

Prevalence of Rape Incidences in Rigasa Neighbourhood in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Insecure locations in northern Nigeria appear to have a high rate of sexual violence against children and young adults. Many incidents have been reported and prosecuted, but the number of incidents in the region continues to rise regularly. The prevalence of multiple instances is significantly higher in slum-like settings, densely populated places with a high degree of overcrowding. The cause of this surge in sexual violence in minors is still being debated. The paper aims to examine the prevalence of rape cases in the Rigasa area of Kaduna state. Hence, this paper assesses the daily increase in rape cases in the Rigasa neighborhood. Predicated on Routine Activity Theory (RAT), the paper utilized secondary data sources and qualitatively analyzed the prevalence of rape cases in the Rigasa area of Kaduna state. The findings of the paper revealed that high population density, absence of protectors, and availability of suitable victims and potential perpetrators contributed to the high prevalence of rape cases in the area. The paper recommends that the Kaduna State Government and Non-Governmental Organizations should liaise with the community to provide orientation on the laws of the state and on how best to guard their children and women against the perpetrators of rape.

Keywords: Rape, Rigasa, Sexual violence, minors, insecure communities

Introduction

Owing to the growing attention towards preventing and responding to sexual violence, recent years have witnessed a variety of interventions and policy measures. Despite the progress and success so far made (Munala et al., 2018; Schulz, 2020; Smith & Galey, 2017), rape cases are still increasing, with minors, young adults, and adults being severely affected. More traumatically, rape survivors are sometimes not listened to nor believed, even though listening to them can reduce their challenges (Wilson et al., 2021). Different women's advocacy groups and other civil society groups have protested the geometrical surge in sexual violence globally. In addition, the United Nations has demonstrated its support through multiple policy proclamations for controlling the global surge in sexual violence. Therefore, rape is considered a stressful trauma and often has long-lasting health consequences for the survivor (Oshodi et al., 2020).

Several studies have linked the prevalence of rape to the nature of the population and communities in which it occur, or rather the setting in which it is reported. However, more evidence shows the connections between rape prevalence and routine opportunities in the

neighborhood (Muldoon et al., 2019). On that account, criminology acknowledges the significance of places in the spread of sexual violence. It suggested that crime occurs in areas such as street segments, buildings, or parks and becomes stable over time. The influence of the places demonstrates that crime is also a result of socioeconomic contextual factors, which are essential components of a social system that criminologists have studied over time (De Nadai et al., 2020; Tillyer et al., 2021; Xie & Baumer, 2019).

Despite the importance of the area, little concern is given to it in most local and densely populated areas in Nigeria. However, the abundance of literature on rape appears to be a neglected area of research in Nigeria. The current trend shows that complete national data on the nature and scope of the problem in the country is currently unavailable. The data on sexual violence that is accessible comes from small-scale reproductive health surveys and police records (Ajuwon & Adegbite, 2008). Other sources include non-governmental organizations that safeguard the rights of women, girls, and young adults and maintain sanity in various parts of the country. Therefore, this article examines the persistent increase in

rape cases in Rigasa densely populated area of Kaduna state, to uncover the causes of the rise.

Rape Cases in Nigeria

Rape is fast escalating in Nigeria, necessitating immediate and urgent intervention. Rape is a breach of a woman's privacy, self-preservation, and dignity, just like other acts of violence. Evidence shows that rape is no longer an isolated activity affecting only a few women. In recent years, rape has generated a national concern due to its high prevalence frequency. Even though campaigners and women's rights advocates have pushed for its redress, there is yet to be a feasible mechanism for its prevention (Amuda, 2021).

Many sources reported a significant increase in rape cases between 2015 and 2017 in Nigeria. For instance, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2019), the percentage of rape incidence among women and minors in Nigeria increased from 63.0% in 2015, to 72.1% in 2016, with a slight decrease of 69.3% in 2017. These figures are much lower than the actual figures because many rape cases in the country go unreported (Idoko et al., 2020). However, statistical evidence from the National Bureau of Statistics (2019) shows that the annual rate of rape in Nigeria is 198 per 100,000 women. In addition, records show that between January and June 2020, rape cases skyrocketed to 717 (Labe et al., 2021). According to Iroanusi (2020), the United Nations reported a 300 percent increase in gender-based violence in Lagos alone. More specifically, during the Covid-19 lockdown, at least 100 rape incidents were reported in each of the 36 states in the federation.

