

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN NASARAWA STATE

By

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Abstract

The recent surge in the rate of sexual violence in Nigeria has attracted great attention especially amongst stakeholders, Government bodies, non-governmental organizations, social initiatives, the media and the general public. According to police report, a total of 717 rape cases were reported between January to May 2020, statistics however show that only about 28% of sexual violence are reported to relevant authorities making the projection unimaginably higher. The incident has given rise to a massive campaign against rape and sexual violence both on the street and on the media. This study therefore seeks to examine the role social media campaigns in the fight against sexual violence. The study argues that through the social media, people can be sensitized on sexual violence, the need to report, and cases can be exposed for onward prosecution by appropriate authorities. Anchored on the agenda setting theory, the study adopts a survey research design with questionnaire as the data gathering instrument. The population of study comprises of the people of Nasarawa state as a sample of 269 people was drawn from three Local government areas of the state. Findings show that the social media is a relevant and effective weapon in the fight against sexual violence as it helps in the area of sensitization, creation of awareness, educating potential victims and exposing hidden cases. The study also discovers that despite the effectiveness of the social media, factors like low literacy level, low social media usage and false rape allegations are some the challenges of social media campaigns against sexual violence.

Keywords: Social Media, Campaigns, Sexual Violence

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Introduction

State Governors in Nigeria, on the 11th of June, 2020 declared state of emergency on sexual and gender based violence against women and children following the rising spate of rape in the country. The chairman of the Governors' Forum in a communique, called on "state governors that have not already domesticated relevant gender-based protection laws to domesticate the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, the Child Rights Act and the updated Penal Code to increase protection for women and children and ensure speedy investigation and prosecution of perpetrators in addition

to creating a sex offenders register in each state to name and shame.” (Sahara Reporters). While there is no tangible explanation to the sudden surge in rape and sexual violence in the country especially in the heart of the battle against the novel corona virus, the country continues to wake up to fresh and disturbing cases of sexual violence with underage girls and infants of a few month old as the prime targets.

According to police report, Nigeria records 717 cases of rapes between January and May 2020, an outrageous figure for such a short period. With incidents almost evenly distributed among states across the country the sudden wave of rapes and killing of women has led to a national outcry and massive campaign with thousands of people signing a petition and using such hashtags as #WeAreTired and #EndTheRape on the street and on the social media to draw the attention of concerned authority to the seriousness of the issue. Massive campaign is no doubt one of the quickest response to a surge of that magnitude and the media are vehicles upon which such campaigns to can carried from door steps to door steps. With the social media enjoying its current momentum and the flexibility with which it operates there is a great prospect to what can be achieved through social media campaigns in an effort to reduce the rate at which such violent acts are perpetrated and the swiftness with which they are swept under the carpet. Since the emergence of social media platforms, they have been used in raising awareness and mobilizing for social causes around the world (Ayodeji, Yusra and Shiela 2019). This study examines the contribution of social media campaigns to the current battle against rape and sexual violence in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Rape and other forms of sexual violence and molestation have remained major social problems of all times leaving women and children at their peril. The rate and manner with which they occur in recent times is not only alarming but has also called for a nationwide action. Despite the rapid increase in the rate of sexual violence, and the general campaigns against the act, a lot still needs to be done in the area of creating awareness through the various media of communication especially the social media. The Social media despite posing series of social challenges, presents viable platforms for advocacy and social reform- its flexibility and coverage makes it the choice media for social campaigns and advocacy. Around the globe, social media tools have helped

fuel social movements. According to Caroline (2013) Social media has been shown to strengthen social actors' ability to challenge and change power relations in society, providing platforms for debate, reflection, influencing and mobilizing people. It is axiomatic that social mobilization in this contemporary relies heavily on the use of social media to reach its targets and the campaign. Ayodeji, Yusra and Shiela (2019) observed the social media opens up social issue for public discussion. Several cases of such social media use abound: the Egyptian revolution that ousted Hosni Mubarak from power in 2010, the occupy Nigeria protest that took place in Lagos, Abuja and other parts of the country in January 2012 following the announcement by federal government that fuel subsidy had been removed are all cases in point where social media were used as means of creating awareness and securing public mobilization for an action.

