive rights.

Police should investigate and prosecute those who commit criminal abortions.

Traditional and religious leaders should warn parents and youths in their communities about dangers of patronizing quacks or engaging in illegal abortions.

1.2.9 OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

Initial conceptualization of the issue of violence against women failed to recognise the impact of economic deprivation of women as a form of violence. However, the realisation that women constitute the poorest of the worlds poor, resulting in the denial of their fundamental rights which in turn result in physical and psychological abuse soon changed this position.

This is one form of violence usually perpetrated by the state. When the state fails to provide a secure environment, with basic standard of living to guarantee sustainable development then, it has constituted an economic violence against women.

⁵ Women’s Rights Monitor Newsletter Vol. 1 No.11 July-September, 97 edition page 28, Mrs. Bunmi Ogendegbe an associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital commenting on unsafe abortions stated as follows:-

In Nigeria like many other countries in the world, although women are major contributors to the economy their contributions are not recognised in the distribution of wealth. Women in Nigeria are the producers of food, as they constitute a large percentage of the farmers yet cultural practices deny them good nutrition.

Moreover the level of poverty amongst the women militates against her ability to enforce her fundamental Rights. Consequently, she loses her self-esteem and sometimes falls easy prey to other forms of violence, such as trafficking in women.

The economic down turn in Nigeria, occasioned by the impact of structural adjustment programme, has further impoverished Nigerian women. The resultant affect is the fall in the standard of living of the Nigerian woman coupled with a neglect of essential services such as health, education and housing.

Consequently, the medical facilities in both rural and urban centres are sometimes unavailable and where available unaffordable. The lack of adequate infrastructures such as electricity, energy for cooking (kerosine), portable water, good roads and so on further compound the work load of women. The woman cannot therefore enjoy a safe and secure environment conducive for her development.

On the whole the deprivation of women's access to education, sound health services, shelter, employment, good nutrition and minimum standard of living constitute economic violence against women.

Psychological Violence.

Research on domestic violence has shown that violence in this regard cannot only be considered at the physical level. Psychological violence is as real as the physical even though to some extent the effects may not be visible. In most cases the physical abuse is preceded by psychological /emotional abuse of wives/ partners , involving verbal aggression, rejection and sometimes neglect. The effects of verbal abuse may not be seen physically but can affect the women abused psychologically, leading to loss of self esteem, lack of confidence and depression which poses serious health problems.

There is also emotional abuse through verbal attacks on the person of women and girls. For example calling the girls prostitutes, sex symbols and free persons. She may even be reminded of a physical or mental defect. She may also be reminded of the peculiar way in which she looks, walks or talk. Usually abusive language is regarded as a means of correcting the victim.

Women experience torture and inhuman treatment, which constitute attack on the psychological and emotional conditions of the victims rather than their physical. For example, some Nigerian men desert their homes for long periods to live with other women outside their matrimonial homes. Such women if they have children are left to cater for the needs of their children, themselves and even those of other relations. The women also experience some degree of loneliness and emotional loss. Those women who have no children experience great loneliness and deep emotional loss. This experience can amount to torture and inhuman treatment. There is a need for a greater effort at documenting psychological violence. This of course, calls for more research in this area.

As a result of the down turn in the economy, the level of poverty has heightened which has to a large extent for wiping out the middle class in Nigeria with the result that a few people are in the upper class while the rest of the society form the lower class. This adverse economic situation has tended to affect most the women and the children such that poverty wears a woman 's face . This situation has in turn led to a great deal of financial pressure on the woman who normally bears the greater burden of making 'ends meet' in the family

Consequences.

Psychological/emotional violence has contributed significantly to great anxiety among women which may lead to the development of diseases like hypertension and even mental ill-health. The victim may also lose self-esteem, have suicidal tendencies and stress , which may result in social maladjustment