Records of rape cases in Nigeria show that adults and minors have been raped. In one instance, a six-year-old girl was raped in Kaduna state (Hassan-Wuyo, 2021), and another one, in Niger state (News Agency of Nigeria, 2021; Yahaya, 2021). In Kano state alone, nearly 4,000 rape against women and children have been registered in the last five years (Murtala, 2021). In Ebonyi State, in 2017, a father raped his biological child, who was eight months old at the time, and a 16-year-old boy raped a 4-month-old baby (Amuda, 2021). In all, studies have shown that females aged 10 to 19 years were the most frequent age group

affected by rape incidences in all these incidences. However, there is an alarming rise in the number of minors who are persistently raped.

Causes of Rape

Scholars have identified many factors that significantly affected the upward rise of rape in Nigeria. For instance, according to Adegoke et al. (2020), rape is a social as well as health and psychological challenge that is caused and motivated by many factors such as cultism, ritual purposes, drug addiction and alcoholism, disease sharing, revenge purposes, indecent dressing, pride, poverty/unemployment and disappointment in relationships. Other scholars such as Ugwuanyi and Ogbozor (2021) reported that rape comes because of victims' indecent dressing, seduction, sexual urge, lonely locations, fantasized relationship, and even social media contributions. In addition, more recently, evidence shows the influence of Covid-19 in skyrocketing the menace of rape in Nigeria.

However, Covid-19's influence has exacerbated Nigeria's widespread increase in rape cases (UN Women, 2020). For instance, studies in Lagos alone indicate an average of 13 new cases per day, with 390 reports in one month alone (Omukoro, 2020). In addition, in katsina and Akwa Ibom states, numerous suspected rapists were apprehended by the police, which scholars have all attributed to the influence of Covid-19 (Ezeilo, 2020). On the whole, records show that there were about 3,600 rape cases during the lockdown across Nigeria (Iroanusi, 2020). Most importantly, the massive increase in rape cases during the Covid-19 period was due to the lockdown, which created an opportunity for perpetrators to access the available targets easily.

The unexpected lockdown and closure of schools, houses of worship, and other public locations exposed them to possible perpetrators, often neighbors or relatives, who resided in their homes. According to the UN Women (2020), rape and other gender-based violence incidents in Nigeria increased in the first two weeks because the victims were stranded at home with their potential abusers, increasing the risk of tensions escalating into violence. More so, Igodo (2021) reports that, statistics confirm that

allegations of rape and gender-based incidents nearly tripled from March to April 2020 in 23 of the 36 states (Igodo, 2021). In essence, despite Nigeria's rising anti-rape campaign, rape remains a problem because it has endangered the dignity and safety of young children and adult women (Fawole *et al.*, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

Numerous researchers have developed different explanations to account for the high number of rape occurrences in neighborhoods. This paper adopts the Cohen and Felson 1979 Routine Activity Theory (RAT), which studies problems from macro-criminological perspectives and supports the notion of spatial heterogeneity. It implies that there will be both an increase and a drop in criminal behaviour when there are more people in a certain location (Boivin, 2018). The opportunities for criminal behaviour and the connection between these opportunities and the amount of criminal activity are the main concerns of Routine Activity Theory. It suggests that the spike in crime may be due to changes in how everyday activity patterns are structured. However, three essential elements must coexist in time and location for a crime to be committed: potential offenders, appropriate targets, and a dearth of capable guardians (Miro, 2014). This point of view holds that a crime must occur when an offender and a target are present at the same time and place without anybody who could or would defend the target. This macro-level theory outlines the criminal event as an analytical unit and the essential components needed for it to occur (Eck, 1995).

According to this theory, shifts in legal opportunity structures, such as those related to technology and the human habitational system, may increase the confluence of motivated criminals and eligible targets without competent parental supervision. Due to this potential, crime options in urban and slum areas have significantly risen (Pratt *et al.*, 2010). However, rape instances occur when there are willing perpetrators, suitable targets, and not enough guardians to stop the violation in unsafe settings (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1999). Therefore, a potential perpetrator, an available target, and the absence of a guardian are, in essence, the major factors that determine whether a crime will be committed, especially

since a motivated offender is invariably present in these situations (Valan & Srinivasan, 2021).

Insecure communities are a major factor in the motivations for rape. It illustrates how opportunities and factors converge. Women were suitable rape victims due to their symbolic importance to perpetrators, lesser inertia, visibility, and accessibility to the perpetrators. For instance, the absence of suitable guardians is frequently caused by the lack of police officers and travel restrictions on formal and informal sources. However, during the Covid-19 lockdown, alterations in people's daily routines gave domestic abuse perpetrators around the world more possibilities (Krishnakumar & Verma, 2021).

