

PREVALENCE AND CAUSES OF SEXUAL DEFILEMENT OF FEMALE MINORS IN LAGOS METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Sexual defilement of female minor has become a prevalent social problem in Nigeria, and in Lagos metropolis in particular. However, information on awareness, prevalence and causes of it are scanty. This study, therefore, investigated the awareness, prevalence and causes of sexual defilement of female minors in Lagos metropolis. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Data were collected through qualitative and quantitative methods. These involved two in-depth interviews and 100 questionnaire surveys of court officials (77) and social workers (23). Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis, while quantitative data were analysed using frequency distribution. Fifty – Six percent of the sampled court officials were female; 79.0% of them were married and 81.0% of them had between 1 to 3 children. 96.0% of them were strongly aware of sexual defilement of minors as a social problem; while 98.0% of them identified female minors as the most targeted. However, 67.0% of them strongly agree that male minors were not also spared. Sexual desire for the girl (mean = 3.74); experimenting with sex (mean = 3.97); wanted sex (mean = 3.86); spiritual cleansing with virgin (mean = 3.44); alcoholic drinks and drugs (mean = 3.90); opportunity because the minor would not tell (mean = 3.79); watching sex films and other sexually explicit materials (mean = 3.96); psychiatric problem (mean = 3.40); exposure to sexual abuse in the past (mean 3.46) and war / conflict / riot (mean = 3.11) were the identified causes of sexual defilement of female minors in Lagos metropolis. Sexual defilement of female minors has become a worrisome problem in the city of Lagos. More awareness campaigns, adequate record keeping of its incidences, more identification of its causes, sensitization and intervention measures were recommended.

Key words: Sexual defilement, female minors, offenders, prosecution, awareness.

Introduction

The issue of sexual defilement has become a recurrent social phenomenon. It is a kind of sexual offence within the spectrum of sexual violence and rape. The act may be carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority or against a person who is incapable of valid consent, such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, or below the legal age consent. In recent years it has become not only a far rampant phenomenon but an almost a daily issue. The incidence of sexual defilement in Lagos has tremendously increased due to cosmopolitan nature of the state and the consequent effect of the classification of the state as a mega city.

The sexual defilement of children in the state is perhaps the highest in the country, though there seems to be no central statistics to refer to as basis. However, the frequent reports of the incidences over the media show that the rate is very high in Lagos state.

This study was carried out therefore, to investigate the awareness and causes and of sexual defilement of female minors in Lagos metropolis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The social problem of sexual defilement of minors is very common in every society of the world. In Nigeria, for instance, the problem is gradually becoming alarming. Nnadi (2012) argued that rape, indecent assault, incest and defilement of the minors are some common sexual assaults that women in Nigeria are confronted with. It is the same story in other African countries like Uganda where incest, forced marriage, early marriage and sexual defilement of minors are now very rampant (Muhwezi et al, 2011).

Although, statistics do not show so many reported cases of child sexual abuse in Nigeria (Bejide, 2014), however, the daily reported cases in the print and electronic media showed that it has become a worrisome problem in Nigeria. The notorious cases of forced marriage and sexual defilement of the minors is on the increase, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria.

The constitution of a sexual offence varies between societies and within society over time. Issues relating to gender, age, relationship, aggression, consent and location all influence whether a particular sexual act is considered an offence or not (Kanyanya et al, 2007). However, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines sexual violence or offence as any sexual act, attempt to obtain sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the survivor, in any setting (Beninger, 2013). Sexual defilement is child sexual abuse at the hands of an adult (Finkelhor et al, 2014) it is the offence of rape of children (Morhe and Morhe, 2013). It is an act of having carnal knowledge of a girl who is a minor without her consent or under duress (Nnadi, 2012). Defilement of young girls is pervasive globally as babies from the cradle are not spared (Nnadi, 2012)

One may ask: who are the people that are likely to be perpetrators of sexual defilement of minors? In most cases, abusers are people who are close to the child. It may be a biological parent, or a step parent, uncles, cousins, grand parent or an extended relative or a care giver. It may be on some occasions the neighbours, employers or a police officer (Bejide, 2014, Finkelhor et al 2014 and Sampson and Hart, 2013) or soldiers called upon to keep peace during conflict or war (O'Brien, 2011).

A previous study showed that more young people were involved in sexual defilement than older people, but this offence was not limited to a particular age group of perpetrators and the vast majority of the offenders were usually non-professionals, comprising the lower socio-economic class of population (Kanyanya et al, 2007). The studies conducted on sexual defilement have shown that victims were usually girls and that majority of the offenders of defilement and attempted defilement target minors (Beninger 2013 and Kanyanya et al, 2007). Hence, this work is pertinent and would add more values to the existing pool of knowledge on sexual defilement of minors and the laxities involved in prosecution of the offenders involved.

Reasons and causes of sexual defilement

There are many obvious reasons why perpetrators of sexual defilement were motivated to commit the crime. Jewkes et.al (2010), in their study included wanting of sex from the girl involved, experimenting with sex, peer group influence, anger against or as a punishment for the girl and boredom are motivational reasons why adult defile female minors. Another reason identified was the possibility that there would not be consequences, especially when very young female children were involved.

