

**The Nigerian Civil War of 1967 and the Stigmatization of Children Born of Rape  
Victims in Edo State Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

The history of the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970, though short, still lingers in the memory of many Nigerians especially communities that were not among the many ethnic groups in the war, hence they were seen as saboteurs. For this many atrocities were netted on them; among which was rape. Up till date, it is still obvious in some of the names given to children now adults born of rape victims by the Biafran and Nigerian army during the two and half years the war lasted. This study therefore seeks to observe the attitude of 'children' born this period in question as a result of the stigma attached to their names; it examines community responses to incidence of rape and the level of compensation to mothers (rape victims) and the resultant children born after the war. The study employed principally qualitative methodology: in-depth interview and focus group discussion, among a cross section of 50 households drawn randomly and via a snowballing sampling method in three local government areas of Edo state Nigeria. Major findings from the study showed that 40years after the Civil War, 'children' were still seen as 'bad omen' mostly affected were the female 'children' now married 73% of them. Also observed was that many of the males (67%) have changed their names from war related meanings. The study concludes that rape in war times is evil and should not be encouraged in any form. Finally the study recommends that proper education and enlightenment campaign about the aftermath of rape should be given to soldiers preparing for war.

**Key words: Children Rape, Victims and War**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The 20th century contained some of the most barbaric episodes of large-scale violence and crimes against humanity in recorded history (Suarez-Orozco & Robben, 2000). Examples include the Nazi Holocaust, the “killing fields” of Cambodia, government-orchestrated terror in Latin America, and ethnic cleansing campaigns in the Balkans and in African countries of Rwanda and Burundi. Crimes against humanity often include sexual violence (Comision de derechos humanos de El Salvador, 1986). This is true of atrocities perpetrated upon civilians during civil wars in many countries of which Nigeria had its own bitter share in July 1967-Jan 1970, the former Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1995 etc. During these civil wars/conflict periods, thousands of females were subjected to systematic mass rape conducted as both individual sexual assaults, sometimes in the victim’s own home, and as collective rapes as in “bordello camps” (Arcel, Folnegovic-Smalc, Kozaric-Kovacic, & Marusic, 1995; United Nations, 1994). Rape is considered to be one of the most traumatic of peacetime human experiences (Arcel et al., 1995; Resick, 1990). It is also associated with some of the highest rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD); (Breslau et al., 1998; Resick, 2001) resulting in many cases that appear to resist spontaneous healing over time (Foa, et al., 1989, Schulz, et al., 2006).

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

There is no doubt many literatures have shown the negative effect of war on nations and the people in general terms with increasing civil wars and crises around Africa. Researches on the effect of war on women and children though on the increase, nevertheless few is the case on studies relating to rape victims from the Nigerian civil war experience of 1967-70. This has been attributed to the short period the war lasted (Only for a period of (30) thirty months).

Evidences are abound today in many communities in the Eastern part of Nigeria and border states where the war had its largest casualty of victims, indigenes and non indigenes alike especially families from the Old Mid-Western Nigeria (later Bendel State and presently Edo and Delta states), who were caught up in the war but had to return with their young daughters with pregnancy resulting from rape by troops of either side. Also a lot of married women were raped apart from losing their husbands in the war to both the Nigerian and the Biafran troops, the effect was more on single

girls and ladies (unmarried) many who became pregnant and have to give birth to children whose paternity are still unknown today. Traditionally the African society despite frowning at rape also vehemently dislikes the act of having children outside wedlock. The repercussions are enormous mostly on ladies as these tend to reduce and even prevent potential suitors' hands in marriage. Apart from the issue of stigma, community members and those in the know are bound to extend the repercussion/hatred on the victims' children as well as their families. For these reasons this study therefore probes into the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 and the stigmatization of children born of rape victims in Edo State - Nigeria.

### **1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of the study is to examine the effect of the Nigerian civil war and the stigmatization of children born of rape victims in Edo State Nigeria from which the following specific objectives were derived:

1. to observe the attitude of 'children' born this period in question.
2. to identify and examine the stigma attached to names given to children born of rape victims.
3. to examine community responses after the war to incidence of rape.
4. to examine the level of compensation on mothers (rape victims) and the resultant children of war.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

Today, opinion leaders, policy makers and various NGOs are concerned with the problems of breaking the vicious cycle of poverty, and underdevelopment in many countries especially on women and children (Country Report, 2000). To achieve these objectives, some of the salient aftermath of the effect of the Nigerian Civil War should be retraced and look into, among several others to heal the wounds of the past: This study also aims at bringing to our knowledge the importance of names among the Edo people.