Also, despite high rate of sexual violence in our society, statistics have shown that only less than 40 percent of such occurrences are reported to the police or through the media. This leaves several cases unreported thereby making it difficult to measure the damage it may have caused. It is against this backdrop that this study not only seeks to assess the role of social media campaigns in the fight against rape and other forms of sexual violence but to also determine extent to which such campaigns may have helped in boosting the rate at which rape cases are reported.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the extent of the use of social media campaign against sexual violence in Nasarawa State.
2. To ascertain whether the social media has helped to expose cases of sexual violence.
3. To examine whether social media campaign help to create awareness and sensitization against rape and sexual violence.
4. To ascertain the challenges of using social media to campaign against rape and sexual violence.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is the social media used to campaign against rape and sexual violence in Nasarawa state?
2. Has the social media helped in exposing cases of rape and sexual violence?
3. Does social media campaign help to create awareness and sensitization against rape and sexual violence?
4. What are the challenges of using social media to campaign against rape and sexual violence in Nasarawa State.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptualizing the Social Media

Several definitions and feature have distinguish the social media from the traditional mainstream media (Ahmad and Abdullahi 2018. p.187). According to Boyd & Ellison, (2008 p7), "the phrase social media have been used to describe the relatively recent phenomenon of mass personal publishing, including any form of online interactions that allows for the highly scalable user-generated contents of any kind..... that is meant for the consumption of the general public and uses interactive dialogue with others". Kietzmann (2011) defined Social Media as websites which allow profile creation and visibility of relationships between users web-based applications which provide functionality for sharing, relationships, group, conversation and profiles. These definitions are not so different from several others of their kind, they however emphasize on the role of social media in creating relationships in our contemporary. Through social media platforms, people meet other people from far distance and have the chance of relating with those who hitherto could be referred to as total stranger.

Taking another dimension, Emmanuel, Victor and Pauline (2019), mentioned that Social networking service, also known as social media, is an online platform that focuses on building social relations among people, who share interests, background or activities. Social media are modern interactive communication channels through which people connect to one another, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages and information of common interest (Chika and Edogor 2015 p.51). What distinguishes the social media from the conventional means of communication according to the authors

is their interactive nature which allows the audience to participate in it from any part of the world they reside.

While explaining the core characteristics of the social media, Manning (2014 p.278), mentioned that all social media involve some sort of digital platform, whether that be mobile or stationary. He added that not everything that is digital, however, is necessarily social media. Two common characteristics help to define social media; first, social media allow some form of participation. Social media are never completely passive, even if sometimes social networking sites such as Facebook may allow passive viewing of what others are posting. Social media also involves interaction. This interaction can be with established friends, family, or acquaintances or with new people who share common interests or even a common acquaintance circle. Some popular examples of social media platforms include Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Nimbuz, Snapchat and Instagram.

Nigeria and the “Outbreak” of Rape and Other Sex Related Violence

Sexual violence may be defined 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 on Violence and Health 149). Coercion within the context of its usage in this definition explicitly covers a whole spectrum or degrees of violence; physical force, psychological intimidation, blackmail and other forms of threats. It also covers situations where the person aggressed is unable to give consent – for instance, while drunk, drugged, asleep or mentally incapable of understanding the situation.

The terms “rape” and “sexual violence” are rightly often used interchangeably to address all forms of sex related violence because of their intimacy in meaning and applications. While rape is defined as a type of sexual assault usually involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration, perpetrated against a person without that person’s consent (Alao 2018 p.2), or “as physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration – even if slight – of the vulva or anus, using a penis, other body parts or an object, Sexual violence can include other forms of assault involving a sexual organ,

including coerced contact between the mouth and penis, vulva or anus” (World Report on Violence and Health 2020).

