

**IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO LAMENT,
PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE.**

By

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WHAT DOES CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE REALLY MEAN?

- The engagement of a child by another in a sexual activity.
- The violation of a child's right to childhood-sexual innocence, sexual sanity and sanctity.

Who is a Child?

Any one who is below 18 years of age (the Child's Rights Law of Lagos State 2007).

A child is below the age of consent, hence, the issue of consent is irrelevant in CSA.

What Constitutes Child Sexual Abuse?

CSA can take place in different forms –

- Harmful contact behaviours (sexual contacts)-kissing or fondling with the lips, breasts, buttocks, genitals as well as penetrative intercourse(oral, anal, vaginal).
- Non- contact behaviours (sexual interactions)-sexual solicitation, pornographic exposure, sexually explicit conversations, indecent exposure either directly or electronically, peeping at a child, etc.

Classifications of CSA

- Subsistence or informal sexual exploitation
- Commercial sexual exploitation
- Terrorist's sexual attack- armed robbers, rebels, rioters, war fighters, etc

CSA, an Embarrassing Reality

No documented statistics yet but there are numerous news paper reports of cases of CSA in Nigeria.

- For instance, on November 7, 2010, the Sunday Punch published a story of how an 11 year old girl was abused in a shop by a 55year old man who happened to be her step- father. This happened at Mokola area of Ibadan in Oyo State.
- On September 10, 2011, the Punch newspaper reported the case of an 8 year old girl who was always abused by two men who lived in the same apartment where she lived with her guardian in Lagos. They would invite her into their rooms in the night and do all sort of things to her body. No one knew about it until she became sick.
- A 9 year old pupil told a high court at Ile- ife , Osun state, how she was abused by her male teacher in the school. (The Punch, March 20, 2012.)
- The April 7, 2012 issue of the Punch reported how seven children were abused in different parts of Ibadan.

Who is Vulnerable?

- Any child can be affected irrespective of –
 - Socio-economic class
 - Religion
 - Level of IQ
 - Ethnicity
 - etc.

Never say never, every child needs protection.

Who are the Perpetrators, Where and How Does it Happen?

- Perpetrators cut across age, gender, religion, socio-economic status, level of education, etc.
- CSA can happen anywhere – home, school, religious centres, etc.
- Perpetrators use psychological inducement, chemical inducement, intimidation.

What do we Really Have at Stake?

The immediate and long term consequences of CSA put the survival, wellbeing and development of the victim at stake. They include:

- **Physical Effects-** injury, unplanned pregnancy, STD.s, damage to reproductive organs, psycho somatic symptoms (aches, digestive and respiratory difficulties), death.
- **Psychological and Emotional Effects-** shame, self-blame, depression, grief, anxiety, self-pity, phobia, shame, loss of concentration, mood swings, amnesia, insomnia, trauma, PTSD, etc.
- **Social Effects-** withdrawal, suspicion, substance abuse, etc.
- **Effects on Sexuality-** distortion of body image, perversions (perverted perception about sexual relations, addiction), resentment,
- **Effects on Educational Development-** poor performance or disruption can result from pregnancy, STD.s, lack of concentration, depression, amnesia, etc.
- **Effects on Growth and Development-** a sudden extinction of childhood which disrupts the normal sequence of growth and development, with the consequence of chronological vs emotional and psychological age discrepancy.

The Effects of CSA on the Family and Society

- . **Effects on the Family-** trauma, grief, guilt, loss of income, broken family ties (where the abuser is a member of the family) and in some cases, the loss of a child.
- . **Effects on the Society-** more abuse, abandoned children, spread of STD.s, a crop of emotionally shattered young people, ready to unleash violence on the society.

Factors Fuelling CSA in Nigeria

- Silence due to fear of stigmatization.
- Failure of states to domesticate the Child's Rights Act and poor implementation.
- Children's ignorance about their sexuality and their rights.
- Parents' ignorance about CSA and its consequences.
- Failure of the law enforcement agencies.

Why are We Talking About it Today?

- CSA is a problem and we need to see it as such
- It is everyone's issue, hence we need to get involved in the prevention process.

Prevention is the Most Profitable Step

The prevention of CSA requires a multi-strategic approach:

- . Child Protection
- . Child education
- . Deal with the risk factors for the child – child-labour, child trafficking, lack of supervision, unmet needs, early dating behaviour, substance abuse, physical and mental challenge.
- . Treatment of victims for their healing and to prevent them from becoming abusers.
Focus on perpetrators- punishment and rehabilitation, identification of risk factors and education of potential perpetrators.
- Community education

Thank You