Therefore, the ability of this theory to respond to queries like "what opportunity does Rigasa affords to rape offenders in Kaduna state?" makes it relevant to the investigation of the occurrence of rape incidents in the highly populated Rigasa region of Kaduna state. This is because Rigasa is densely populated and has high crime occurrences. It is an unstable location with no effective watches that can serve as guardians, which increases rape incidences. In essence, rape cases are more common in this area. However, based on the assumption of the RAT, larger populations do not provide higher micro-level guardianship. Additionally, conflicting forces might be at play, and their impacts might cancel one another out or have a negligible influence. To put it another way, the population may have a substantial beneficial impact on crime in some circumstances while also having a significant negative impact on crime in other environments (Boivin, 2018).

Methodology

The paper is a qualitative study that analyzes cases of rape in the Rigasa area of Kaduna State. The cases used in this paper are the ones reported to the police for prosecution. The number of cases, gender, and the relationships of the victims to their perpetrators were derived from secondary sources that discussed rape cases in the area, newspapers, and reports from the government. However, the analysis was done thematically with the support of charts for more elaborations on the rape realities in the Rigasa neighborhoods. In addition to the three areas of study- age group, the legal status of the

cases, and relationships to the perpetrators of rape in the Rigasa neighborhoods-, it also includes the overall number of rape cases reported. However, data shows that roughly fifty-one (51) rape instances were reported to the police. This does not imply that the number of rape cases in the neighborhoods were exactly as reported. It indicates only the incidences of the willing victims' resolve to report the events to the relevant authorities.

Prevalence of Rape Cases in Rigasa Neighborhood

Rape prevalence in the Rigasa area has featured a high number of cases as in other places with high crime rates in the state. This is due to the nature of the neighborhood. The Rigasa area is a densely populated urban slum (Babalola et al., 2019) with multiple crime perpetrators. The

area is unique in size and in location. Due to the nature of the neighborhood, outsiders often consider Rigasa residents as troublemakers due to the frequency of the crime committed in the area (Ahmadu-Suka, 2015). The situation of rape prevalence in Rigasa is obviously the case of life routine activities and the opportunities provided by the strategic location and almost absence of available guardians. The lifestyle routine activities theory (RAT) provides a clear theoretical lens through which to look at and comprehend crime opportunities. It is predicted that when a motivated offender comes across a suitable target, opportunities for victimization arise in the absence of qualified guardians (Choi et al., 2021), as is in the area. However, the charts below demonstrate the nature of rape in Rigasa neighborhood.

Figure 1: Rape Victims by Age Group



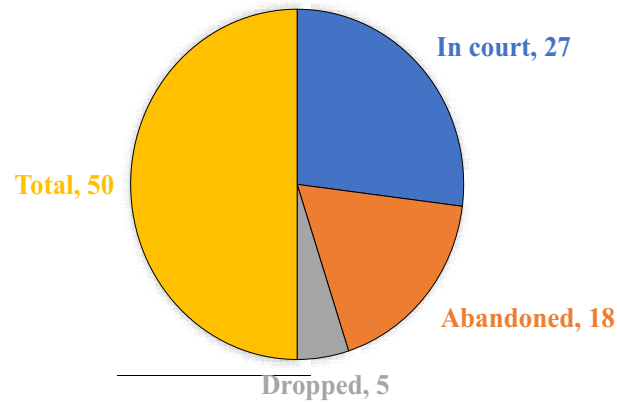
Source: Adapted from Modibbo, 2020

Figure 1 indicates the number of victims and their age groups. The chart demonstrates the prevalence of rape according to three important age groups consisting of 0-7 years, 8-14 years, and 15-45 years. However, of the three categories, the chart indicates that those in the 8-15 years category were most affected by the raping incidences in Rigasa neighborhoods. In addition, the 0-7 years category was the second most affected, while the 15-45 years category was the least affected by the rape incidences in

the area. Furthermore, evidence has shown that the number of rape victims affected, especially in the second category, was higher than in the two other categories. The implication of this is that victims from this category were more vulnerable. However, the prevalence of rape cases in Rigasa might be attributed to the nature of the environment, especially its demographic size (Ahmadu-Suka, 2015) and the lack of available guardians.