## **1.4 Research Setting and Methodology**

The study setting is EDO State, a "generic name given to a group of people who have a common ancestor and have a common language, with some different variants, depending on the distance between the group and the "tap root, "resident in and around the present day Benin City (Ryder, 1977:31). In short, the land, the political state, the people, tribe, language and the principal city -Benin City is called EDO. The Edo-speaking people are divided into the following clans today: a) " BINI ", b) ESAN/Ishan, c) The Afemais, d) Akoko-Edos and e) The Owans-ORAS. This study was limited to three communities of Oredo, IKpoba-Okha, and Ovia in the Bini clan.

The study employed principally qualitative methodology: in-depth interview and focus group discussion, among a cross section of 50 households drawn randomly and via a snowballing sampling method with the first option of purposively identifying a key informant in Oredo Local Government area of Edo state Nigeria. The study population comprised of 50 respondents one each from fifty households, constituting nine (9) males and forty-one (41) females. As a qualitative study, the methods of data collection and data analysis were basically through informed questions and answers from an interview/focus group discussion guide. The quantitative data were analyzed using simple percentages and tables as against content analysis/grouping of relevant information from the interviewees and focus group discussants.

## **2.0 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The literature for this study is limited to the causes of the Nigerian civil war, basic definition of rape, rape in the Twentieth Century, Criminal Justice System and Rape; and the factors affecting rape reporting.

### **2.1 The Nigerian civil war: Causes of the civil war**

There were two major causes of the war the immediate and remote causes;

1. The military governor of the Igbo-dominated southeast, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, citing the large-scale massacres of Christian Igbo living in the Muslim north due to the coup and counter coup of September, 1966. This led Col. Ojukwu to proclaim with southern parliament the secession of the south-eastern region from Nigeria as the Republic of Biafra, an independent nation on 30 May 1967. The war later began 6th July 1967 and ended on 13th January 1970.

2. The conflict was the result of economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions among the various peoples of Nigeria. Like many other African nations, Nigeria was an artificial structure initiated by the British which had neglected to consider religious, linguistic, and ethnic differences. Nigeria, which won independence from Britain in 1960, had at that time a population of 60 million people consisting of nearly 300 differing ethnic and cultural groups (Madiabo, 1980).

## **2.2 An Overview of the Term Rape**

Traditionally rape is defined as “an act of sexual intercourse undertaken by a man with a woman, not his wife, by force and against her will” (Bohmer, 1991, p. 318, Clay-Warner and Burt, 2005, p. 152). Most states’ definitions of rape now encompass acts other than the “traditional” rape such as marital rape and forced oral or anal sex (Marsh, Geist, & Caplan, 1982; Searles & Berger, 1987), and they have replaced the single crime of rape with a series of graded offences. These graded offences reflect the continuum of violence in sexual assault crimes, allow punishments to be prescribed that are commensurate with the crime, and reduce the amount of discretion given to criminal justice officials (Marsh et al., 1982). An additional modification was the replacement of the term *rape* with a more general term, such as *sexual assault*, with the intentions of emphasizing both; that rape is a crime of violence, rather than one resulting from uncontrollable sexual urges, and equating rape with other violent assaults (Searles & Berger, 1987).

## **2.3 Rape in the Twentieth Century**

The century saw the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia in 1992-95, the theme of sexual violence became a major issue and agenda on international discourse. Mass rape of women in these two conflicts has generated open debates about the phenomenon. It seems that the taboo which has overshadowed rape and sexual violence for so long has now been changed. The international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) are the first war crime tribunals where sexual violence is part of the agenda. The work carried out in both tribunals reveals, however, that there is a substantial lack of knowledge about the phenomenon (Skjelsbaek, 2001).