The genesis of sexual violence (sexual defilement included), is rooted in the social and cultural norms that entrench patriarchal gender relations and perpetuate discrimination and inequality of girls (Beninger, 2013). This created problems of sexuality which is very much a socio-cultural invention that is closely linked to power and to the process of subjugation. How we 'do' and experience sexuality is influenced by our society and culture. How and with whom we have sex are all forms of learned behaviour from our culture and society (Tamale, 2014).

Another cause of sexual defilement of female minors is exposure to sexually explicit materials. Kanyanya et.al (2007), argued that there was a link between sexually explicit materials and pre-occupations with thoughts about sex and sexual defilement offence.

Poverty is another factor identified as a cause of sexual defilement of female minor children. Kaye (2008) argued that overall economic circumstances which compel minors to engage in sex trade to provide support for themselves and their parents were a strong cause of sexual defilement of minors in the society. Beninger (2013) argued in the same way that some girls engage in transactional sex under economic pressure in order to afford school fees or obtain money to spend, or to secure good grades. The author added poor disciplinary standard and a culture of impunity for sexual misconduct and imbalance of power between girls and male counterparts as other factors.

Virginity is another cause of sexual defilement of minor female children. In south Africa and Zimbabwe, Tamale(2014) wrote that many young women voluntarily submit themselves for virginity test in a bid to gain public approval, response to demands for communal belonging and on account of the dignity and pride associated with it. However, such virginity test may open up such young women to sexual defilement from the adult male in the society. Bajaj (2008) in her study of Zambia society argued that sexual defilement of virgins is a common phenomenon because of the belief by older men that having unprotected sex with a virgin can cure HIV. Hence, many minor female children have been defiled and this also exacerbated the spread of the disease. This is a virgin sex cure for HIV (Jewkes, et.al, 2010)

Another cause of sexual defilement of minors is psychiatric problem in offender; Kanyanya et.al (2007) identified psychiatric morbidity or implicit personality disorder as cause of sexual defilement. Other factors identified by the authors are; substance use disorder, paraphilia, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder and anti-social personality disorder.

Kanyanya et.al (2007) also signified family variables, socio-economic factors, history of sexual abuse, impaired family functioning and alcohol, as other factors which may propel people to offend laws on sexual defilement.

Finally, conflict and war in the society may cause a big chance for the adult male fighters to engage in indiscriminate sexual defilement of minor female children. Blunt (2000) gave the historical explanation of how minor female British Nationals were defiled during the years of Indian mutiny. The exposure to conflict for a long time has implications on people's sexual integrity. Women and girls were more likely to be victims of sexual abuse associated with the war and conflict. Reports of girls and women that had been victims of rape and defilement at the hands of rebel fighters were common. Therefore, during war, the possibility of sexual abuse of women and girls is known to be high (Muhwezi et.al, 2011).

Consequences of sexual defilement on the victims

Sexual defilement has a lot of bad consequences on the victims. These are consequences that are lasting and very profound on the victims, even throughout the continuum of life. However, these effects or consequences of sexual defilement vary from victim to victim depending on a variety of factors. According to Bejide (2004), such factors include the age of the child when defiled, the personality of the abuser to the victim and the reaction of those whom the defiled child decides to share his experiences with.

Sexual defilement has many psychological effects on the victims. The first psychological effect is traumatic sexualisation which is a process in which a child's sexuality (including both sexual feelings and sexual attitudes) is shaped in a developmentally inappropriate and interpersonally dysfunctional fashion, as a result of sexual abuse (Finkelhor and Browne, 1985). Defilement evokes not just anxiety and fear, but disgust (Seidman, 2013). Other effects according to Bejide (2014) included depression; dissociation; hostility; anger; impaired relationships; low self-esteem; and sexual dysfunction; sleep disturbance; suicidal ideas and behaviour and substance abuse. There is obviously a serious emotional and psychological impact for girls who experience abuse (Beninger, 2013). Hence, victims of defilement suffer adverse psychological effects long after the offence has been committed. Victims were found to present psychiatric problems, somatic manifestation and disturbances in instinctive functions (Morhe and Morhe, 2013).

Sexual defilement also has a serious health implication on the victims. It leads to adverse long term health consequences. For instance, HIV/AIDS is a cause and a consequence of sexual exploitation of children

(Morhe and Morhe, 2013). Sexual defilement, therefore, spreads sexually transmitted infections (Beninger 2013). Pathogens can be transmitted indiscriminately and unknowingly; contamination through bodily contact can spread exponentially (Seidman, 2013). Morhe and Morhe (2013) argued that some victims get pregnant and are also susceptible to long term health problems associated with early motherhood. Hence, sexual defilement causes unwanted pregnancy (Beninger, 2013). In area of education of the victims, sexual defilement severely affects the ability of girls to participate in school, and it therefore fully affects their right to education. It perpetuates gender discrimination and inequality, especially when it goes unnoticed and unpunished (Beninger, 2013).