Although sexual violence occurs throughout the world, and only a few researches have been conducted on the problem, available data suggest that in some countries nearly one in four women may experience sexual violence by an intimate partner, and up to one-third of adolescent girls report their first sexual experience as being forced. The incidents of rape and gender related violence has become a source of worry to governments, development planners and researchers across the globe. In many developing countries such as India, Nigeria, South Africa, etc, hardly a day passes without reported or rumoured cases of rape or gender violence (Akinwale and Omoera 2017 p.1). Although Nigeria had recorded a relatively steady increase in the number of children and women being sexually molested, the recent outbreak is alarming. According to National Bureau of Statistics report, Nigeria recorded 2143 cases of rape in 2015 with 1351 involving female victims and 792 involving male victims. This figure rose to 2404 in 2016, as outrageous as these figures seems, according to studies conducted by the CLEEN Foundation (2013), only about 28% of rape cases are reported to the relevant authorities and that about 1 in 3 Nigerians personally know a rape victim suggesting that the incidence of rape is grossly underreported.

On Wednesday, 27th of June 2020, a 22-year-old microbiology student of university of Benin was found in the pool of her own blood after being sexually molested in her church where she had gone to study. While the rape and murder of Uwa as she was called sparked a lot of outrage amongst Nigerians, it is just one of the more than 700 cases of sexual violence reported to the police and many more that are to come in the following months. While a lot of people condemned the act because it happened in a church, rape and sexual molestation has become a culture in places of worship and amongst clergy men in Nigeria. The Ogun state police command on the 14th of July, arrested a 59 year old pastor of light Christian Church over the rape of a ten year old girl. According Premium Times, an Islamic cleric was arrested and charged to court for raping a 16 year old girl in the same month in Osun state. In another report by Sahara reporter, another 43 years old Islamic cleric was remanded for raping a 5 year

old girl inside a mosque. These and many other instances underpin the fact that sexual violence is a common tradition amongst so called clergy men in Nigeria.

Barely a week after Nigerians woke-up to the news of rape and murder of Vera Omozuwa in Edo State and Barakat Bello in Oyo State, Premium Times reported another case involving a 12 year old girl in Ajah, Lagos. The girl was reported to have been raped by four masked men in her home town on the 4th of June 2020. The presence of the police and other law enforcement agencies has no doubt relatively minimized the occurrence of rape in mega cities and metropolitan areas. Places in the country sides have however continued to record a rather bizarre cases of sexual molestations. The arrest of a suspected serial rapist in the small town of Dangora, Kano State on the 9th of June gives credence to this assertion. The suspect was arrested for alleged involvement in over 40 rape cases in the town within a period of one year. Also, the growing spate of banditry, insurgency and other social instability in some part of Nigeria has made more women and children vulnerable to rapists who take advantage the homelessness and financial crises of their victims to lure them to the location where the evil is committed.

The “#Endrape” Campaign and Other Movements against Sexual Violence in Nigeria

A group of Nigerian women under the umbrella of different right groups took to the street of major cities in the country on the 9th of June, 2020 calling on the government to take drastic action to combat rape and sexual violence against women. While this was a quick reaction to the gruesome death of Uwaila Vera Omozuwa in edo state and the rape of Barakat Bello in Oyo state, it was to water the ground for other anti-rape campaigns to come with the Women Against Rape in Nigeria (WARN) group on the fore front. The protest as expected gave birth to several other anti-rape movements and nationwide campaign against sexual violence both on the street and on the social media. Other notable initiatives and organizations that featured in the campaign included “Stand to End Rape Initiative”, launched in 2015 by Ayodeji Osowobi, the “Mirabel Center” established in 2013 by Itoro Eze-Anaba, “Hands Off Initiative” launched in 2018 by Ololade Ganikale, “WhineandwhineNg” of Odunayo Eweniyi

and Dami Odufuwa and “Women at Risk International Foundation” Founded in 2016 by Dr. Kemi DaSilva-Ibru, (Akindare 2020 p.1).

Social media surveys also show that Nigerians turned up massively on the social media to campaign against sexual violence with several hashtags including #endrape, #wearetired, #stoptherape etc. Social initiatives and NGOs also took to their respective social media pages to mobilize support for the anti-rape campaign as well as provide free online sensitization for the public, educate people on safety measures and the need to report rape cases. One of such instance is the virtual summit to “seek an end to the culture of impunity in cases of rape and gender based violence” organized by Movement Against Rape and Sexual Violence on 27th of June. Statistics show that as at 2019 the number of internet users in Nigeria increased from 94 million to 98.39 million. This indicates a fair increase in the number of users and also reflects the high rate of internet usage in the country, constituting about 50% of the total population. From the 98.39 million Nigerian internet users, 54% access the internet on a daily basis while only 12% (24 million) have active social media accounts. The social media, judging by these figures is the only platform that connects millions of Nigeria on a daily basis making possible for social discourse and argument on sexual violence to take place. Through these platforms also, individuals can now expose rape cases at the comfort of their homes and leave the rest in the hands of concerned authorities.