Witchcraft

Witchcraft is an act, which is traditionally frowned at by people in many communities in Nigeria particularly in the old western region where people believe that witches both male and female are very wicked human beings. Among the Yoruba, the male witch is called 'Oso' while the female witch is called 'Aje'. Witches are supposed to have extra ordinary powers e.g. to fly in the night to attend clandestine meetings which are supposed to hold inside trees e.g. the Iroko tree, inside rivers etc. Witches are believed to possess the power

to kill supernaturally that is, not by using any visible instrument like gun, cutlass, knife etc. Their victims just fall sick and die. Death may occur after a brief or prolonged period. Witches are also supposed to cause accident involving many deaths. Such events happen when they need human blood for some clandestine activities. The existence of witches, activities and methods of operation are only contained in folklores and improvable experiences of certain individuals. They are not documented. Witchcraft when viewed objectively or scientifically may be considered unreal or erroneous and those who hold the belief in it and react to its existence may be termed mentally ill; and in need of the intervention of psychiatrist. However, a very significant number of Nigerians believe in the existence of witchcraft. To them it is very real and they react to it as reality. For example, the law does not recognize witchcraft or react to it in the sense that its content are improvable. This may be responsible for the people (who view witchcraft as real) taking the law into their hands, from time to time, by stoning to death or burning any one who, from their point of view can be labeled a witch. It is the same reality of witchcraft that makes the people (supported by their chiefs) give anybody suspected of witchcraft an odious concoction to drink in order to prove innocence or other wise. The one who survives the ordeal is adjudged to be innocent while the one who dies or starts to confess to alleged “evils” committed through supernatural power is adjudged guilty and stoned to death.

Some have attributed the process confession as delirium or other mental illness.

The important thing is that it is invariably a woman who is stoned to death or burnt for being suspected of witchcraft. For example, although the Yoruba recognized a male witch as well as a female witch, it is rare (even if it exists at all) for a man to be burnt or stoned to death for being suspected of witchcraft. This is an evidence of ‘violence against women’ (even though some women and girls) may join in the violent act against another woman.

Consequences.

One major consequence of being branded a witch is death. The women victims could also be ostracized from the society and rejected.

Women and Sharia

Two Nigerian women, Safia Husseini on 9th October 2001 in Sokoto State and Amina Lawal on 19th August 2002 have been sentenced to death by stoning by

Sharia courts. Safia was sentenced for adultery while Amina was sentenced for bearing a child outside wedlock. It is noteworthy that the men with whom they committed the offences were allowed to go scot-free. In spite of worldwide condemnation of these sentences, there has been no official statement outlawing such barbaric and discriminatory sentences which goes against the provisions of our constitution.

Media portrayal of women as objects of entertainment and display also constitutes violence and should be discouraged.

REACTIONS OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS TO VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Women who are abused need sympathy not derision. The police must always be willing to intervene to protect the life of the victim.

Judges must not show impatience or hostility because this may discourage other women who are suffering.

2. ATTITUDE OF STAKEHOLDERS TO VICTIMS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WHO ARE PHYSICALLY ABUSE AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY TRAUMATISED

2.1 Our Judicial system is unsympathetic to the plight of victims of violence against women; Cases are not disposed of promptly and the strict requirement for corroboration and proof in some cases makes conviction impossible. The absence of witness protection programmes and giving of evidence in open courts prevent victims from starting or concluding cases.

Undue delay of cases causes lack of confidence in the judicial system and discourages the medical expert witnesses in attending Courts.

The society including the traditional institutions and the religions authorities are also not sensitive to the problems of women.

Victims are stigmatised and ridiculed while offenders are made to feel they are not the cause of violence rather the victims are blamed.

Guardians and parents do not encourage prosecution but will rather prefer to settle out of court because of what societal stigma the impact on the woman.

Strict adherence to cultural norms tends to worsen human rights abuses which are based on culture. Incidents are not reported due to societal stigma to rape and sexual assault victims.

The Police authorities are not gender friendly. Proper records of reported cases are not kept and used for prosecution.

Police do not conduct thorough investigations thereby creating loopholes for perpetrators who get off unpunished.

Domestic violence is regarded a private matter by the Police and prosecution is usually not done for serious injury arising there from.

Sometimes the victim is the one arrested and detained.

During prosecution, because proper investigation is not done cases fail in court.

Women are the ones blamed for rape and sexual assault.

The Police write statements of victim and make alterations even where such people can write. Some victims are further assaulted at police stations.

Medical Doctors are not committed to attending courts to give evidence because of the usual protracted delays in court proceedings.

So me medical doctors refuse to attend cases with criminal connotation but rather insist on the victims going to Government hospitals.