Sexual defilement of minor female also has extensive consequences and devastating effects on the families and the communities at large (Nnadi, 2012). It causes enormous emotional pain and suffering to the victims and families in area of huge economic losses (Kanyanya et al, 2007). These economic losses and hardship are often associated with teenagers' pregnancy and attendant complications (Morhe and Morhe, 2013).

Sexual defilement would also create a problem where the victims would not trust people again. This is a problem of betrayal which refers to the dynamic by which children discover that someone on whom they were virtually dependent has caused them harm (Finkelhor and Brown, 1985). Another effect is powerlessness or disempowerment, the dynamic of rendering the victim powerless. It refers to the process in which the child's will, desires and sense of efficacy are continually contravened (Finkelhor and Brown, 1985). The defiled is often considered a predatory figure engendering a trail of suffering and ruin (Seidman, 2013).

Stigmatization is another effect. This refers to the negative connotations (e.g badness, shame and guilt) that are communicated to the defiled child around the experiences and is then incorporated into the child's self-image. It may come from the abuser or reinforced by attitudes that the victim infers or hears from other persons in the family or community (Finkelhor and Brown, 1985).

Finally, sexual defilement may also lead to the death of the victim through murder. O'Brien (2011) argued that a US soldier engaged as part of the American peace keeping contingent to Kosovo raped and murdered a 10 years old girl. Hence, sexual defilement in the process may cause the victims their lives.

Ending the problem

The first way of eliminating the problem of sexual defilement is to make strict and stiff law against it. There should be domestic legislation that seeks to protect children against sexual exploitation. Female and male minors should be protected from being exposed to any form of sexual abuse that may be occasioned by an adult male (Bejide, 2014). The offenders should be prosecuted and punished if found guilty by the courts in order to act as deterrence.

Secondly, there should be calls for activism that eschews emotive appeals based on the defilement of childhood innocence in favour of politics that are more responsive to the actual needs of the victims (Kaye, 2008). Government should put in place, measures to meet the needs of the victims legally, medically and emotionally. Medically, there should be provisions for HIV post-exposure prophylaxis for Child Sexual Abuse, not only to prevent some children from acquiring HIV from the Child Sexually Abused but to attract more children and guardians to the service, as well as inter professional referral to the service (Cheshyre and Molyneux, 2009).

Thirdly, awareness campaigns to enlighten the public of the fact that children are the most common victims of sexual defilements should be increased so that parents and guardians would be more vigilant over their children and wards (Kanyanya et al, 2007).

Finally, sexual offenders should be treated and rehabilitated to reduce the vices (Kanyanya et al, 2007). The victims need to be counselled too. They should be made to realize that sexual brokenness with its exploitation and distorted lusts is not the final word. We can find freedom from this slavery through the redeeming grace and love of Christ. We must bring our sexual brokenness to him and ask him to remove the shame (Smith, 2012). Hence, religious counselling should be included in the treatment of the cases of sexual defilement.

METHODOLOGY APPLIED

Introduction

This section discusses the research design, the study area, the study population, sampling methods and sampling size, method of data collection, method of data analysis, ethical issue and constraints.

Research design

Survey design (onetime survey or sample survey) was adopted in this study. It involved the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions (Schutt, 2004). The study utilized triangulation of method where both qualitative and quantitative methods were used.

The study area

The study was conducted in Lagos state. It cuts across notable areas where family courts at the magisterial level and social workers' offices were located. These included areas like Ikeja, Yaba, Ibeju Lekki, Ajegunle, Surulere, Ogudu, Ikorodu, Badagry, Lagos Island, Apapa and Mushin.

The study population

The family court officials and social workers formed the study population. The court officials included the magistrates and the court administrative officials who have been working in these courts, at least a year before the commencement of the study. The social workers attached to the Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Mirabel Centre Lagos State and Lagos State Teaching Hospital were also included as part of the study population.

Sampling method and sampling size

The selected study areas.

All the study areas selected for this work were purposively sampled because they suited this study. They were areas where family courts at magisterial levels and social workers' offices were located. Hence, they served the purpose of the study. Purposive sampling was used to select these areas because of judgment that they would facilitate the investigation of the study (Neuman, 2003, Adler and Clark, 1999). Eleven family courts at magisterial level and two social workers' offices were sampled for the study.

The court officials and social workers

Seventy-seven (77) court officials and twenty-three (23) social workers were sampled for the study. Being available subjects, sample random sampling was used in the selection. The method was employed so that each member of a study population had an equal probability of selection (Alder and Clark, 1999). However, the magistrate judge and the lawyer who participated in the study were purposively selected.

Methods of data collection

Primary data were collected and collated for this research work. The primary data were collected with use of questionnaire and in depth- interview.

Questionnaire

One hundred (100) questionnaires were administered among the court officials and social workers in the selected study areas. The entire number of the questionnaires administered (100) were returned because they were administered one - to - one with proper assistance and coordination from the researcher. The questionnaires were used to gather the quantitative data for this study.

In-depth interview

In-depth interviews (IDIS) were conducted with one magistrate judge and one lawyer.