In Skjelsbaek, (2001), reflections on the ethnic cleansing process in Bosnia, Sells (1996:11) noted that the more obscene the crime, the less visible it is'. Sexual violence in war is an example of such an obscene crime. Feelings of shame and guilt as well as culturally imposed taboos contribute to keeping the victims of this crime silent not until recently. A lot of people have failed to look into the mechanisms which create perpetrators (Skjelsbaek, 2001), perhaps out of fear that the possibility of committing the same crime is a potential we all have. Few are also willing to look into how this crime affects the victims and the child/ren born thereafter, as this study seek to examine 40 years after the Nigerian Civil war ended. The wars of the 1990s do seem to have changed this pattern of ignorance as well as create platform to look into such occurrence in the past as in the case of the Nigerian civil war of 1967.

#### **2.4 Rape and the Criminal Justice System**

Since the mid-1970s, sweeping changes have been made to laws governing forcible rape. These changes include the alteration of evidentiary requirements, establishment of rape shield statutes, modification of resistance requirements, and, in some cases, even redefining the crime of rape (Spohn and Horney, 1992). Prior to the institution of these reforms, many victims were reluctant to report rapes, fearing mistreatment from the criminal justice system and retaliation from the perpetrator (e.g., Bryden & Lengnick, 1997; Legrand, 1973; Robin, 1977). In fact, under-reporting was so widespread that some estimated that even if every rape reported resulted in a trial, more than 90% of rapists would never see the inside of a courtroom (McCahill, Meyer, and Fischman, 1979). Recognizing that justice system reforms are only successful to the extent that victims access the systems, one key goal of the reforms was to increase reporting of rape (Bachman & Paternoster, 1993; Bryden & Lengnick, 1997; Horney & Spohn, 1991). Despite the significance of reporting to the overall success of the reforms, however, only limited empirical research has examined changes in rape reporting across time (Bachman & Paternoster, 1993). Even less attention has been given to whether extralegal factors that inhibited reporting, such as prior acquaintance with the assailant, continue to exert the same influence today as they did in the pre-reform era.

The influence of extralegal factors is significant, as Estrich (1987) has argued that there has always been a distinction in the legal system between *aggravated* and *simple*

rape. She defined aggravated rape, following Kalvin and Zeisel (1966; see also Horney & Spohn, 1996), as an assault in which the victim and assailant are unknown to each other, there are multiple assailants, or violence is explicit, as evidenced by use of weapons and victim injury. In simple rapes, none of these circumstances exists. Although modern law has not drawn a distinction between these two forms of sexual violence, considerable evidence suggests that, indeed, aggravated rape and simple rape have been viewed as different crimes by the public and have been treated differently by the courts (CJS in Nigeria) (Alder, 1987; Bryden&Lengnick, 1997; Estrich, 1987; Kalvin & Zeisel, 1966; LaFree, 1981; McCahill et al., 1979). Estrich also states that certain components of rape reform were written with the explicit intent of reducing the distinction between aggravated and simple rape (e.g., rape shield laws). The question remains, however, whether these reforms have been successful in reducing the reporting gap between simple and aggravated rape.

## **2.5 Factors Affecting Rape Reporting**

It is not just the rates of reporting that deserve scrutiny, however; it is also important to examine whether extralegal factors associated with rape reporting have changed. An ancillary goal of rape reform was to remove the stigma attached to certain types of rape such as those committed by acquaintances or those in which no additional injury occurred. As Estrich (1987) noted, these types of rapes were not considered “real rapes” and were not treated seriously by either the public or the criminal justice system. In developing her argument, Estrich cited the fact that rapes committed by strangers (one type of aggravated rape) are more likely to be reported than are rapes committed by acquaintances, most of which would be classified as simple rape. Indeed, studies using crime data gathered from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s have concluded that women raped by strangers were significantly more likely to report compared to women raped by acquaintances (Feldman-Summers & Ashworth, 1981; Greenberg & Ruback, 1992; Lizotte, 1985; Smith & Nelson, 1976; L. S. Williams, 1984).