Theoretical Framework

This study anchored on Agenda Setting Theory. The theory, as proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in 1973 assumes that the news media set agenda for the public. An agenda within this context is “an issue, which elicits a positive or negative comments from the members of the public. Asemah (2011) observed that Agenda setting on the other hand is the process of reflecting the events in our society. McCombs (2007) reiterates that the power of the news media to set a nation’s agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well-documented influence. Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news.

The theory was developed as a study on the 1968 presidential election where Democratic incumbent Lyndon B. Johnson was ousted by Republican challenger Richard Nixon. Known as the "Chapel Hill Study," McCombs and Shaw surveyed 100 residents of Chapel Hill, North Carolina on what they thought were the most important issues of the election how that compared to what the local and national media reported were the most important issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972 in Amber 1). Built under the assumption that even though the media may not necessarily tell people what to think, it can tell them what to think about, the agenda setting theory is not only limited to focusing the attention of the members of the public on a particular set of issues, but also influences the understanding and perspectives of the individuals on the topic in the news. Agenda setting theory begins as an explanation on how the mass media affects to change the pattern in political behaviour during elections (Cohen: 1963), it is "a theory that discusses on how the mass media influences in making a certain issue as a public agenda" (Razinah 2014 p.5).

Axiomatically, the agenda setting theory was propounded at a time when there was no social media, and the proponents made reference to the traditional media; radio, television and newspaper. The theory has however acquired more popularity in the social media era as it features, perfectly also, in most researches on the use of social media for public mobilization. The growing usage of social media, its ease of access, wide coverage and flexibility has placed it in the center of modern mass communication. As a matter of fact, the world is going through an unprecedented social media revolution that ensures the circulation of user-generated information and provides for massive feedback so much so that one cannot talk about setting a public agenda without it.

Review of Related Studies

Sexual violence have not just constituted a prominent social issue over time, it has also been widely researched by scholars in the social sciences. While most of such researches dwell particularly on the effects of rape on its victims and its impact on the society, others have examined its causes, contributing factors, and its remedies and hardly would any research on the subject matter take a deviate completely from these

four major themes. While for instance, Alao (2018) in his study, examined the impact of rape on its victim and the socio-development of Nigeria, Armstrong and Mahone (2016) examined the role of social media in individual willingness to mobilize against rape.

In a paper written by Caroline Liou and published by **Partners for Prevention** in 2013, possible ways of using the social media to prevent violence against women were explored. The writer draws references from the social media communication campaigns to prevent violence against women in India, China and Vietnam. According to the writer, social media tools have helped fuel social movements and “has been shown to strengthen social actors’ ability to challenge and change power relations in society, providing platforms for debate, reflection, influencing and mobilizing people” (Caroline 2013 p.5). The three social media campaigns from India, China and Viet Nam as explored in Caroline’s publication show that there are many ways that social media can be used in communications campaigns aimed at preventing Violence against women – “social media can serve both as a key tool at the forefront of the campaign (the ‘Love Journey’ campaign in Viet Nam), support a more traditional campaign pinned to traditional media and on-the-ground events (the “17 Man” campaign in China) or a campaign that uses social media on both these levels (the “Must Bol” campaign in India)” (Caroline 2013, p.5).