Method of data analysis

Questionnaires for the study were sorted out and properly cleaned. In order to minimize errors, data from questionnaire were coded so as to pave way for editing of data for the use of SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) software. The analysis of data emphasized relative frequencies. Univariate analyses were used in interpreting socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, using frequency and percentage tables. These served as quantitative data.

The qualitative data which emerged from in-depth interviews were analysed using manual content analysis. The process of the analysis involved deciding on the samples to be included in the analysis, defining the categories of content measured and finally, recording the units that were chosen (each item in it's entirety). The quantitative data from the questionnaire were presented separately from the qualitative data but results from each of the methods complemented the other.

Ethical issues

Ethical issues in social research were followed in this study. The consent of the respondents was sought before the commencement of the In-depth Interviews, Key Informant interview, Focus Group Discussion and before administering questionnaires. The anonymity of the respondent was guaranteed. References were not made to their names or anything that may identify them. The reports from the research were presented in aggregate data, not in personalized and recognizable form.

Finally, all the information and the data supported were kept strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of this study.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This section deals with data presentation and analysis. The analyses are both descriptive and inferential. It is divided into two parts;

1. Analysis of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics
2. Discussions on research objectives

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The first characteristic of the respondents examined was sex of the respondents. The table 1 below shows the presentation and the analysis of the sex of the respondents who participated in the study.

Table 1: Sex Distributions of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	44	44.0
Female	56	56.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The above table shows that 44 .0% of the respondents were male while 56.0% of them were female. This implies that more female respondents participated in the study than the male. Sexual defilement is majorly a female focused crime. Hence, it was not least unexpected to have more female who participated in the study than male.

The next characteristic of the respondents in the study was age of the respondents who participated in the study. The table 4.2 below shows the breakdown of the ages of the respondents who participated in the study.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
15-19	1	1.0
20-24	4	4.0

25-29	7	7.0
30-34	14	14.0
35-39	16	16.0
40-44	25	25.0
45 and above	33	33.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

A cursory look at the above table shows that 1.0% of the respondents was between 15years and 19years, 4.0% of the respondents were between 20years and 24years; 7.0% were between 25years and 29years; 14.0% were between 30years and 34years, 16.0% of them were between 40years and 44years and finally; 33.0% of the respondents were 45years and above. The above analyses show that many of the respondents who participated in the study were adults. The study, it can be inferred, had data and information from adults who are considered in African societies to be with experiences of life.

Marital statuses of the respondents were also put into consideration in the study. The table 4.3 below; shows the marital statuses of the respondents who participated in the study.

Table 3: Marital Statuses of the Respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Married	79	79.0
Single/Never Married Before	15	15.0
Widow/Widower	5	5.0
Cohabitation	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The analyses from the above table show that 79.0% of the respondents were married; 15.0% of them were single that never married before; 5.0% of them were either widows or widower while 1.0% was cohabitation. The analyses showed that overwhelming majority of our respondents were married. Being married would indicate possibility of parental responsibility. Additionally, married men and women are expected to have experience regarding child care, protection and guide. The vast majority of respondents who participated in the study indicated that the study engaged experienced respondents.

Since the issue of sexual defilement of minors centred on children, the study considered it very important to investigate the number of children of the respondents who participated in the study. Table 4.4 below analyses the data concerning this.

Table 4: Number of Children of the Respondents

Number of children	Frequency	Percent
1-3	81	81.0
4-6	18	18.0

7-9	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2016

From the table above, it clearly shows that majority of the respondents; 81.0% had between 1 child to 3 children; 18.0% had between 4 children and 6 children; while 1.0% had between 7 children to 9 children. The large number who had between 1 child to 3 children may be attributed to economic conditions of the nation which has constrained many Nigerians to reduce their family sizes by embracing the modern method of birth control.

The religions of the respondents were also considered. The table 4.5 below shows the breakdown of the respondents' religion by religion.

Table 5: Respondents by Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Christianity	74	74.0
Islam	25	25.0
Others	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

From the table above, 74.0% of the respondents were Christians; 25.0% were Muslims and 1.0% an adherent of other religions. Religion is very valuable in impacting both the spiritual and moral values in the lives of the people to ensure that they live worthy and expected life in the society. Furthermore, religion shapes the opinions of people in society on many issues i.e. crime commission. Therefore, religions of the respondents are included in the study.

Lagos state which was the study area is an open door part of Nigeria to other West African countries; hence, the study investigated the Nationality of the respondents who participated in the study. The table 4.6 below shows the analyses.

Table 6: Nationality of the Respondents

Nationality	Frequency	Percent
Nigerian	98	98.0
Non-Nigerian	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The table above shows that majority; 98% of the respondents were Nigerians, while 2.0% were Non-Nigerians.

The residence of the respondents was also considered in the study by how long they have been living in the residences of their abodes. The table below shows the outcomes of their responses on this.

Table 7: Respondents on Years of Residence in the Community

How long have you been living in this community	Frequency	Percent
1-3	11	11.0

4-6	5	5.0
6 years and above	84	84.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

From the analyses above, 84.0% of the respondents have been living in their residences for 6 years and above, 11.0% of them have been living there between 1 year and 3 years, while 5.0% have been living there between 4 years and 6 years. This implies that majority of the respondents have been living in Lagos community for long.