Medical reports are not as explicit as they should be.

Victims are not treated with the sympathy they deserve.

Demand for money (payment) before treatment causes delays, which may affect the value of the medical report.

Cases of criminal abortion which end up in hospitals are not reported to the police for prosecution.

Lawyers who are usually defence lawyers subject victims to rigorous and sometimes embarrassing cross-examination, which prevents them from expressing themselves in court during hearing.

Some lawyers refuse to take up cases for those who cannot pay their fees whereas the constitution provides for legal aid to be provided for cases on the Enforcement of Human Right⁶.

Lawyers do not apply their knowledge to use international conventions where local laws are lacking or in adequate.

⁶ Section 46 (4)(b) Constitution of the Republic of Nigeria

Lawyers who prosecute, delay cases and this frustrates litigates and witnesses.

Some of these forms of violence are subtly supported by religious and cultural practices, for example the sharia law says that “Sharia law allows the man to withdraw maintenance from the wife if she denies him sex, but generally forbids marital rape

2.2 DECIDED CASES

CASE 1

An accused was charged with rape of one Rebecca Okusuga, a 20 year old virgin girl, the girl had accompanied her male cousin to visit his friend who was a brother to the accused. The accused overheard that the girl was looking for a job and offered to help. He asked her to call back some days later to collect addresses of prospective employers. On the appointed day at about 6.30 pm she went and was given the addresses.

As she knelt down to say thank you the customary way, the accused a well-built man, switched off the Light, locked the door and forcibly carried her to the bed and in spite of her screams and struggle had carnal knowledge of her.

No co-tenants came to her rescue. After the incident he offered her five shillings which she refused His bed sheets were stained with the girls blood and the girls pant were blood stained. When she got home she reported the incident to her parents and her cousin. They followed her to the accused house and he pretended to be sleeping. When accused was confronted with the compliant he kept silent and even refused to make a statement to the police.

The judge held as follows:

“I have no doubt that accused took most improper liberties with the girl who was also anxious to get a job. The accused committed the offence for which he is being charged but there is a practice in Nigerian courts, which have for all practical purposes ripened into Law, that is the requirement of corroboration before conviction for rape even though the act does not call for corroboration”.

Applying the principle of corroborative evidence to this case; the girls prompt reply to her parents and cousin did not satisfy it. The learned judge did not consider the silence of the accused and the stained clothing and bed sheets, as corroborative evidence. The accused was discharged and acquitted.

Comments:

Note the attitude of the judge even though he recognized that the offence was committed and that the act did not call for corroboration he went on to discharge the accused.

CASE 2.

In the case of the state VS Samuel Adegboye (1991) ALL NLR page 404 where the accused was charged with unlawful carnal knowledge and indecent assault of a nine-year-old girl, the accused was discharged of the charge of unlawful carnal knowledge but convicted on the lesser count of indecent assault.

The court held later alia “Although in cases of rape and sexual offences against women and girls a court may convict on uncorroborated evidence of the prosecution yet the court must warn itself that is dangerous to do so.

Note that in this case the judge created a stricter threshold from the basic principle that an accused could be convicted on the uncorroborated evidence of the prosecution by declaring that it is dangerous to do so. This will further make convictions difficult if not impossible in cases of sexual violence against women.

2.3 CASE STUDIES

Case 1. Obianuju Okafor (not real name)

Obianuu an 18 year old medial student of the University of Calabar was going to visit her aunt at Abagana. For some reasons occasioned by vehicle break down she arrived late in the day at about 8pm when it was already dark. She met an Okada (Motorcycle) driver who offered to take her to her destination. Unknown to her he took her to a different place and when she entered a room he locked it behind her and later offered her drinks. She became frightened and asked of her aunt. He started beating her and later tied her to the bed and started to rape her. He raped her repeatedly throughout the night. She was a virgin and her blood flowed freely on the bed. Her clothes and pants were torn and blood stained. She screamed for help but no one came and he threatened to kill and bury her if she tried to attract attention. After raping her he stole about N2000 from her purse. He left her when he was called out for work in the morning.

