

FORUM:	Advisory Panel
ISSUE:	Measures to Reduce Sexual Violence and Alleviate its Effects in Ethiopia
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Introduction

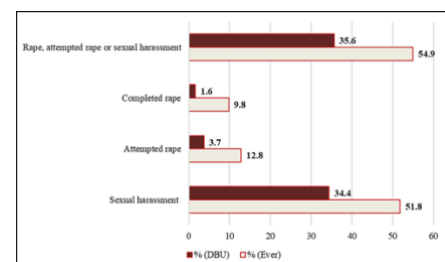
Sexual violence is an action where one uses their power to have control over the other person through an unwanted sexual activity. There are various types of sexual violence: sexual assault, sexual coercion, rape, sexual harassment, and stalking. The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that a high percentage of women, with 1 in 3 women in the world, have experienced sexual violence.



Sexual Violence

As sexual violence is becoming one of the most crucial topics in the world, there are different rates of sexual violence in individual countries. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than thirty percent of women in the world, approximately 736 million women, have ever experienced sexual violence from their partner or from a person whom they don't know.

Focusing on Ethiopia, according to a report in 2022, there are more than thirty-five percent of women aged between 15-49 who suffered from different kinds of sexual violence from their husbands. According to the health facilities, they reported that there were more than 1,288 cases of gender-based violence from February to April 2021. The biggest reason there is a high rate of sexual violence in Ethiopia is due to the view towards sexual violence by men. More than sixty-eight percent of the country agrees and justifies their actions towards women. Moreover, the poor handling of the Ethiopian government has been increasing the rate of sexual violence in Ethiopia. People who suffer from sexual violence require the necessary support where they can cure their hurt. However, the government has blocked various aid and health services for sexual violence. As the government stops different supports for the victims of sexual violence, it is making the serious worse and putting the citizens of Ethiopia in greater danger. Lack of support makes people suffer from physical and



Rate of Sexual Violence in Ethiopia



mental complications such as trauma, back pain, immobility, fistula, sleep deprivation, emotional distress, and more.

With these ongoing issues in Ethiopia, many groups are working together to solve the ongoing problem. Starting from early 2021, U.N. officials have raised concerns about the ongoing issue of sexual violence in Ethiopia and have been holding various conferences with different nations to bring up possible solutions to the problem.

Background

In early history, the definition of sexual violence differed from that of today. In the past, sexual violence was a defilement of a man's property. But, today, most people tend to understand sexual violence to be a crime happening towards young children or women. Depending on the culture of different countries, sexual violence has been treated differently. However, there are some factors that they share which is that sexual violence is an illegal action. Thus, as all cultures treat this as an unlawful action, they all punish the accused person differently. However, though people were punished, in some countries where the government power became weak, the rate of sexual violence increased exponentially, and Ethiopia is one example.



Rate of Sexual Violence in the past

On September 12, 1974, the Ethiopian Civil War occurred. This civil war continued until a coalition of rebel groups overthrew the government in 1991. With the fall of the government, the country started to flow in a negative way. Ethiopia is one of the nations in the Organization of African Unity, now called the African Union. Most countries in the African Union have a high level of sexual violence occurring. Many experts believe that this is because of the lack of education people gain in the country.



Civil War in Ethiopia

With its low-quality teaching due to its low qualified teachers and instructional materials, in the country, about seventy-two million children are not attending school, and forty to fifty percent of children in fifth or sixth grade do not gain a proper education. A lack of government assistance and government effort leads to a high degree of sexual assault, with more than forty percent of sexual violence occurring across Africa.



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Problems Raised

Health Problem

“It is likely known that due to sexual violence, it occurs various kinds of health issues such as bruising and genital injuries, sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy and psychological, such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts (Centers).” For these health issues to be cured, the government must provide a sufficient healthcare system so that the victims can overcome them and return to their everyday lives.

However, Ethiopia has an inferior level of health curing systems. Though it is known that Ethiopia has improved in its health care systems compared to the past, it is showing that it is challenging for more than 110 million Ethiopian people to get the right and good quality of healthcare in their country. Also, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), lifetime sexual violence among women was about thirty percent. Due to its inferior healthcare system implemented in the country, it shows that more than millions of people are suffering from various viruses. Also, it has been shown that due to the poor healthcare system, women in Ethiopia who have suffered from sexual violence have suffered from mental issues such as abuse and experience fear, low self-esteem, anger, shame, sadness, and guilt. Also, it has been shown that more than half of the women who have suffered from sexual violence suffer from trauma due to their experience.

Weak Punishment

According to the Criminal Code of Ethiopia Article 620, it states that whoever commits a crime related to sex, whether it is by using violence or grace intimidation, the person will be punished with imprisonment from five years to fifteen years.

Although the law is stated in the constitution, poor government policies, corruption, political instability, and more

factors result in many crimes, such as sexual violence. With a corrupted government, the punishment to the people is not being given properly. Many Ethiopians are motivated to commit crimes by a government that is not doing its job properly. According to a statistical result, the corruption index in Ethiopia averaged 30.86 from 2000 to 2022, hitting an all-time high of 39.00 in 2021, which grew significantly compared to the years 2000. The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Chair of the UN Action Network proposed that the Ethiopian



government collaborate with them and sign an agreement to prevent and respond to sexual violence-related conflicts. Despite several steps taken, including by the United Nations, the rate of sexual violence in Ethiopia remains high. Ethiopia has a high proportion of unemployment despite a significant rise in population due to official misinformation. However, when people gained greater unemployment, the rate of committing crimes, particularly sexual violence, increased. However, because the government does not prevent these persons from committing crimes, Ethiopia has a high rate of sexual violence.