Awareness and prevalence knowledge of the respondents was also investigated. This was to test their familiarity with the problem of sexual defilement of minors. Tables 8; 9; 10; 11 and 12 examined their awareness on the problem of sexual defilement of minors.

Awareness and prevalence of sexual defilement of minors

Table 8: Awareness of Sexual Defilement in Lagos State

Are you aware of the crime of sexual defilement of minors?	Frequency	Percent
Somehow Aware	4	4.0
Strongly Aware	96	96.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

A critical look at the above table shows that 96.0% of the respondents were strongly aware of the problem of sexual defilement of minors in our society. This clearly demonstrated that large numbers of population were aware of the problem. Personal experiences, information and news on the printed and electronic media were possibly the sources of their awareness.

Table 9: Respondents on Prevalence of Sexual Defilement in Lagos State

Rate of prevalence of the crime in Lagos	Frequency	Percent
Not Prevalent	2	2.0
Undetermined	1	1.0
Somehow Prevalent	6	6.0
Prevalent	47	47.0
Very Prevalent	44	44.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The analyses from the table above show that, 47.0% of the respondents signified that sexual defilement of minors was prevalent; while 44.0% said it was very prevalent. It can be deduced from their responses that large number of the respondents testified to prevalence of the problem in Lagos state.

Table 10: How Common is the Problem in Other Part of Nigeria.

How common is sexual defilement of minors in other part of Nigeria	Frequency	Percent
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Undetermined	7	7.0
Somehow Common	9	9.0
Common	47	47.0
Very Common	37	37.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The respondents who said that the problem of sexual defilement of minor was common were 47.0%, while 37.0% said it was very common. The analyses from the above table show that large number (84 respondents altogether) affirmed the commonness of the crime across all the part of the country, and not Lagos state alone. However, it is likely to be more common in Lagos state than other part of the country based on the responses made on table 9 as compared with table 10 .

The excerpt below testified to this:

I cannot say for Nigeria but for Lagos state. For frequency, many are not reported because of poverty, culture, stigma and lack of confidence in the judiciary or police. But more importantly it is because of culture and stigma. Culturally,, the girls are expected to be intact (virgin) but when found defiled, it brings stigma to the parents. As at this year February (2016) and last year February (2015) there were 578 and 579 cases of sexual defilement respectively and this were less than half of the cases which occurred.

(A Female Chief Magistrate/ Lagos Island/ May 17th 2016).

From the above comment made by the magistrate judge, it can be deduced that the rate of sexual defilement of female minors is very alarming going by the figures presented by the judge. Moreover, most of the cases are not reported because of the factors mentioned above by the judge. Hence, if all cases were reported, it is going to be far higher than the figures mentioned above. Hence, the prevalence and commonness of this crime can be said to be very alarming.

Table 11: Respondents on the Commonest Victims

Commonest Victims of Sexual Defilement of Minors	Frequency	Percent
Male Minors	1	1.0
Female Minors	98	98.0
Missing	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

From the table 11 above, the respondents clearly stated their opinions that the commonest victims of sexual defilements were female minors. Beninger 2013 and Kanyanya et al 2007 in their studies showed that girls were usually the victims of sexual defilement.

An excerpt below from the female magistrate interviewed throws more light on those that were usually the victims:

Basically, the victims were both male and female. But most of the cases involved minor female victims that were raped. There were few cases of elderly women too as victims. Children also were victims. There were cases of 2 or 3years old children that were involved as victims. They might not be able to explain the context, but you would be amazed that some of them when giving evidences in court, they would say things like “what my brother use to piss” or “he put his finger in my bombom”.

(A Female Chief Magistrate Judge/ Lagos Island /May 17th, 2016).

The above excerpt from the interview shows clearly that both male and female may be victims of sexual defilement. But the female minors were the most targeted or more vulnerable. Children were also not spared from this abuse going by the series of evidences given in court by them. Hence, it can be concluded that no sex is invulnerable to this sexual abuse.

Table 12: Respondents on underage boys as victims

Underage boys can also be defiled by adult offenders	Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid undetermined	1	1.0
Disagree	1	1.0
Strongly disagree	2	2.0
Somehow disagree	3	3.0
Agree	26	26.0
Strongly agree	67	67.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The analyses from the above table (table 12) show that 67.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that minor male children can also be victims of sexual defilement, 26.0% of the respondents also agreed to the same. Girls were not only the victims of sexual defilement; boys can also be victims in the hand of the male adults or female adults.

On the perpetrators of this crime, the magistrate judge cited close relatives at homes as most offenders. The excerpt below captures her opinion on this:

Most of the cases of sexual defilement occurred at homes. The perpetrators are usually uncles, drivers, gardeners and fathers. We have fathers raping their daughters and cases of daughters pregnant for their fathers (which are very prevalent now). Recently, we have a case of 12 years old girl who was pregnant for her father. So, most of the offenders come from home and the girls are more vulnerable at home than other places.

(A Female Chief Magistrate Judge/ Lagos Island /May 17th, 2016).

