

Research paper

Literature, Russian Literature



Sexual Violence: An Analysis in Perspectives Violence pervades people from various sectors in every society. The World Health Organization revealed that “ violence is among the leading causes of death for people aged 15-44 years worldwide, accounting for 14% of deaths among males and 7% of deaths among females” (WHO, par. 1). As there are different types of violence, one of the most traumatic for people of any gender, race, age, or demographic condition, is sexual violence. This essay aims to proffer issues on sexual violence with the objective of finding out ways and means to prevent and address it.

Definition of Terms The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define sexual violence (SV) as “ any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will. SV encompasses a range of offenses, including a completed nonconsensual sex act (i. e., rape), an attempted nonconsensual sex act, abusive sexual contact (i. e., unwanted touching), and non-contact sexual abuse (e. g., threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment)” (CDC, par. 1). The World Report on Violence and Health clearly defines SV as “ any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (World Report, 149). These definitions are consistent in terms of identifying common elements of the sexual act (or even attempt) that is unwanted either through physical, non-contact or verbal means or in any location.

Risk Factors There are identified factors that increase the probability or possibilities of sexual abuse. The CDC classified diverse risk factors into four categories: individual, relationship,

community, and societal factors. Women were reported to be more vulnerable to this type of violation due to their gender, physical weakness and those with intimate partners. Other factors that increase the susceptibility of women to SV are enumerated as follows: “ being young; consuming alcohol or drugs; having previously been raped or sexually abused; having many sexual partners; involvement in sex work; becoming more educated and economically empowered, at least where sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner is concerned; poverty” (World Report, 157). Poverty, physical and social environments comprise community factors that increase the incidents of SV depending on the external environment and the income level or social status of either the victim or the abuser. Societal factors, on the other hand, focus on the country’s laws and regulation imposed on this criminal behavior and cultural norms. Countries manifesting strong male dominance and power contribute to greater tendencies for SV than those exhibiting equality and fair treatment among genders.

Consequences The effect of SV is damaging and sometimes fatal. The CDC classified the consequences into physical, psychological, social and in terms of health associated behaviors. The more evident consequences is manifested in the form of unwanted pregnancies and other long-term physical effects such as: “ chronic pelvic pain, premenstrual syndrome, gastrointestinal disorders, gynecological and pregnancy complications, migraines and other frequent headaches, back pain, facial pain, and disability that prevents work” ((Jewkes, Sen, Garcia-Moreno, 2002 as cited in CDC: SV: Consequences, 1). From among the most recognized psychological effect, the following are eminent: shock, depression, fear, anxiety, confusion,

alienation, and even attempted suicides. Social consequences are manifested through strained relationships with others, lack of emotional support from family and friends, less frequent interpersonal relationships, and lower marriage possibilities (CDC: SV: Consequences, 1). Finally, health behaviors were reported to be both consequences and risk factors which were collaborated by various researches. These behaviors were summed into “engaging in high-risk sexual behavior, using harmful substances, and practicing unhealthy diet-related behaviors” (ibid, 1). Prevention Awareness of the drastic and long lasting effects of SV should preclude susceptible individuals from engaging in activities that increase the risk of being victims. As clearly indicated in the CDC site include reduction of risks, focus on people who could be perpetrators by encouraging them to be educated on campaigns against SV, and by making community members more aware and proactive in preventing the occurrence of SV. Conclusion This essay achieved its objective to proffer issues on sexual violence with the aim of finding out ways and means to prevent and address it. Like other forms of violence against human, prevention strategies need collaborative efforts from all sectors of society. Starting from reinforcement of educational awareness on the risk factors and consequences, efforts from school authorities and community workers could assist in enhancing knowledge and reducing vulnerabilities to SV. The government should also enforce laws and regulations to punish perpetrators and preclude others from replicating the behavior. Commitment and proactive vigilance is needed to put an end to this dilemma. Work Cited Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Sexual Violence: Definitions. 2009. Web. 28 February 2011. < <http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/ohv/sexualviolence/sexualviolence.htm>

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