Figure 2: Rape Incidents by Legal Status

LEGAL STATUS OF THE CASES



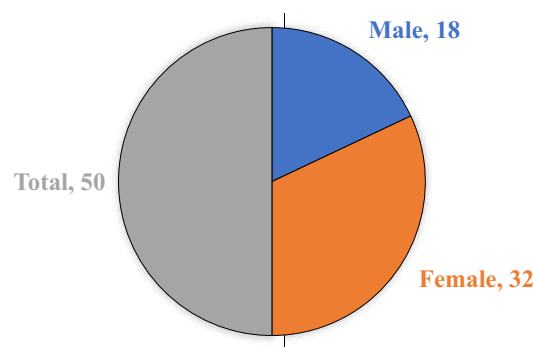
Source: Adapted from Modibbo, 2020

Figure 2 indicates the case status of each rape incidence in the Rigasa neighborhood. The chart categorizes the case status into three major categories. From the available data in the chart, about twenty-seven (27) rape cases were still in court. In comparison, about five (5) cases were dropped for reasons that bother stigmatization and fear of victimization within the family and the neighborhood. However, the chart indicates that about eighteen (18) cases were also abandoned in court. These figures indicate positive development in the area, especially since more cases are going to courts. Available records show some relatives have dropped cases due to pressure and financial inducements after

reporting the cases to the police. Many cases were abandoned due to similar pressure and coverup by the community (Tribune Online, 2020), which is an indication of the absence of possible guardianship in the community. However, the situation has changed due to a number of reasons including setting up a task force to manage the rape issues (Omorogbe, 2020). Most importantly, evidence shows that more cases are going to court due to the reinvigorated involvement of the Kaduna state government with the help of other non-governmental organizations (Abulude *et al.*, 2022).

Figure 3: Rape cases by Victims' Gender

VICTIMS' GENDER



Source: Adapted from Modibbo, 2020

Figure 3 shows the analysis of rape cases by the victims' gender. The nature of the chart shows that rape cases were not only restricted to the

female gender, contrary to the generally held view that rape is often associated with females as potential victims (Daily Trust, 2021). This

confirms that there was a tendency that rape perpetrators were expanding increasingly to cover male children in the state. However, in the first instance, the chart indicates that about thirty-two (32) rape cases were related to the female gender in the area. This is due to their high vulnerability occasioned by the absence of effective possible guardians that could protect them within the area. Furthermore, despite

having the female gender as the most affected, new cases are beginning to show a new trend in rape cases in the area (Obiekwe *et al.*, 2022). For instance, based on the data above, about eighteen (18) cases were recorded of male children in 2020 alone, which is a significant number enough to show the magnitude of rape cases. Therefore, rape victims in Rigasa neighborhood are both male and female gender.

Figure 4: Analysis by Relationships



Source: Adapted from Modibbo, 2020

Figure 4 shows an analysis of rape victims by relationship to the victims. The chart presents different categories of rape perpetrators consisting of close and distant relatives. Some of the perpetrators are family relations, while others are not. However, based on the available data, about twenty-nine (29) cases were related to the neighbors, which show that victims are more vulnerable at the hands of their neighbors. This is because the victims live close to the perpetrators and sometimes become more acquainted. In addition, about seven (7) cases were reported to have happened in schools with teachers as the molesters. Records have indicated that about six (6) cases happened in business areas consisting of buyers and sellers as molesters. Other categories of relationships include friends of the victims, which has six (6) cases, passersby which has three (3) cases, uncles which has two (2) cases, biological father, which has one (1) case, and the village head, which has one (1) case.

From the above chart, the pattern indicates that the frequency of rape Rigasa neighborhood are perpetrated more by neighbors than any

other group stated above. This may be explained by the fact that the neighbors live closer to their victims and know and interact with them most often (Mokogwu & Isah, 2020). Investigations reveal that most victims have some sorts of trust in their perpetrators which was often betrayed by the perpetrators. The victims visit the areas while the perpetrators took advantage of the nature of the location and absence of the potential guardians in the locations.

Conclusion

Rape is obviously a challenging sexual violence that has eaten deep into Rigasa neighborhood in Kaduna. The rampant prevalence of rape cases is due to factors such as the availability of perpetrators and motivations to commit it, and free access to the targets where there were no available guardians. Coupled with its population density with a track record of high crime levels, rape cases have become more prevalent in the area. Most rape cases in the area were committed by neighbours than by other classes of perpetrators. Most cases were reported to the police, but a lot more were also

dropped due to pressure from friends, family members, and the community. People's negative perception of Nigeria's judicial system has further prompted the drop in cases by victims and their families. Therefore, it is obvious that young children and adult women were vulnerable to rape in 2020 in Rigasa neighborhood. As such, this paper recommends more roles of nongovernmental organizations in collaboration with the community and the state government. Despite the state government enacted new laws to deal with the entire gender-based violence in the state in 2018 to strengthen the fight across the state, which has led to the recording of more rape cases in courts, collaboration is very important.

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