Another objective of this study is to find out the causes of sexual defilement of female minors or what necessitate the offenders. This section of the write up, therefore examines the causes of sexual defilement of minors.

Causes of Sexual defilement

Table 4.13: Sexual Fun as a Cause

Willing to have sexual fun with the girl	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	8	8.0

Disagree	2	2.0
Somehow Disagree	6	6.0
Agree	29	29.0
Strongly Agree	55	55.0
Total Mean= 4.21 Maximum =5	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The first cause of sexual defilement investigated was the desire of the offender to have sexual fun with minor female. 55.0% of the respondents strongly agree that wanting to have sexual fun with minor female was a causative factor of sexual defilement, 29.0% of the respondents also agree with the same factor. Jekwes et al (2010) identified the same factor as a cause of sexual defilement of minor. Many offenders counted the act of sexual defilement as a fun or a playful act and did not consider this as a criminal offence under law

Table 14: Respondents on Whether Friends’ Influence Can Cause Sexual Defilement

Friends’ influence can cause it	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	11	11.0
Disagree	14	14.0
Somehow Agree	11	11.0
Agree	37	37.0
Strongly Agree	27	27.0
Total Mean= 3.55 Maximum=5	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The study considered the possibility of the peer group or friends’ influence as a factor that may cause one offending the law on sexual defilement, 37.0% of the respondents agree that offenders might have offended because they saw their friends doing the same act, 27.0% of the respondents strongly agree with the same friends’ or peer groups’ influence as a factor why people may engage in sexual defilement of minors. Jewkes et al (2010) also affirmed the same factor in their study.

There is a possibility that offenders defiled minors because they lustfully desire for such female minors because of the female minors’ sexual attractiveness. Table 15 below shows the responses of the respondents on this.

Table 15: Respondents on Whether Sexual Desire for the Girl Can Cause Sexual Defilement of Female Minors

Sexual desire for the girl	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	10	10.0

Disagree	10	10.0
Somehow Agree	11	11.0
Agree	34	34.0
Strongly Agree	35	35.0
Total	100	100.0
Mean=3.74 Maximum=5		

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

A critical look at the table reveals that 35.0% of the respondents strongly agree that lustful desire for the female minors would prompt people to commit sexual defilement, 34.0% of the respondents also agree with the same. In summary, large number of the respondents concurred to lustful desire for the female minors as a cause of sexual defilement. Jewkes et al (2010) in their study also identified such lustful desire as a cause. Wanting sex is another factor. Sexual arousal of the offender or high sex libido or uncontrollable sexual urges may warrant people defiling minors. Table 4.16 shows the respondents' responses on this

Table.16: Wanting Sex Can Cause Sexual Defilement of Female Minors

Wanting sex	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	6.0
Disagree	11	11.0
Somehow Agree	9	9.0
Agree	39	39.0
Strongly Agree	35	35.0
Total	100	100.0
Mean=3.86 Maximum=5		

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

A cursory look at the table shows that 39.0% of the respondents agree that wanting sex causes sexual defilement, 35.0% of the respondents strongly agree with the same. Jewkes et al (2010) listed the same factor as a cause of sexual defilement.

Experimenting sex with younger ones was also considered as a factor which may cause sexual defilement of female minors. The table 17 below shows responses of the respondents on this

Table 17: Respondents on Experimenting Sex with Younger Ones

Experimenting sex with younger ones	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	6.0
Disagree	4	4.0

Somehow Agree	17	17.0
Agree	33	33.0
Strongly Agree	40	40.0
Total	100	100.0
Mean= 3.97 Maximum=5		

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

From the table above, 40.0% of the respondents strongly agree that experimenting with sex may lead people into offending, 33.0% of the respondents also agree with the same. It can be inferred from the analyses that experimenting with sex may cause offending. Jewkes et al (2010) also mentioned the same factor in their study as a cause of sexual defilement of minor.

Spiritual reasons were envisaged as a cause of sexual defilement of minors. Offenders may indulge in the act as a result of spiritual cleansing. The table 18 below shows responses on this

Table 18: Respondents on spiritual cleansing with virgin

Spiritual cleansing with virgin	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	12.0
Disagree	11	11.0
Somehow Agree	24	24.0
Agree	27	27.0
Strongly Agree	26	26.0
Total	100	100.0
Mean= 3.44 Maximum= 5		

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The analyses from the above table shows that 24.0% somehow agree that spiritual cleansing may be the cause of sexual defilement, 27.0% agree and 26.0% strongly agree with the same, spiritual cleansing might be the reason why people engage in sexual defilement of minors. Some did it with belief that their disease may be cured when they have sex with female minors that are virgins. Jewkes et al (2010) and Bajaj (2008) also affirmed this reason. Moreover, some adults do this for the potency of their spiritual power or for money rituals or to achieve one or more spiritual benefits for themselves.

Alcoholic drinks and drugs were also examined as a cause of sexual defilement of minor. Table 19 shows the frequency and percentage distributions of the respondents on this.