In a similar study, D’Ambrosi, Polci, and Papakristo (2018) delineates the use of social media as a communication strategy for “new education” against gender-based violence. Using a quantitative/qualitative analysis approach of around 20 Italian social websites-platforms-pages dealing with the phenomenon of femicide, the study investigates the role of social media in cultural awareness raising and engagement in the struggle against gender violence. According to the researchers, Participatory experiences in the Web nowadays increasingly have a specifically communicative and educational connotation. This is particularly so when such aggregations are oriented towards expressive-symbolic action reflected in the pursuit of a common cause. The analysis of the three dimensions (awareness, participation and education) in the study highlights a new face that the web is developing in addressing the issue of femicide/violence against women. Scattered and weakly linked pages are joined

today by structured and coordinated websites/blogs, which are set up as spaces for listening and meeting. Such virtual spaces are often anchored to significant images and symbols, chosen to “sensitize” in relation to emotionally engaging topics through new participatory and educational strategies (D’Ambrosi & Polci, 2018 p.39).

Methodology

The study adopts a survey research method for gathering quantitative data on the role of social media campaigns in the fight against sexual violence in Nasarawa state. The researcher employs the survey research method because it is considered very effective for gathering reliable quantitative data in the field of public relations and corporate communication. The survey research method according to Onwubere (2012) is perhaps the most popular research method among communication researchers. Sobowale (2009) corroborates this assertion when he states that it is the most commonly used research technique by behavioural (social) scientists.

The major population for this study is Nasarawa state. The population of Nasarawa state according to the 2016 population projection is estimated to be 2.5 million. Given the largeness of this figure, the study is narrowed down to cover only three (Keffi, Wamba and Doma) out of the 13 local government areas, with one local government each from the three senatorial districts, reducing the figure to about 409,000. The study uses the “Fluidsurveys” sample size formula/calculator at <http://fluidsurveys.com/university/survey-sample-size-calculator>.

At the imputation of the population of study, a desired margin of error and confidence level, the “fluidsurveys” sample size calculator brings up an accurate sample size. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a margin of error of 5 % and confidence level of 90% for total population of 409,000, using the formula below:

Sample Size Calculation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Sample Size} &= (\text{Distribution of } 50\%) / ((\text{Margin of Error}\% / \text{Confidence Level Score}) \\ &\text{Squared}) \\ &= \frac{50\% (409000)}{(5\% / 90\%)^2} \end{aligned}$$

= 270

Given:

Distribution = 409000

M.E (margin of error) = 5%

C.L (confidence level) 90%.

From a sample size of 270, below is the sample distribution by local government.

Local Government	Sample	Percentage
Keffi	90	33.3%
Wamba	90	33.3%
Doma	90	33.3%
Total	270	100

The main instrument used for data gathering in this research is the questionnaire. It is a set of well thought out questions relating to the aims and objectives of the study which respondents are required to give answers to. The questionnaire as an instrument that permits wide coverage for minimum expense both in monetary terms and in effort. Against this backdrop, 270 copies of the questionnaire were purposefully distributed in each of the three Local Government in the manner illustrated in the table above. All the 270 questionnaires were administered by the researchers and all were filled and returned. The questionnaire is composed of two parts- "A" and "B". Part A is made up of demographic information of the respondents while part "B" carried closed ended questions on the role of social media campaign in fighting against sexual violence in Nasarawa state.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: demographic characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	158	58%
Female	112	42%
Total	270	100%
Age		
15-35	109	40%
36-60	92	34%
61-above	69	26%
Total	270	100%

Marital Status

Single	93	34%
Married	102	38%
Divorced	48	18%
Widowed	27	10%
Total	270	100%

Source: Field Survey 2020

Table 1 indicates that 158 (58%) respondents were male while 112 (42%) were female. There is a close margin between the number of males and females involved the study as respondents were randomly picked. This also indicates that a good number of both gender were involved in the study.

The table also shows that 109 (40%) of the respondents are within the age of 15-35 years, 92 (34%) were within the age of 36-60 years, while 68 (26%) are within the age of 61 and above. This distribution reveals substantially that majority of the respondents are within the youthful age while a good number of aged people and young adults were also involved.

The table indicates that 93 (34%) of the respondents are single, 102 (38%) are married while 48 (18%) and 27 (10%) are divorced and widowed respectively. This shows majority of the respondents are either married or single while other people of different marital status were also relatively involved in the study.