The next morning, she managed to escape. The first person that met her got scared of her appearance and ran away. She reported the matter to the police. Her aunt and her relations were alerted to her problem. She made a detailed statement to the police. She was ready to prosecute but her aunt and other

relations wanted to settle the matter within the family because the offender was related to the aunt's husband. When the matter went to the court the aunt applied to withdraw the matter, but the court refused because when the victim was interviewed she said she wanted the matter to be prosecuted. Her parents were abroad but she believed they would support her.

The next time the matter came up in court the victim had been intimidated into saying that she no longer wanted the case to go on and pleaded with the court to allow them to go and settle. That her aunt had told her that if she gave evidence that is recorded in court no one will ever marry her. That she should accept Twenty Thousand Naira. (about 200 dollars for her pains and forget about prosecution.). Even though the court did not grant her application for withdrawal a problem has risen. There will be unwillingness to testify and the accused will go free. The medical doctor who conducted medical examination also refuse to release the medical report because he was not paid the huge amount he demanded. The matter is still pending.

Comment

This was a good case where the offender should have received maximum punishment but due to the societal attitude and the doctors attitude he is likely to be discharged.

Case 2 Chinonye Adukwe (21 years)

Victim's father reported that she has been in police custody for more than one year. A police officer confirmed that policemen were sexually assaulting her. She was accused of having killed her daughter and throwing away the corpse..

On investigation it was found that she did not kill her daughter but that she failed to bury the body of her daughter because she was advised by an older relative to throw the body into the bush because of the nature of the baby's illness. By the time she was released by court for want of evidence she had spent over one year in detention and had been sexually assaulted several times by those police officers in whose custody she found herself. There was no prosecution for the sexual assault or unlawful detention.

Comment

Victim should not have gone through the long period of arrest and sexual assaults if the police officers were sensitised on the adverse affects of

violence against women. Note the role of the older relative on issue of tradition.

Case 3 Re: Juliana Okoye

The client a wife of customary Law marriage has six children, four boys and two girls. She was a petty trader who lived in Lagos with her husband and children. In February 1999 her husband for unknown reasons sent her packing to their village at Nnewi. While he remained in Lagos where he does his business. She went back to the village and even though he sent no money for the up keep of his family she was able to put the children in school.

One day he came from Lagos and went to her stall in the market, beat her up, and threatened to bathe her with acid because he said she was sleeping with other men. He later used the police to arrest her and detained her for several days.

Through a lawyer, B,S Nwankwo esq. she went to an Nnewi High Court to enforce her fundamental rights. There in court her husband boasted that he will continue to harass and arrest her as it pleased him because she was his property. When the court made an order for his arrest for contempt of court he drove away.

Again he carried out his threat. On 20-5-2000 he came with men of state security and investigation. Bureau zone II command Onikan headquarters Lagos, picked up Juliana and her lawyer and took them to Lagos where they were again detained. He claimed that she and her lawyer planned to assassinate him (the husband). Counsel J.I. Adeyanju for Juliana applied for bail when they were arraigned but was refused at first. Finally on 26/05/2000 she and her lawyer were released on bail.

When she went back to Nnewi, her husband again went to the house and tried to pour acid on her but was prevented by neighbours. Again police come to arrest her on a report by her husband. A petition was then written to the inspector General of Police who sent a team to investigate the role of the police in the matter. Instead of investigating the role of the police, they arrested Juliana with forged warrants of arrest served by one B.E Williams DSP. When FIDA came to know we alerted the inspector General of Police and again she was released on his orders.

The Nigerian Police Onikan later apologized to the victim for detaining her for eight days without cause. Her husband was never prosecuted for giving false information to the police or for assaulting his wife.

Comments

Note the negative role of the police in this matter. Note also the positive interventions of the Inspector General of Police.

CASE 4 Rape case

“You’re apes in the midst of humans, judge tells police”

ONITSHA – Justice Stanley Nnaji of an Enugu High Court has condemned what he called “barbaric behaviour” of some police officers that he called “apes in the midst of humans”.

Delivering judgement in a case of rape against 2 policemen, Justice Nnaji said their action was “callous, condemnable and intolerable in any civilised society. They ought not to stay in the Nigerian Police Force and should be made to face the full length and wrath of the law.

Miss Ifeoma Ani (18) had filed a suit against the Enugu state police command and 2 policemen – one Ahmed and Augustine of Abakaliki Road Police Station claiming N100,000,000 for damages for alleged rape by the 2 policemen.