Consistent with Estrich’s (1987) assertion, situational danger has also been found to affect reporting. Smith and Nelson (1976) found that victim reporting varied directly with the amount of danger experienced by the victim during her rape and that reporting was more likely if the rapist committed additional crimes at the time of the

attack. Similarly, Greenberg and Ruback (1992) found that women were more likely to report their rapes if degrading acts were inflicted. Other indicators of rape seriousness, such as weapon use (Amir, 1971; Bachman, 1998; Lafree, 1980; Lizotte & Wolfson, 1981) and the level of physical injury (Bachman, 1993, 1998; Holmstrom & Burgess, 1978; LaFree, 1980; Lizotte, 1985; Lizotte & Wolfson, 1981), have also been found to increase the likelihood of reporting. In fact, Lizotte (1985) found that although the seriousness of rape incident was predictive of crime reporting in general, serious injury had an even greater effect on the likelihood of reporting in rape cases than in cases of nonsexual assault. Other factors not directly related to the simple-aggravated rape dichotomy have also been found to be associated with rape reporting. Lizotte (1985) found that both married rape victims and highly educated victims were more likely to report. Greenberg and Ruback (1992) reported that women were also more likely to report their rape if the attack occurred outdoors, this contradict the reporting of rape case in Nigeria.

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on routine activity-situational motivation theory of Cohen and Felson (1979) with emphasis on deviance and criminal behaviour.

### **2.6.1 Routine Activity-Situational Motivation Theory**

The emergence of theories of crime that emphasize the influence of routine activities (Cohen and Felson 1979) or lifestyle (Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo 1978) is one of the most significant developments in the study of deviance over the past decades. This situational approach shifts attention toward the dependence of crime on opportunities (war) presented by the routine activities of everyday life (Sex). Routine activity theorists apply situational approach to explain group differences (Hindelang et al. 1978) and trends in aggregate crime rates (Cohen and Felson 1979) in terms of the social structure's impact on routine activities. According to Meier and Miethe (1993: 472-73), sociologists find the routine activity perspective appealing because it identifies a symbiotic relationship between conventional activities and illegal activities and points to fundamental ironies in links between some otherwise constructive social changes and increasing crime (e.g. armed robbery and rape).

The routine activity perspective can also be extended to a wider range of deviant behaviours, behaviours that are disapproved by conventional normative standards and that typically provoke attempts at social control if detected by authority figures. For example illegal or deviant behaviours, such as: the use of illicit drugs, reckless behaviour, illegal services, and mutual violence. Theoretical statements defining the perspective are explicitly limited to predatory crime, meaning incidents in which an offender does harm to/or takes property from a victim/government (Hindelang et al. 1978; Cohen and Felson 1979; Miethe and Meier 1994). A central concept of the routine activity theory is Briar and Piliavin's (1965) idea of situational motivation, which states that the motivation for delinquency is inherent in the situation rather than in the person.

Rather than considering delinquent acts as solely the product of long term motives deriving from conflicts or frustrations whose genesis is far removed from the arenas in which the illegal behaviour occurs, we assume these acts are prompted by short-term situationally induced desires experienced by all boys. ... (P. 36)

This is applicable to men; soldiers and rebels alike. For Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) include a situational conception of motivation in their general theory of crime (which they define to encompass a broad range of deviant behaviours). This theory suggests that the motive to crime is inherent in or limited to immediate gains provided by the act of rape. A situational conception of motivation also meshes well with the cost versus benefit analysis found in the rational-choice perspective, which shares the routine activity perspective's emphasis on the contribution of opportunity to crime. This Briar and Piliavin (1965) observed that the concept of situational motivation is the basis of a social control explanation of delinquency. Reasoning that everyone encounters situations in which delinquent behaviour would be rewarding, they portray variation in delinquency as dependent on the "stakes in conformity" that induce an actor to forego those benefits. This therefore calls for government, rebel leaders to initiate policies that will make soldiers/individuals to conform to morals of everyday life.

### 3.0. Results of Findings and Discussions

#### 3.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The research sample comprised of 50 respondents: (41) 82 percent females and (9)18 percent males, all drawn from a survey of fifty households in three Local government area of Oredo, Ovia, and Ikpoba-Ohka and in Edo State-Nigeria. The ages of the respondents showed that the oldest among the respondents were born in 1968 (26%) and youngest which constituted the majority, were born in 1969 (74%). Educational attainment of the respondents showed that 16 (32percent) of the female respondents had no formal of education. Marital status showed that 64% of the female respondents were married (32 of 41), so were 14% of the male respondents (7of9). The occupation status shows that most of the respondents were traders (42%) and civil servants (10%) as shown in the table 1. below:

**Table 1. Showing the Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

<b>Age</b>			
<b>Year of birth</b>	1968	1969	Total
Male	5(10%)	4(8%)	9(18%)
Female	8(16%)	33(66%)	41(82%)
Total	13(26%)	37 (74%)	50(100%)
<b>Educational Qualification</b>			
	Male	Female	Total
Primary	2(4%)	11(22%)	13(26%)
Secondary	4(8%)	9(18%)	13(26%)
Tertiary	3(6%)	3(6%)	6(12%)
None	-	16(32%)	16(32%)
NR		2(4%)	2(4%)
<b>Total</b>	9(18%)	41(82%)	50(100%)
<b>Marital status</b>	Male	Female	Total
Single	2(4%)	-	2(4%)
Married	7(14%)	32(64%)	39(78%)
Divorced	-	9(18%)	9(18%)
Total	9(18%)	41(82%)	50(100%)
<b>Occupation</b>	Male	Female	Total
Traders	6(12%)	20 (40%)	26(52%)
Civil servants	3(6%)	7(14%)	10(20%)
Housewife	-	9(18%)	9(18%)
unspecified	-	5(10%)	5(10%)
Total	9 (18%)	41(82%)	50(100%)

**Field Survey, 2008**

### 3.2 Names Given to Children Born of Rape Victims and their Meanings.

Names in African settings are usually attached to events, supernatural, natural and other divinely inspired connotations. Likewise among the Binis, in Edo state. From the study among families who experienced the Nigerian Civil, the study seeks to know the various names given to the respondents at birth and the present names they bear. The following names in table 2 were among the few names given to the children born of such circumstances as rape and war alongside their meanings.

**Table 2. Showing Some of the African Names Given to Respondents at Birth**

Names	Abbreviation.	Meanings	Male	Female
Okwuoemose,	Imose	War is ugly	3(6%)	15 (30%)
Okwodiaghe	Diaghe	War is not worth watching	1(2%)	7 (14%)
Okwoeinata	Nata	Not to be told	2(4%)	-
Okwoienoma	Enoma	War is not to be desired	1(2%)	6(12%)
Naimie	Imie	Not to be experienced	-	7(14%)
Okwoba	Iba	Red is the colour of war	2(4%)	6(12%)
Total			9(18%)	41(82%)

**Field Survey, 2008**

From table 2., the percentage representation shows that among the interviewed and sampled respondents, 30 percent of female were named at birth *Okwuoemose* (ugly face of war), and 6 percent of the male respondents. Also 14 percent of the respondents named *Okwodiaghe* (War is not worth watching) and *Naimie* (Not to be seen). Another 12 percents with the name *Okwoienoma* (War is not to be desired). Among other names *Okwoba* (Red is the colour of war) and *okwoeinata* (War is not to be spoken about). The meanings and circumstances surrounding the names were buttressed by a female interviewee:

*We in this part of the world are known not to just bear names like the white people. Like in my own case I was named at birth Okwuoemose meaning the face of war is ugly. I later got to know the meaning, quite late while I was in school in the 1980s. It was when I was in secondary school some of my friends tried to link my date of birth to the civil war and the meaning of my name that it became clear and I had to find out the real meaning from my late foster father.*

*So after secondary school I decided to abbreviate the name from Okwuoemose to Imose which gave it a*

*different meaning entirely. Imose in bini dialect means beauty. (ID. Female Ovia).*

The focus group discussion highlights some of the reasons why such names were given to children of that period.

*These names as Okwueimose, Okwuoria, Naimie, and Okwoienoma etc we were told were given to us to remind people of what happened in the past and to stop such occurrence from happening again or to serve as precaution and deterrent against war and war mongers. From the listed names you would repeatedly hear the word Okwuo, this word means war...so those of us whose pregnancy came up during this period and were born shortly after mostly had names beginning with the word 'Okwuo' in other instances if the events/circumstances were nice names were also given to mark such events and their importance to society, but many have come to use it against us. Thus these names we are bearing as discussed. Stigmatisation is a big problem we faced while growing up. (Idi/female/40yrs/18/02/08 Benin-city) and Female FGDs01/03/2008*

On the contrary 8 of the male respondents tend to disagree with the point of view of the female interviewees. They saw names containing *Okwuo* as a prefix symbolizing masculinity. This view was captioned by majority of the male respondents (88.9%) eight of the nine respondents. Extracted from a particular interviewee as follows:

*We should not be deceived, for our Bini names signifies period of wars and depicts strength of warriors. So that's why we were given such names by our parents. Though some tend to view it as one form of stigma or another as many females have claimed here in this discussion, nevertheless war-names teach lessons to the people so we all should be proud of our names and forget about what people are saying (FGD/male 22/06/08/Oredo).*

### **3.3 Stigmatizations Attached to Names**

The study saw an overwhelming response most especially from the female respondents claiming that they were being punished and suffered indirectly with stigma associated with the circumstance surrounding their births and their names. As observed from thirty-four out of the 50 respondents, depicting 68 percent, a male respondent-a school teacher at Ikpoba-Okha said:

*No doubt, there is a bit of stigmatization attached to our names, especially we who were born shortly after the war. The stigmatization is even more or worst in circumstances where either parent is unknown and also, I have come to realise that when one is not educated or not doing well in the society, the stigma is heighten. People see some of us as bad omen (He burst in tears). This has made many of us to go to town where less is known of us. (Ikpoba-Okha/12/12/07).*

Corroborating the issue above, response from a women/mother in one of the focus group discussion sessions in *Ikpoba-Okha* revealed that stigmatization was more among women, coming from the general public, their husbands and even from fellow women:

*The major problem with we women born this time in question is the way we are referred to especially among families that are in the know. For example a neighbour called me names just because I was not in support of her opinion to impeach the president of our Street Landlord Wives Association. Saying my attitude is related to the circumstance of my birth after a heated argument. You can imagine how I felt that day saying it with my local dialect. Till date I still feel it anytime I set my eyes on this lady who incidentally was from my mother's clan. (Ikpoba-Okha, 06/02/2008)*

Among some of the women, 24%, of them also noted that on few occasions they have been stigmatized in their own very matrimonial home by their own husbands and in-laws, sometimes jokingly and other times with all seriousness. A lady discussant concluded thus:

*As we all know, our culture does not permit us to complain out, some of the problems in form of abuses netted on us women. I remember recently my husband was furious simply because I came back home late to prepare his meal for that evening. Another instance was a day we had a quarrel on whose responsibility it is to pay the children's school fees which I have been paying for sometime now, just because I told him it was not my duty as a wife, he flared and said 'I am not surprised, its typical of those born of unidentified parents', to crown it all I was called a bastard by my own very husband... when I remember that day, I always feel sad (FGD/Female/Oliha-Oredo).*

**Table: 3 Showing the Effect of Stigmatisation on Respondents Born of Raped Mothers**

<b>Effect of stigmatisation</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Late Marriage	1(11.1%)*	15(36.6%)
Leaving the community	3(33.3%)*	22(53.6%)
Depression	1(11.1%)*	19(46.3%)
Changing of Names	6(67%)*	14(34%)*

\*Of 9 and 41 Respondents for male and female (**Field Survey, 2008**)

The above shows some of the effect of stigmatisation on respondents from the study. It was observed that majority of male respondents (67 Percent) agreed that stigmatisation has made them to change their names from war related meanings to other meanings that suit their personality or new status. As against 34 percent of the female respondents whose names have also been changed.

This a male civil servant working in a local secondary narrated thus:

*You see once you come to realise some things in life there are better ways to cope with such anomalies, for example for the simple fact that I am now a born again Christian I had a vision to change my name to suit my new found religion so I chose Emmanuel as against Okwuodiaghe to avoid anybody asking me what circumstance brought about the name. If not because this is a research work and as an educated person, I have sworn not to talk about it anymore. (IDI/Ikpoba-Okha/male)*

Another effect of stigmatisation was the enthusiasm to leave the community where they were born (mothers home town). This most of the women saw as a major effect of stigmatisation netted on them in their community and hence many were forced to leave their community (hometown). About fifty-four of them (Female respondents) saw it that way, also were the male respondents thirty-three percent (33.3%) of them.