Table 19: Respondents on Whether Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs Can Cause Sexual Defilement of Minors

Alcoholic drinks and drugs	Frequency	Percent
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Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Strongly Disagree	6	6.0
Disagree	6	6.0
Somehow Agree	13	13.0
Agree	42	42.0
Strongly Agree	33	33.0
Total	100	100.0
Mean= 3.90 Maximum= 5		

The analyses from table 19 above indicated that 42.0% of the respondents agree that alcoholic drinks and drugs may push people into act of sexual defilement, 33.0% of the respondents strongly agree with the same factors. It can be inferred therefore, that alcoholic drinks and drugs may act as stimulants which drive

people to commit sexual defilement. Kanyanya et al (2007) mentioned alcoholic drinks and drugs as propelling factors of sexual defilements. In some occasions, offenders were discovered to be under the influence of alcoholic drinks, and drugs when the offence was committed by them. This is very common when the act of sexual defilement entails incest domestically.

The study investigated the factor of inability of the victim to reveal the sexual assault/ harassment against her as another factor that may give opportunity to the purported offender to commit sexual defilement. Table 20 below shows the analyses of the responses on this factor.

Table 20: Respondents on Opportunity That the Victim Would Not Tell

Opportunity, she would not tell	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	9	9.0
Disagree	5	5.0
Somehow Agree	15	15.0
Agree	40	40.0
Strongly Agree	31	31.0
Total	100	100.0
Mean= 3.79 Maximum= 5		

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

From the above table, it can be seen that 40.0% of the respondents agreed that when purported victims are unable to tell parents or other people around about sexual assault or harassment against them may give offenders go ahead opportunity to assault or harass minors sexually. 31.0% of respondents strongly agreed with the same factor. Jewkes et.al (2010) identified the same factor in the study. On many occasions, offenders may capitalize on the inability of the victims to report the offence to parents or elderly people. This may be as a result of fear, shame or in cases of some small children, inability to comprehend the “scenario” or what transpired as a result of their age. Hence, assaulting female minors may continue unnoticed for a long period of time.

Watching sex films and other sexually explicit materials was another factor considered in this study as one which may cause or motivate offenders to assault or harass female minors sexually. Table 21 below shows the analyses of the responses of the people who participated in the study on this.

Table 21: Respondents on Watching Sex Films and Other Sexually Explicit Materials

Watching Sex Films and Other Sexually Explicit Materials	Frequency	Percent
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Strongly Disagree	7	7.0
Disagree	2	2.0
Somehow Agree	16	16.0
Agree	38	38.0
Strongly Agree	37	37.0
Total	100	100.0
Mean= 3.96 Maximum=5		

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

A critical look at the above table shows that large number of the respondents 38.0% agreed and 37.0% strongly agreed that watching sex film and sexually explicit materials may lead to the very act of engaging in sexual defilement of the minors by offenders. Kanyanya et.al (2007) argued that link exist between sexually explicit materials and pre-occupation with thoughts about sex and sexual defilement offence. Watching sexually explicit films or printed materials would arouse the sexual feelings or urges and lead to sexual thoughts which may eventually lead people to engage in sexual assaults/harassment against female minors. People have the psychological tendencies to wish to practice what they see and what have been registered in their psyches.

A psychiatric challenge was another factor which featured in the study as a factor which may lead to people committing sexual assaults or harassment on minors. Table 22 below shows what the opinions of the respondents were on this factor of insanity.

Table 22: Respondents on Psychiatric Problem of Male Adults as a Cause

Psychiatric problem of Male Adults	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	13	13.0
Disagree	17	17.0
Somehow Agree	21	21.0
Agree	15	15.0
Strongly Agree	34	34.0
Total	100	100.0
Mean=3.40 Maximum=5		

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The analyses from the table above show that 21.0% somehow agreed, 15.0% agreed and 34.0% strongly agreed that people with psychiatric challenge may offend law on sexual defilement.

Kanyanya et.al (2007) in their study, identified psychiatric morbidity or implicit personality disorder as a cause of sexual defilement. People with psychiatric problem may be unable to comprehend their action or the gravity of the offence. They lack sound mind to make them accountable for their action for they lack ability to make judgment of their action.

Table 23 below shows the responses of the people who participated in the study on exposure to sexual abuse experienced by the offenders as a factor which may cause them abusing others sexually in the future.

Table 23: Respondents on Male Exposure to Sexual Abuse as a Cause

Male adult's Exposure to Sexual Abuse	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	10	10.0
Disagree	12	12.0
Somehow Agree	25	25.0
Agree	28	28.0
Strongly Agree	25	25.0
Total	100	100.0
Mean=3.46 Maximum=5		

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

From the table 23 above, the analyses show that 25.0% somehow agreed, 28.0% agreed and 25.0% strongly agreed that when people were sexually abused, especially when they were young. They may grow up with the mind of abusing others in return. Kanyanya et.al (2007) mentioned that history of sexual abuse experienced by offenders in the past may propel people to offend laws on the sexual defilement. This is called “inter-generational abuse”. People who have been abused in the past tend to abuse others later in the future. On many of the occasions, the types of the abuse suffered in the past, were usually the same abuse they would perpetrate against others in the future. Hence, people who have been sexually abused in the past tended to abuse others sexually too.