Justice Nnaji said the arrest and detention of the schoolgirl in the first instance was

“Unlawful and malicious in the legal sense”

“The arrest, detention and rape of the applicant no doubt constitutes a flagrant violation of the applicants fundamental right guaranteed under section 34, 35 and 41 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The applicant is a young unmarried girl of about 18 - 25 years, the violation of her womanhood no doubt has degraded her and put her future to marrying a young man of her choice in jeopardy,” Nnaji said.

He ruled that the first respondent (Commissioner of Police) “in circumstances like this would be held vicariously liable for the tort under his command even though their relationship is not strictly that of master and servant”

The judge also states the need to observe human rights. His words: “The observance of human rights is a tribute to the rule of law. The rule of law is the first principle of democracy as exemplified in the doctrine of powers, which is antithetical to democracy.”

The applicant no doubt is entitled to public apology in addition to the damages already awarded. In the circumstances, I hereby order the first respondent (Commissioner of Police) to cause to be published in any of the national dailies an apology to the applicant for the inhuman and barbaric act of the second and third respondent meted out on the applicant,” Justice Nnaji ruled and ordered that the applicant be paid N300, 000. 00 as damages.

Comment

This is a case where the Judge awarded compensation to the survivor even after conviction of her assailants. This practice is worthy of emulation as it is permitted by our criminal code.

Case 5 Amaka Okeke- widowhood practices, inheritance

Amaka Okeke is a widow with only female children. When her husband a medical doctor died in 1999 his relatives asked her to leave the family house because she was still young and did not have a son for her husband. They took away his cars and other properties and sent her and her daughters away. She is in court trying to repossess her properties and return to her matrimonial home. Even through a letter of administration was obtained in her favour her brother-in-law is contesting it, claiming that since his brother left no son the properties should go to the closest male relative.

HOW TO ASSIST A FEMALE VICTIM OF VIOLENCE

The helper has an advisory role, but he/she also has a moral, legal and supportive role.

3.1 DIALOGUE

Welcome the victim and let her decide how she wants to tell you her experience and how much. Help her to let out any bottled up feelings or emotions. Listen, empathise and sympathise. Encourage her to talk but do not interrupt or interject unnecessarily.

3.2 TAKE NOTES/RECORD

This is important especially if there is eventual need to take legal action. It is easy to remember things that are written down immediately after the event(s).

3.3 ADVISE BUT DO NOT PRESSURISE

She must be guided but she must make her own choice. She needs to take control of herself and her life. Let her know all the options available, the advantages and disadvantages. But in the final analysis, the choice must be her own. She must have time to think before making a choice.

3.4 IDENTIFY LOCATIONS OF FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Shelter where it is available and will save life

Police for documentation and possible pre-emptive action

Family elders

Skills/Training avenues for learning about her rights and good communication technique

Legal procedure/ Legal Aid Center / Legal practitioner

STRATEGIES FOR STAKES HOLDERS

The police should be sympathetic towards women who go to the police to make reports. They should listen attentively take good records and get all the necessary details that will assist in the prosecution. They should gather the relevant evidence to charge the matter to court and prosecute successfully. They should advice the victim on the appropriate steps to take. Domestic violence is not just a family matter.

Medical officers must reassure survivors that they are not to blame. They should keep records and keep in mind the fact that medical evidence is crucial in cases of violence and ensure that all the necessary information is provided in the medical report. They should refer those who approach them before going to the police to the nearest police station.

Judicial officers should realize that violence against women has far reaching adverse consequences to the individual the family and the society in general. This should influence their attitude in handling such cases, which come before them. The fundamental human rights provision on right to dignity of the human person is there for all persons in Nigeria. Moreover, the African Charter and other international treaties like CEDAW can be invoked to determine both criminal and civil cases.

Our laws permit compensation to be awarded in 23 criminal cases and this should be practiced more. Courts should also make protective orders to protect survivors.

Legal practitioners are part of the judicial system and play a dual role of representing their clients as well as being officers of the court. They should play a pro-active role in ensuring that justice is done in cases being handled by them. They should use international laws to bring cases to court where there are lapses and they should avoid embarrassing women in court during evidence. Lawyers should also offer their services free to women who are not able to pay legal fees.