A view of this was captured in one of the focus group discussion sessions

*The stigma I can say is responsible for a lot of us moving out of our place of birth and migrating farther especially to big cities where ones identity is uneasily identified as well as the possibility of bearing a new name which is common among us ladies. (female/FGD/Ovia)*

This view was supported by 38% of the interviewees. Similarly it was also noted by others 62 percent of the interviewees the role marriage plays in reducing the stigma

attached to names and conditions of their birth as noted from another interview session thus:

*If not for marriage I wonder how I would be living in my small village where everyone seems to know about the rape incidence of my mum during the civil war. Marriage has helped a lot, taking away to some extent the stigma, but continuous ties with those I grew up with, especially the older ones, still look at us with pity and disdain. This, to a large extent annoys me anytime I come across some of them. This has prevented me and my family from going to my only home which is my maternal home (Udo).... (Female/ IDI/Benin- Oredo.*

A male respondent commented further thus:

*The issue of gossip I think was the main reason why my mum had to leave for Oredo (Benin) a larger town than our village. I was told that the war caught up with my grandparents who were itinerant traders in the East before the war, and the incidence of rape frustrated them back home in Orionmwon. But as time went on my mum had to leave when I was 10year+, that was in the 1980s to Benin as a result of gossips about her and me her (son) and also because of the inability to settle down in terms of marriage.(IDI/Male/Benin/14/11/200)*

### **3.4 Late Marriage**

Late marriage and the inability of rape victims to get married with their peers, age grade or men within the same community has been noted by scholars (McCahill, Meyer, and Fischman, 1979). The study reveals that, about 37 percent of the female respondents were affected in form of settling down into matrimony. This was also inferred from the age difference between respondents and their siblings on one hand and on the other, being the only child of their parent, signifies that some of the respondents' mothers were never married or had delay in marriage or even lost interest in marriage after the incidence. This 30 percent of the respondents attested to:

A female respondent commented on the above that:

*For the fact that am thirteen years older than my step sister, it shows that there was the likelihood that my mum got married late. Because I could still remember I was already through with my elementary and was in secondary school before she left for Benin to settle down with my step father. She must have been in their thirties (30s) as at the time, which is quite late at that*

*time for an African/Edo lady without western education (IDI/Ovia).*

The focus group discussion also revealed a different view from a male respondent who is an only child. He narrated how her mother died without getting married:

*My own case being an only child shows clearly that my mum was never married. This I also know till she died last year. Though she told me she would have love to marry but her tribal men were always looking at her with disdain and that there was nobody to stay with in the city (Benin), as she also lost her father (My maternal grandfather) to the war. (FGD/male/Benin/13/12/2007)*

A female interviewee noted in support:

*That it is not only our parents that were affected. It is a problem we are also facing. Take myself as an example, I am still single at forty (40), not because I love to remain single but the attitude of men, ego and belief system (am sorry to say) put us (women of such circumstances) at disadvantage since most times investigations were/are made about ones family and circumstance of ones birth. The same thing happens to a young girl if she is rape today by fellow community men talk less of not knowing the rapist in the case of the civil war of 1967 (Benin/13/12/2007).*

She concluded, noting why she is still single:

*Some men who wanted my hands in marriage did tease me when I was much younger, that if only they knew who my father was they would have love to marry me. This was after they got to know that my maternal grandfather whom I was staying with at that time was not my biological father.*

**Table 4: Community Responses after the War to Incidence of Rape**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Parents were welcomed	23	46%
Caused were heaped on the rapist	35	70%
Report were sent to government to find and punish offenders (military or civilians)of rape during the war	46	92%

**Field Survey, 2008**

The responses from the study showed that the three communities used for the study made attempt to welcome back the parents and victims of the civil war. From the table

above 46 percent of the respondents noted that parents were welcome back to their community. This was necessary because most communities will be happy to see the survivor of the war especially those who were trapped in the Eastern part of the country. This was narrated by a female interviewee:

*Like most wars, survivors were usually welcomed as we were told it was a celebration galore, joy and happiness after their arrival (referring to the mother). The community rejoice and give thanks to God. Though I was not born then, the story was told by my maternal grandfather. He said this was immediately they returned from where they were trapped, with time he said 'after everything settled down, about a year later, reality set in as children were born, children whose paternity could not be determined as a result of the incidence of rape during the war. They became victims as well as their family'. This, the community saw as something strange and was seen as ill luck to the society. (IDI/Ikpoba-Okha)*

As it was then, though in most rural communities in traditional African societies, anything, events or cases viewed as evil is usually taken to the shrine where the entire community gathers to heap abuses/causes on the perpetrators of such evil or menace. This was also observed from thirty-five of the fifty respondents of the study (70 percent) that causes were heaped on the rapist and parties to the civil war.