International Actions

Women for Women International

Women for Women International is an organization that works to provide better life conditions for women who need help worldwide. This organization was created in 1993, and until today, they have been helping women overcome obstacles in their country and helping them to have a



Logo for Women for Women International

new start. From the past until today, this organization has invested in over 500,000 women who need help due to various issues occurring in their country by providing education so that they can learn skills that they need to overcome and have a new start in their family or community.

As they help women who need help all over the world, they have been also helping women who need help in Ethiopia due to problems occurring such as sexual violence. According to the Women for Women International group, more than 26,000 Ethiopian women and girls were victims of sexual violence due to social shame in 2021. Furthermore, the government's actions have exacerbated the humanitarian catastrophe by displacing two million people and shutting off access to food, telecommunications, energy, and banking. More than 13 million people in the north will require vital human services by 2023.

Thus, the Women for Women International group has been helping women who survived, like a mother who was breastfeeding and carrying her one-month-old baby when she was raped by a group of troops. Women for Women International works with three other groups to help people in Ethiopia who have been sexually abused. These groups work with people who have been victims of sexual and gender-based violence to help them and give them control over their lives.

Included in their programs is the provision of secure housing for victims of sexual violence. As they provide a secure haven, they provide food, clothing, medical care, and therapy so that the victims



can recover from their ordeal. Additionally, "Mums for Mums" provides counseling services to survivors. In addition, it educates numerous children about sexual violence.

Key Players

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)

The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) was created in 1994 by Scott Berkowitz. RAINN is a nonprofit organization and is a big anti-sexual organization. The purpose of RAINN is to make programs such as education that will help in reducing sexual violence, relieving the survivor, and making sure that the law punishes perpetrators.

One program that RAINN is working on is the victim service. In the victim service, RAINN develops programs and services that help people who suffer from sexual violence. As RAINN works on the victim service, they created and operated the National Sexual Assault Hotline, which can be accessed online. They work with more than thousands of local sexual assault service providers, providing support services to the survivors. This has helped more than 3.7 million survivors and is helping the survivors to this day. In 2020, the victim service program helped 308,000 people.

Another thing RAINN is working on is public education. To inform the seriousness of sexual violence, RAINN is working with the media, the entertainment industry which can educate the gravity of sexual violence; and colleges around the country to talk with the students about the current issues. They further provide accurate and correct information about sexual violence and ways to prevent the violence from happening. Also, RAINN operates the Speaker Bureau, a network where more than 3,500 survivors of sexual violence share their stories to the media to inform the seriousness.

RAINN has worked to improve public policy against sexual violence. The RAINN's policy team works to improve the criminal justice system, improve laws to prevent sexual violence, and provide justice for the survivors of sexual violence.



Logo of RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)



Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA)



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Achievement RAINN has made in 27 years

EWLA is a non-governmental organization that focuses on promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls, including combating gender-based violence and providing legal aid to survivors of sexual violence.



*Logo of Ethiopian Women
Lawyers Association*

The protection they provide to their citizens will significantly reduce the number of cases of sexual violence.

Possible Solutions

Though various actions are being taken to improve the problems of sexual violence in Ethiopia, many issues are still happening. The reason could be a need for more government support, civilization, financial aid, low economic position, etc. These reasons make Ethiopia not develop and remain, causing the same problem for the country and its citizens. Though we cannot fully solve the ongoing issue directly, various effective ways to work together and mitigate the problems in Ethiopia still exist.

Creating Healthcare Center

Providing sufficient healthcare to the victims is as crucial as preventing sexual violence from occurring. In Ethiopia, with a poor healthcare system, many people have been suffering from various health issues, such as bruising and genital injuries, sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy, and psychological, such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Though Ethiopia has been successful in reducing the number of sexual violence in the nation, if they don't find a sufficient way to provide good quality healthcare to the victims, it is still going to be a significant problem.

Thus, by requesting funds from each nation involved in the United Nations, it is going to be essential for the Ethiopian government to construct a healthcare center with good-quality doctors who can provide sufficient healthcare. As they are getting funds provided, the countries who fund them could request an annual report stating where the funds have been used so that they know that the funds are being used correctly.

Create Sex Education and Awareness Program

Currently, Ethiopia has poor education, which leads many adults and children to gain less education. A smaller amount of education that they earn about sex increases the level of sexual violence occurring in the country. Also, victims, with a lack of education that they gain, do not know the right way to prevent sexual violence from happening. Also, in Ethiopia, there are not many awareness programs happening. Being aware of sexual violence can lead to a massive decrease in the number of sexual



violence being committed. Thus, the Ethiopian government needs to gain help from other organizations to create sex education and awareness programs to decrease the number of sexual violence from happening.

Glossary

African Union

African Union is a continental union that has 55 member states. African Union was founded on 9 September 2002 by Mu'ammad Al-Qadhdhafi. The purpose of the creation of the union was to provide better living conditions to citizens in Africa, defend their sovereignty, and for the territorial integrity and independence of each member state.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics

With many different members in the organization, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics works to improve education, science, culture, and communication. They also work to improve and provide education for people around the world, create better technology, and improve each culture.



Logo of the African Union

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