LIST OF ACCRONYMS

AU	AFRICAN UNION
CEDAW:	CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
C.C	CRIMINAL CODE
P.C.	PENAL CODE
FGM	FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION
ICCPR	INTERNATIONAL CONVENANT ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS
ICESCR:	INTERNATION CONVENAT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS
NGO:	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION
OAU:	ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY
THE PROTOCOL:	PROTOCOL TO THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS
AFRICAN CHARTER:	THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS.
UDHR:	UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS
WILDAF:	WOMEN IN LAW INLAW AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
WASRO	WEST AFRICA SUB REGIONAL OFFICE

APENDIX I

ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA 2001, NO.3

THE PROHIBITION OF INFRINGEMENT OF A WIDOW'S AND WIDOWER'S FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS LAW 2001.

A LAW TO MAKE IT UNLAWFUL TO INFRINGE THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF WINDOWS AND WIDOWERS, AND FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS

**ENACTED BY THE ENUGU STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY,
THIS 8TH MARCH, 2001**

ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA 2001, NO. 3

Long Title: A Law to make it unlawful to infringe the fundament rights of widows and widowers, and for other related matters.

Date of Commencement: (8th March, 2001)

WHEREAS:-

the fundamental right to life is entrenched in the Constitution;
the fundamental right to dignity of human person is entrenched in the Constitution;
the fundamental right to peaceful assembly and association is entrenched in the Constitution enactment:

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED by the House of Assembly of Enugu State of Nigeria as follows:

Short Title: 1. This law may be cited as the prohibition of Infringement of Widow's and Widower's Fundamental Rights Law 2001.

Prohibition: 4. (1) No person for whatever purpose or reason shall compel a widow/widower as follows:

to permit the hairs on the head or nay part of the body to be shaved;
to sleep either alone or on the same bed or be locked in a room with corpse of the husband/wife;
not to receive condolence visits from sympathizers during the period of mourning;
to be re-married by a relative of the late husband / wife
to sit on the floor to be naked during any period of the husband's/wife's burial rites;
to drink the water used in washing the corpse of the husband/wife;
to weep and wail loudly at intervals at any time after the death of the husband/wife except at ones own volition or involuntary action;
to remain in confinement after the death of the husband/wife for any given period;
to vacate the matrimonial home;
to do any other thing which contravenes the fundamental rights entrenched in the Constitution or is degrading the person;

(2) Subject to the Marriage Act, Wills law, Administration of Estates law, or indeed any customary law (not repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience), a widow/widower shall not be dispossessed upon the death of the husband/wife of any property acquired by the deceased husband/wife (during the deceased husband's / wife life time) without his/her consent.

False Complaint: 5. It shall be unlawful for any widow \widower or any person to falsely allege that the rights guaranteed under this law have been violated.

Penalty: 5. Anybody who contravenes, conspires, aids, counsels procures, or assist an other person to contravene the provisions of section 4 and 5 of this Law shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine of N5,000.00 (Five thousand naira) or two years imprisonment to both.

Jurisdiction: 7. The Magistrate Court shall have jurisdiction to try summarily and offence under this law.

Appeal: 8. There shall be a right of Appeal from the judgment of the Magistrate Court up to the highest Court in Nigeria.

This printed impression has been carefully compared by me with the Bill which has been passed the House of Assembly of Enugu State of Nigeria, and is found by me to be true and correctly printed copy of the said bill.

ABEL CHUKWUHERBERT E. UDEH

Speaker of the House of Assembly

Clerk of the House of Assembly

Assented to this.....day of.....2001.

CHIMAROKE NNAMANI M.D.

Governor of Enugu State.

APPENDIX II

DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993

Article 1

For the purposes of this Declaration, the term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Article 2

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

- (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
- (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

Article 3

Women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. These rights include, inter alia:

(a) The right to life; 6/

(b) The right to equality; 7/

(6) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 3; and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 6.

(7) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 26.