A female traditionalist among the interviews noted:

*That till date the evil doers (rapists) have not been forgiven and continuously the community will forever be heaping causes upon causes on them and their families. (IDI/Ovia/15/10/2007)*

Responses (92 percent) a total of 46 of the 50 respondents agreed that effort was made by the parents and community and report was sent to government to fish out and punish offenders (military or civilians) of rape during the civil war.. This all the focus group discussion sessions held revealed yielded little or no effort at ameliorating the problem that came with the civil war. This they said seem to have fell on deaf hears. Emphasis was at that time on how to rebuild infrastructure destroyed by the civil war, this a male discussant claimed:

*No reasonable effort could be achieved after the war and even till date, because emphasis was on reconciliation and everything was done to reunite the*

*country. And any attempt to dig into rape cases was seen as 'reopening the wounds' of the civil war. This was basically government reply to the community as we were told. It is important to state hear that the era in question was militaristic and not a democratic regime... so everywhere could have been tensed at that time, so also the people affected. (FGD/Oredo/Male)*

**Table 5: Compensation on Mothers (Rape Victims) and the Resultant Children of the Nigerian Civil War**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Free medical treatment in government/military hospitals	18	36
No compensation in any form	32	64
Total	50	100

**Field Survey, 2008**

The last objective of this study was to examine the level of compensation on mothers (rape victims) and the resultant children of the Nigerian civil war. It was observed from 36 percent of the respondents that victims were only compensated with free medical treatment in government and military hospitals, while majority 64 percent responded in the negative that their parents were not compensated in any form whatsoever. A respondent captured this in annoyance against those who answered in the affirmative in the focus group discussions saying:

*If there was any compensation my mother would have told me. It was only those who were in the big cities that enjoyed such benefit if at all there was such. Come to think of it the only major government hospital then was in far away Ibadan; others were mere clinics probably in the military barracks in Benin City. Then how many people would have gone closer to the hospitals in the barracks with the memory of the civil war still fresh in their heads, again most people then were said to have gone to their villages in fear, that the war may continue, so tell me what can of compensation was there? (FGD/Female/Benin)*

*Another respondent, one of those who answered in the affirmative concurred*

*That really there were few hospitals then and mostly in the cities which only those around Benin city benefited. But to say it was only in Ibadan that's an exaggeration because there was a military hospital in Benin the capital of old Mid-Western region. For me I was told that free medical treatment, maternity care and child delivery in*

government/military hospitals and *were what looked like compensation (FGD/Male/Benin).*

This shows more or less, if at all there were compensations the effect of war, rape and other long lasting psychological injuries and tortures caused by warring factions maybe or cannot be compensated for.

#### **4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Sexual violence has long been used as a strategy in war. Rape is a highly effective means of terrorizing entire communities, because of the emphasis most cultures place on the sexual virtue of women, the rapist is able to humiliate and demoralize. The impact is multiplied thereafter, especially in cases of pregnancies and birth of children whose fathers are unknown. This study to a reasonable extent exposed some of the problems faced by children born as a result of rape in wartime.

Rape in wartimes has been left unchecked in many forgotten conflicts: It would seem today that rape in war has become too banal to provoke a response. Nevertheless, until an international legal framework is firmly established; ad-hoc advocacy efforts, human rights, and humanitarian law will go a long way and remain crucial in preventing sexual violence in war. The international court of justice as well as local judicial system should help transform the legal and cultural acceptance of sexual violence, as norm acceptable as part of military and domestic laws. Perpetrators of sexual violence will then no longer be exempted from punishment as most cases have shown.

Proper education and enlightenment campaign about the aftermath of rape should be given to soldiers preparing for war either on the side of the ruling government, oppositions or rebels.

This is crucial to legitimating norms of gender justice and shifting both blame and shame from victim to perpetrator, though this also requires committed, knowledgeable and sensitised judicial personnel as well as persistent civil society engagement. Women's NGOs must remain vigilant, supporting efforts to ensure sexual violence is no longer treated with levity, empowering women to reject the socially-imposed role

of shamed victim and enabling women to obtain redress and to participate fully in peace building.

Lastly women's right to control their bodies and their sexuality must be respected at all times war or no war.

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