

Sexism and Sexual Victimization in Yejidekilanko's *Daughters Who Walk This Path*

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Abstract

This article is a feminist exploration of the relationship between sexism and sexual victimization in Kilanko's *Daughters Who Walk this Path*. The two concepts are regarded as interlinked forms of oppression which subjugate, victimize, and devalue women and girls. Inevitably, they encourage a rape-culture in the African society, as well as a culture of silence which keeps sexual victimization shrouded in secrecy, allowing perpetrators to go unpunished while their victims are traumatized and stigmatized. This article argues that sexism is largely responsible for intra-familial and acquaintance rape which have traumatic impacts on victims. This necessitates consciousness-raising, particularly on the platform of literature, to raise awareness and facilitate the exploration of avenues to challenge, resist and eliminate sexism and sexual victimization and promote a healthy development of women and girls in the African society.

Keyword: *Sexism, Sexual Victimization*

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Background to the Study

The publication of Yejide Kilanko's novel, *Daughters Who Walk this Path* (2012), signals a new phase in African women's writing and a fresh response to the menace of sexual victimization in the African society. Of recent, traditional and social media (in Nigeria in particular) have drawn much public attention to troubling issues that affect the lives of women and girls such as forced and child-marriage, domestic violence and sexual abuse and the kidnapping of girls by militants. Kilanko's projection of rape (child sexual abuse in particular), a subject often hushed in the African society for fear of stigmatization and, considering its gravity, accorded such little attention in literary works, makes this debut novel significant and timely. Kilanko also has to her credit a novella titled, *Chasing Butterflies* (2015), several short stories and poems.

The challenges of Kilanko's profession as a social worker and a therapist in children's mental health enabled her to gain a deep insight into major social problems faced by women and girls. She remarks: The inspiration for *Daughters Who Walk this Path* came from a place of desperation. I found myself trapped there because long after the meetings ended, I replayed the disclosures of child sexual abuse heard at work in my head...I was well aware of our culture of silence around sex, sexuality and other issues challenging traditional beliefs and practices ... Anger at the injustice of the shaming and blaming which often follows disclosures of sexual abuse made me even more resolved to write the novel ... ("The Spark

The need to expose these social ills that have so adversely impacted many lives resulted in the publication of *Daughters Who Walk this Path* which Chika Unigwe describes as "a subtle yet complex exploration of what it means to be a young woman growing up in contemporary Nigeria (Blurb). In the novel, Kilanko exposes sexism and its implications for sexual victimization and, through the travails of her protagonists, highlights its impact on the lives of many young African girls, women and their families.

E. C. Osondu also notes the silence associated with sexual victimization and remarks that, Kilanko tackles the subject "with an unflinching gaze, a tender heart, and a gift for lyrical storytelling..." (Blurb). Ainehi Edoro, however, sums up her impressions of the novel thus: *Kilanko does a fine job of laying bare the psychic life of a girl who walks the paths to becoming a woman, all the while, burdened with a body in need of mending. There is a series of beautifully tragic moments when it becomes apparent that even as Morayo grows older and tries to live a normal life, she hasn't yet survived the violence in her past. Morayo goes through life confused about where and how to find healing, how to stem the fear that she'd never be able to love or be loved...*

Edoro's observation reflects the impact of sexual victimization on children, represented by the protagonist, Morayo, and her cousin, Morenike, who, until the devastating sexual assault which drastically changes their lives, enjoy a happy childhood. Margaret W. Matlin observes that tragically, sexual victimization of women and girls "is found in virtually every culture and in most civilizations throughout history" (426). This observation helps to position Kilanko's *Daughters Who Walk this Path* as a very significant work in the corpus of African Literature, and women's writing.

Theoretical Framework

Feminism has been adopted as the theoretical framework of this study, for feminists recognize that at the very foundation of sexual victimization lies sexism which creates room for women to be “undervalued, disregarded or abused” (Lori Robinson 178). Aware that sexism and the sexual victimization of women are often ignored, misrepresented and legitimized, feminists advocate the need for women to understand, criticize and invest their energies and resources into challenging and dismantling harmful patriarchal and socio-cultural structures that mutually breed, support and sustain sexism and sexual victimization. The intersection of sexism and sexual victimization of women gains more clarity through Robinson's observation that, “perhaps nothing more clearly demonstrates the problem of sexism than the fact that women are by far the majority of sexual assault victims” (178).