(c) The right to liberty and security of person; 8/

(d) The right to equal protection under the law; 7/

(e) The right to be free from all forms of discrimination; 7/

(f) The right to the highest standard attainable of physical and mental health; 9/

(g) The right to just and favourable conditions of work; 10/

(h) The right not to be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 4

States should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women and, to this end, should:

(a) Consider, where they have not yet done so, ratifying or acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or withdrawing reservations to that Convention;

(b) Refrain from engaging in violence against women;

(c) Exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons;

8/ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 3; and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 9.

9/ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 12.

10/ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 23; and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, articles 6 and 7.

11/ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 5; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 7; and Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

(d) Develop penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress the wrongs caused to women who are subjected to violence; women who are subjected to violence should be provided with access to the mechanisms of justice and, as provided for by national legislation, to just and effective remedies for the harm that they have suffered; States should also inform women of their rights in seeking redress through such mechanisms;

(e) Consider the possibility of developing national plans of action to promote the protection of women against any form of violence, or to include provisions for that purpose in plans already existing, taking into account, as appropriate, such cooperation as can be provided by non-governmental organizations, particularly those concerned with the issue of violence against women;

(f) Develop, in a comprehensive way, preventive approaches and all those measures of a legal, political, administrative and cultural nature that promote the protection of women against any form of violence, and ensure that the re-victimization of women does not occur because of laws insensitive to gender considerations, enforcement practices or other interventions;

(g) Work to ensure, to the maximum extent feasible in the light of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation, that women subjected to violence and, where appropriate, their children have specialized assistance, such as rehabilitation, assistance in child care and maintenance, treatment, counselling, and health and social services, facilities and programmes, as well as support structures, and should take all other appropriate measures to promote their safety and physical and psychological rehabilitation;

(h) Include in government budgets adequate resources for their activities related to the elimination of violence against women;

(i) Take measures to ensure that law enforcement officers and public officials responsible for implementing policies to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women receive training to sensitize them to the needs of women;

(j) Adopt all appropriate measures, especially in the field of education, to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women and to eliminate prejudices, customary practices and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes and on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(k) Promote research, collect data and compile statistics, especially concerning domestic violence, relating to the prevalence of different forms of violence against women and encourage research on the causes, nature, seriousness and consequences of violence against women and on the effectiveness of measures implemented to prevent and redress violence against women; those statistics and findings of the research will be made public;

(l) Adopt measures directed towards the elimination of violence against women who are especially vulnerable to violence;

(m) Include, in submitting reports as required under relevant human rights instruments of the United Nations, information pertaining to violence against women and measures taken to implement the present Declaration;

(n) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines to assist in the implementation of the principles set forth in the present Declaration;

(o) Recognize the important role of the women's movement and non-governmental organizations world wide in raising awareness and alleviating the problem of violence against women;

(p) Facilitate and enhance the work of the women's movement and non-governmental organizations and cooperate with them at local, national and regional levels;

(q) Encourage intergovernmental regional organizations of which they are members to include the elimination of violence against women in their programmes, as appropriate.

Article 5

The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system should, within their respective fields of competence, contribute to the recognition and realization of the rights and the principles set forth in the present Declaration and, to this end, should, inter alia:

(a) Foster international and regional cooperation with a view to defining regional strategies for combating violence, exchanging experiences and financing programmes relating to the elimination of violence against women;

(b) Promote meetings and seminars with the aim of creating and raising awareness among all persons of the issue of the elimination of violence against women;

(c) Foster coordination and exchange within the United Nations system between human rights treaty bodies to address the issue of violence against women effectively;

(d) Include in analyses prepared by organizations and bodies of the United Nations system of social trends and problems, such as the periodic reports on the world social situation, examination of trends in violence against women;

(e) Encourage coordination between organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to incorporate the issue of violence against women into ongoing programmes, especially with reference to groups of women particularly vulnerable to violence;

(f) Promote the formulation of guidelines or manuals relating to violence against women, taking into account the measures referred to in the present Declaration;

(g) Consider the issue of the elimination of violence against women, as appropriate, in fulfilling their mandates with respect to the implementation of human rights instruments;

(h) Cooperate with non-governmental organizations in addressing the issue of violence against women.

Article 6

Nothing in the present Declaration shall affect any provision that is more conducive to the elimination of violence against women that may be contained in the legislation of a State or in any international convention, treaty or other instrument in force in a State.

APPENDIX III

AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Adopted at Nairobi on 26th June 1981

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 21 October 1986, in accordance with article 63.