Table 2: which of these social media platforms are you on?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	205	76%
Twitter	160	59%
Whatsapp	217	81%
Others	126	47%
None	36	13%

Source: Field Survey 2020

The table above indicates that 76% of the respondents are on Facebook, 59% are on twitter, 81% on Whatsapp, 47 % are on other social media platforms not mentioned in this study while 36 respondents (13%) are not on any social media platforms. The data on this table indicates significantly that majority of the respondents are not social media users but are active on the three major social media platforms of the

contemporary and are therefore in the position to give responses on the role of social media campaign in the fight against sexual violence.

Table 3: The rate of sexual violence in Nasarawa State?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	20	7%
High	168	62%
Low	56	21%
Very Low	25	10%
Total	270	100%

Source: Field Survey 2020

Table 3 above shows that 56 (21%) respondents believe that there is low rate of sexual violence in Nasarawa state, 62% agree that there is a high rate of sexual violence, 7% “very high” while 10% “very low”. From the foregoing, the rate of sexual violence in Nasarawa state can be put to “moderately high” especially considering the geometric increase recorded during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to United Nation’s Report on sexual violence, Nasarawa state recorded an increase from 5 cases in March to 20 in April 2020.

Table 4: How often do you come across anti-rape campaigns on social media?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Often	201	77%
Very often	28	10%
Not often	40	13%
Total	270	100%

Source: Field Survey 2020

Table 4 indicates that 77% of the respondents come across anti-rape campaigns on social media often, 10% “very often” while 13% “not often”. By implication, only 13% of the respondents have not come across social campaigns against sexual violence.

Table 5: Sources of most anti rape campaigns on social media

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Government bodies	27	10%
NGOs	120	45%
Social initiatives	190	71%

Private individuals 148 55%

Source: Field Survey 2020

Table indicates that 71% of the respondents agree that social initiatives constitutes the source of most anti-rape campaigns on social media. This is followed by private individuals with 55% of the respondents, NGOs with 45% and government bodies with 10%. This shows that the above four variables undoubtedly constitute sources of social media campaigns against sexual violence. It also reveals that majority of such campaigns on social media are usually championed by social initiatives, private individuals and non-governmental organizations while government bodies constitutes the least in this category.

Table 6: Do you agree that social media campaigns help to create awareness and sensitization against rape and sexual violence?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	137	51%
Strongly agree	85	32%
Undecided	0	0%
Disagree	27	10%
Strongly disagree	21	7%
Total	270	100%

Source: Field Survey 2020

This table indicates that 40% respondents agree that social media help to create awareness and sensitization against rape and sexual violence, 32% strongly agree, 16% and 12% disagree and strongly disagree respectively. This shows that 72% at least agree that social media campaign help to create awareness and sensitization against rape and sexual violence.

Table 7: Do you agree that social media has helped exposed cases of rape and sexual violence?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	125	47%
Strongly agree	81	30%
Undecided	0	0%

Disagree	33	12%
Strongly disagree	30	11%
Total	270	100%

Source: Field Survey 2020

This table shows that 47% respondents agree that social media helps to expose cases of rape and sexual violence. 30% strongly agree while 12% and 11% disagree and strongly disagree respectively. This indicates that a good number of the respondents (77%) atleast agree that the social media has helped in exposing rape cases.

Table 8: in what ways does social media contribute to the fight against rape and sexual violence?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1. Educating potential victims on the need to report cases of sexual violence	189	70%
2. Exposing cases of sexual violence through Citizen reporting	145	54%
3. Providing platforms for discussions and argument on the subject matter	167	62%
4. Providing direct link with organizations and social initiatives that take up rape cases	156	58%
5. Providing platforms for massive campaign against sexual violence	197	73%

Source: Field Survey 2020

The table above indicates that the five ways through which the social media can contribute to the fight against sexual violence as suggested by the researchers are viable. 70% of the respondents agree that social media helps to educate potential victims on the need to report rape cases. 54% believe that social media helps in exposing cases of sexual violence through citizen reporting, 62% agree that social media provides platforms for discussion and argument on sexual violence, 58% agree that it provides direct link with organizations and social initiatives that take up rape cases while 73% agree that social media provides platforms for massive campaign against sexual violence. The distribution shows that amongst other means, social

media provide platforms for massive campaign against sexual violence in Nasarawa State.