Finally, on the causes of sexual defilement, war/ riot were other factors considered as a cause. The table below shows the analyses of the responses on this.

Table 24: Respondents on War/Conflict/Riot

War/conflict/riot	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	13	13.0
Disagree	23	23.0

Somehow Agree	23	23.0
Agree	22	22.0
Strongly Agree	19	19.0
Total Mean= 3.11 Maximum=5	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The breakdown of the analyses from the above table shows that 23.0% somehow agreed, 22.0% agreed and 19.0% strongly agreed that time of war, riot or serious community clashes may give an opportunity to some people to engage in sexual defilement.

Muhwezi et.al (2011) reported that girls and women were more likely to be victims of sexual defilement or victims of rape and defilement at the hands of rebel fighters in the past. Hence, in a time of war, possibility of sexual abuse of women and girls is known to be high.

On the causes of sexual defilement of minors, the magistrate judge interviewed explained that under the law, courts are not concerned with the motives behind the crime or reasons why the offenders offended the law but on the infractions on law. The extract from the interview attests to this:

For the causes of sexual defilement, we do not read the minds of the offenders but we interpret the laws. We do not care what your motive is. If you break the law, you break the law. We are only concerned with the infringement on law not the motives or causes of action.

(A Female Chief Magistrate Judge/ Lagos Island /May 17th, 2016).

On spiritual forces and power as factors that may push people to commit defilement of minors, the Judge also offered the comment below: *We do not recognize spiritual forces or power in law. Everything is scientific.*

(A Female Chief Magistrate Judge/ Lagos Island /May 17th, 2016).

However, a lawyer who was interviewed held an opinion that is a little bit different from the above. She acknowledged the issue of spiritual causes of sexual defilement, not during prosecution but when the offenders are remanded or have been sentenced. She made the comment below to buttress this opinion:

The issue of spiritual forces might come up after the offenders have been remanded. Psychologists may come to talk to them. In the bid to reform them, they may tell the reasons why they did it. The findings may be reported to the government in order to educate the people. And when they are still in custody, pastors may talk to them to assist them, in the course of their visitations.

(A Female Lawyer / Lagos Island /May 17th, 2016).

Summary of findings

This study discovered that many of the respondents (96.0% of them) were strongly aware that sexual defilement of minors is a serious social problem in Nigeria. The respondents, to a very large extent, show that this crime is a common one throughout the entire part of Nigeria and many of them agreed that it is highly prevalent in Lagos state, in particular. 98.0% of the respondents agreed that female minors were the commonest victims, although a very large percentage (67.0%) of them was of the strong opinion that under aged boys may also be sexually defiled.

In area of the causes of sexual defilement, many of the factors highlighted in the questionnaire were concurred to by the respondents. For the factor of willing to have sexual fun, we had **mean** of their responses to be **4.21**; for influence from friends and peer group; (**mean=3.55**), for sexual desire for the victim; (**mean=3.74**), for wanted sex (**mean=3.86**); for experimenting sex with younger ones; (**mean=3.97**), for spiritual cleansing; (**mean= 3.44**), for alcoholic and drugs; (**mean= 3.90**), for opportunity that she would not tell; (**mean=3.79**), for watching sexually explicit films/ materials; (**mean=3.96**); for psychiatric problem; (**mean=3.40**); for offenders’ exposure to sexual abuse in the past; (**mean=3.46**) and for war/conflict/riot, (**mean= 3.11**) (**all at N=100; maximum of 5.00; minimum of 1.00 and at the range of 4.00**)

Conclusion

It is very important to know awareness of people on sexual defilement of minors and how prevalent it is. Moreover, to investigate the causes of it is also very crucial. Awareness and prevalent knowledge people have would be a starting point on how to wage war against it. Knowledge on what can cause defilement would also provide ways of preventing it. Hence, it is very fundamental to always create awareness, monitor prevalence and examine the causes of sexual defilement of minors as done in this study. This study concluded that people were quite aware of problem of sexual defilement of minors and testified to its high prevalence. The causes of defilement mentioned by the respondents were also noteworthy. These are the bases upon which the recommendation of this study rest.

Recommendation

Although, people's awareness on sexual defilement of female minors is very high as they equally affirmed its high prevalence. However, we recommend more awareness campaigns, workshops, public talks, seminars etc. the people living in rural areas should be sensitized on the problem of sexual defilement. Moreover, there should be proper and adequate documentation of cases of defilement in order to monitor its prevalence and how to tackle it in our society.

The ways of preventing the causes of sexual defilement of minors identified in this study should be devised. In addition, other causes not identified in this study should be investigated. People should be counseled on how to prevent their minors from being exposed to defilement. Moreover, victims of sexual defilement should be counseled and helped. Psychologists and counselors should come to the aids of victims involved. Legal remedies are not enough for victims, they need psychological remedies in the same way they need legal remedies.

Finally, people that are vulnerable to committing sexual defilement should be counseled and proper interventional measures provided as well. These would go a long way in preventing problem of sexual defilement in our society in order to make our society safer for our minors.

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