Literature Review

Despite the significance of *Daughters Who Walk this Path*, it is yet to receive the critical acclaim it deserves. However, reviewers and critics who have assessed and critically analyzed the text from varying perspectives have contributed to and enhanced an understanding of the novel.

In his exploration of the work, Oke Adebola highlights the patriarchal world of the novel as one which reflects the “intricacies of the feminine existence, the pains induced by men and the limitations or rules set by the patriarchal society ... [which sets the tone for the] socio-cultural ordeals and emotional traumas encountered by the female characters” (“Within the Feminine Wall”). For Adebola, the society depicted in the novel is one where the male characters are not only domineering but also debased while the female characters are presented “with voice, emotion (pain) and fortitude to bear with the cruel and bestial propensity of the male gender” (“Within the Feminine Wall”).

Adebola's observations are valid because the African society and culture, being patriarchal in nature, are deeply characterized by sexism which encourages the construction of social structures that are oppressive and exploitative to women, and responsible for unequal power relations, male dominance and several forms of female oppression and victimization. Taking cognizance of this, The African Feminist Forum asserts that the patriarchal ideology is one that “enables and legitimizes the structuring of every aspect of [women's] lives by establishing the framework within which society defines and views men and women and constructs male supremacy” (“Feminist Charter”).

In her exploration of “political sagacity” in the novel, Shamaila Dodhyanalyzes the representation of abstract political positions depicted through various past elections in Nigeria against the backdrop gender violence, resilience, and retribution (92-93). She posits that Kilanko's image of society is replete with violence and corruption and, as a mark of her commitment, she assumes the position of a spokesperson to expose “the hypocrisy and corrupt activities of politicians ... [and] new Nigerian elite [who betray] the nationals by misusing positions of privilege for personal rather than mutual gain” This observation aptly reflects Kilanko's commitment to social change and national development.

In a study with Nasir Umar Muhammad in which they examine the socio-psychological construction of the perpetrator (the antagonist) in the novel, Dodhy and Muhammad argue that as a trauma novel, sociological factors shape the way the personality of the perpetrator of the trauma in Kilanko's novel is structured. As such, they identify and examine some of the factors that result in the painful ambiguities related to his life and discover that, not only do these factors impact his psyche, they also have a bearing on the way he is trained as a child and, thus, play a significant role in the development of his personality (1). Indeed, the loss of Tayo's (the perpetrator) father in his childhood, and his single mother's over-pampering to compensate for the void in his life encourage his self-centredness, the sexist tendencies he develops and his sense of entitlement. In a related study based on acquaintance rape in the novel, Dodhy argues that it is possible for the cultural and socio-political ideologies which sustain and reinforce trauma and its perpetrators to be altered. Furthermore, she acknowledges that feminism has exposed "the issue of women's mental health instigated by hidden but common abuse of women and children" (Abstract) which often results in victims suffering psychological trauma.

Dodhy also relies on the trauma theory in her study and evaluation of the occurrence of "intrusive thoughts" that disturb the thought process of the protagonist who suffers psychological trauma and concludes that, the protagonist loses sight of reality because she is not given the opportunity to "disclose her painful secrets ... thus contaminating (sic) her mental health" (99). For Dodhy, sharing her painful experiences with an empathic listener at that point in time would have been a great comfort to the protagonist (102).

Afoma Umesi in his analysis of the novel, however, gives precedence to the theme of sisterhood around which the story revolves. Umesi identifies the relationship between Morayo and Eniayo, on the one hand, and Morayo and her cousin, Morenike, on the other, as successful sisterhoods which should serve as reminders "that women need each other ... [and should be] allies in a world that constantly seeks to undermine [them]" ("Sisterhood"). It is evident that the sisterhood that develops between these female characters is one which positively impacts each one of them.