Table 9: challenges of using social media to campaign against sexual violence

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Low literacy level	205	76%
False rape allegation	188	70%
Low social media usage	143	53%
Re-victimizing victims through leakage Of photos and footages of rape scenes	112	42%

Source: Field Survey 2020

The above table illustrate the problems associated with the use of social media to campaign against sexual violence. From the table, 76% of the respondents agree that low literacy level constitutes a problem, 70% and 53% agree on false rape allegations and low social media usage respectively while 42 % see re-victimization of victims through leakages of photos and footages of rape incidents on social media as one of the problems associated with the use of social media to campaign against sexual violence.,

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study has established that a great number of respondents are active social media users 76% are on Facebook, 59% on twitter, 89% on Whatsapp while 47% are on other social media platforms. On the rate of sexual violence in Nasarawa state, the research has established that there is a high rate of sexual violence in Nasarawa State, a total of 69% of the respondent agree that it is atleast “high”. On the extent of the use of social media to campaign against sexual violence, this study finds out that people of Nasarawa state are to a very large extent exposed to social media campaign against sexual violence. A total of 77% of the respondents come across social campaign “often” while 10% come across it “very often”. The study also established that government bodies are the least source of anti-rape posts on social media while social initiatives constitute the major providers of information and sensitization against sexual violence on social media in the state, this is followed by posts made by private individuals and non-governmental organizations.

Responding to whether social media campaigns help to create awareness and sensitization against rape and sexual violence, 51% of the respondent “agree” and 32% “strongly agree” this means that 83% responded in affirmative while only 17% disagreed. Creation of awareness and sensitizing potential victims on how sexual violence occur, what to do to avoid falling victims and how to react when the harm has already been done is no doubt one of the best way of reducing its prevalence in our society. The social media as discovered in this study provides viable platforms to carry out such sensitization. Intrinsically, one of the factors militating the fight against sexual violence in Nigeria is the secrecy with which it is treated by victims and their families. Out of fear gathering unnecessary attention and scandal, rape cases are usually concealed. This does not only ensure that rapist go unpunished, it also prevent proper documentation of the incidence. In this regard, this study established that through the social media rape cases can be exposed to the world including law enforcement agencies and social initiatives who can help bring perpetrators to justice. 77% respondent affirmed to this assertion while only 33% disagreed.

From the data presented above, this study also established that social media campaign has contributed to the fight against sexual violence in five major ways; educating potential victims on the need to report, exposing cases through citizen reporting, providing platforms for discussions and argument on the subject matter, providing direct link with organizations and initiatives that take up rape cases and serving as platform for massive campaign against sexual violence. Responding to hypothetical questions on the challenges of using social media platforms to campaign against sexual violence in Nasarawa state, 76% of the respondents affirmed low literacy level, 70% false rape allegations, 53% low social media usage while 42% agreed that Re-victimizing victims through leakages of photos and footages of rape scenes is also one of the challenges. While other challenges may abound, the above mentioned apply in most cases, literacy level in most African countries is relatively low, internet facilities are not widely available resulting in low social media usage which may reduce the impact social media campaign in a society. The social media is also known to spread more false information than other media of communication combined, this places individuals at risk of being falsely accused of and defamed over sexual violence.

Another obvious challenge is that of leaking obscene footages and pictures of sexual violence, while victims may expose the incident and seek redress in the court of law, unauthorized exposure and leakages such incidence may traumatize the victim even more than the incident itself.

CONCLUSION

The media as a societal institution is at the very heart of every social struggles and causes. Through its agenda setting role, the media draws attention of the public to contemporary social ills and ensures that people at least think about such ills with the view to mobilize public action. With the social media, it is becoming increasingly easy to mobilize for a social change. In this regard, this study uncovers the contribution of the social media to current campaign against sexual violence in Nasarawa state and Nigeria at large. The present surge in rape and sexual violence in Nigeria may have been caused by several factors, its impacts on the victims and their families remain devastating. With the massive campaign and movement against the act, the social media has played a complementary role through public enlightenment and exposure of perpetrators to ensure that justice is done. This is possible as more grounds could be covered by the social media in terms of reaching people than the conventional media.

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