PART 1

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Chapter 1 – HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Article 1

The member states of the Organisation of African Unity parties to the present Charter shall recognise the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in this Charter and shall undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect to them.

Article 2

Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognised and guaranteed in the present Charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status.

Article 3

1. Every individual shall be equal before the law.
2. Every individual shall be entitled to equal protection of the law.

Article 14

The right to property shall be guaranteed. It may only be encroached upon in the interest of public need or in the general interest of the community and in accordance with the provisions of appropriate laws.

Article 15

Every individual shall have the right to work under equitable and satisfactory conditions, and shall receive equal pay for equal work.

Article 16

1. Every individual shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health.
2. States parties to the present Charter shall take the necessary measures to protect the health of their people and to ensure that they receive medical attention when they are sick.

Article 17

1. Every individual shall have the right to education.
2. Every individual may freely, take part in the cultural life of his community
3. The promotion and protection of morals and traditional values recognised by the community shall be the duty of the State.

Article 18

1. The family shall be the natural unit and basis of society. It shall be protected by the State, which shall take care of its physical and moral health.
2. The State shall have the duty to assist the family which is the custodian of morals and traditional values recognised by the community.
3. The State shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of the women and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions.
4. The aged and the disabled shall also have the rights to special measures of protection in keeping with their physical or moral needs.

Article 19

All people shall be equal; they shall enjoy the same respect and shall have the same rights. Nothing shall justify the domination of a people by another.

Article 20

1. All peoples shall have a right to existence. They shall have the unquestionable and inalienable right to self-determination. They shall freely determine their political status and shall pursue their economic and social development according to the policy they have freely chosen.
2. Colonised or oppressed people shall have the right to free themselves from the bonds of domination by resorting to any means recognised by the international community.
3. All peoples shall have the rights to the assistance of the States parties to the present Charter in their liberation struggle against foreign domination, be it political, economic or cultural.

Article 21

1. All peoples shall freely dispose of their wealth and natural resources. This right shall be exercised in the exclusive interest of the people. In no case shall a people be deprived of it.
2. In case of spoliation, the dispossessed people shall have the right to the lawful recovery of its property as well as to an adequate compensation.
3. The free disposal of wealth and natural resources shall be exercised without prejudice to the obligation of promoting international economic cooperation based on mutual respect, equitable exchange and the principles of international law.
4. States parties to the present Charter shall individually and collectively exercise the right to free disposal of their wealth and natural resources with a view to strengthening African unity and solidarity.
5. States parties to the present Charter shall undertake to eliminate all forms of foreign economic exploitation particularly that practised by international monopolies so as to enable their peoples to fully benefit from the advantages derived from their national resources.

Chapter II – DUTIES

Article 27

1. Every individual shall have duties towards his family and society, the State and other legally recognised communities and the international community.
2. The rights and freedoms of each individual shall be exercised with due regard to the rights of others, collective security, morality and common interest

Article 28

Every individual shall have the duty to respect and consider his fellow beings without discrimination, and to maintain relations aimed at promoting, safeguarding and reinforcing mutual respect and tolerance.

Article 29

The individual shall also have the duty:

1. To preserve the harmonious development of the family and to work for the cohesion and respect of the family; to respect, his parents at all times, to maintain them in case of need;
2. To serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service;
3. Not to compromise the security of the State whose national or resident he is;
4. To preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity, particularly when the later is threatened;
5. To preserve and strengthen the national independence and the territorial integrity of his country and to contribute to its defence in accordance with the law;
6. To work to the best of his abilities and competence, and to pay taxes imposed by law in the interest of the society;
7. To preserve and strengthen positive African cultural values in his relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and in general, to contribute to the promotion of the moral well-being of society;
8. To contribute to the best of his abilities at all times and at all levels, to the promotion and achievement of African Unity.

MONITORING CHART

MATTERS RELATING TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS ISSUES

MONTH	NAME OF PARTIES	ISSUES FOR DETERMINATION	DECISION	REMARKS
JANUARY				
FEBRUARY				
MARCH				
APRIL				
MAY				
JUNE				
JULY				
AUGUST				
SEPTEMBER				
OCTOBER				
NOVEMBER				
DECEMBER				