One can deduce, from the foregoing, that an integral aspect of the novel, which is yet to attract the attention of critics is the significant role played by sexism in the victimization depicted in the novel and the factors that sustain it, among them patriarchal encouragement of sexism, gender inequality, the culture of silence, peer pressure, the blaming and/or stigmatization of the victim rather than the perpetrator and so on. The aim of this article is to, therefore, explore these factors and their complicity in the forms of sexual abuse (rape) highlighted by Kilanko in the novel as major forms of sexual victimization. Matlin defines rape thus:

Rape is sexual penetration without the individual's consent - obtained by force or by threat of physical harm, or when the victim is incapable of giving consent...a broader term, sexual assault, includes sexual touching and other forms of unwanted sexual contact, which may be accompanied by psychological pressure and coercion or by physical threats.

Maggie Wykes and Kirsty Welsh remark that rape is fundamentally wrong, and its wrongfulness lies in “the sheer use and objectification of a person” (114). They further reveal that rape is often accompanied by many indignities such as “violence, fear, and shame, possible pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease and psychological damage...” (155). Clearly, the pain of victims of rape is beyond measure, for they experience an unimaginable emotional and psychological effect which negatively impacts their lives. The rape of a child is referred to by the euphemism “child sexual abuse” which, inevitably, cushions the gravity of the act and its impact on child victims. This has propelled writers such as Kilanko to expose this harrowing problem through their literary works with a view to raising awareness to curb this anomaly in the African society.

Methodology

Daughters Who Walk this Path revolves around Morayo and her cousin, Morenike, who are sexually abused, the former by a family member, and the latter by a trusted family friend, with far-reaching traumatic consequences for both girls. Using the qualitative approach, their experience of sexism and sexual victimization is thoroughly explored and analyzed for a deeper comprehension, not only of these anomalies, but also of their impact on the victims and society. This has necessitated awareness raising of their adverse effects, as well as the urgent need for their suppression which this paper significantly highlights.

Child Sexual Abuse in *Daughters Who Walk this Path*

Child sexual abuse is particularly horrifying and cruel because the very people who should be nurturing and protecting the best interest of the child such as relatives, members of the household, family friends, neighbours and others into whose care they are entrusted, are the very people who abuse them. This is exactly what occurs in the case of Morayo and Morenike. Through them, Kilanko explores two major types of child sexual abuse in her novel: intra-familial and acquaintance sexual abuse which will be discussed in the following segments of this article.

Intra-Familial Sexual Abuse: Morayo

As the name implies, “intra-familial” sexual abuse is that which is perpetrated by a member of the family. In Morayo's case, her first cousin, Tayo, whom she and her sister fondly call “Bros T”, is the assailant. Tayo becomes a member of the household when his widowed mother (Morayo's maternal aunt), requests that he lives with them to enable him benefit from the influence of a father-figure in his life while preparing for his tertiary education. Tayo is much indulged by his mother, a well-to-do business woman, who acknowledges he is a “half-man, half-boy who needs the firm hands of a man” (37-38). Auntie Tope (Tayo's mother) takes this decision having been conditioned by the sexist assumption that a single woman cannot “mould” a son singlehandedly. Tayo is, therefore, welcomed into the Ajayi household, accorded the full status and privileges of a son, and allotted the stereotypical roles that go with them.

Brash, self-centred and insensitive, Tayo steals and lies and, having become sexually aware, is once caught spying on an adult female member of the household, Auntie Adunni, while she takes her bath; he is also expelled from boarding school for trying to force his way into the

room of a female student he fancies. Tayo, unknown to his guardians, becomes involved with a peer group that indulges in wild drinking sprees and girls, some of whom he invites home in their absence.

Although first-cousin incest has been identified as one of the most common forms of child sexual abuse, Morayo's parents miss all the red flags: the incidence with Auntie Adunni (cited above); his inappropriate encouragement of his younger cousins to sit on his laps; his jealous rages and tantrums whenever he sees Morayo chatting with male friends from school however innocently; barging into Morayo's room at will in order to catch her in a state of undress; touching her inappropriately on the pretext of hugging her which Morayo innocently assumes is a simple mistake considering his status as her "brother".

Tayo's attitude towards Morayo, her younger sister, Eniayo, and the girls he dates is clearly influenced by the sense of power and domination he has over them. What eventually pushes him over the edge, however, is his love for alcohol, peer pressure and the desire for sexual gratification. Obviously, traditional notions of gendered sexuality are largely responsible for power relations between the sexes which reinforce peer pressure and the desire to be sexually active. When Morayo is ill and left in his care while the rest of the family travel for a day, Tayo seizes the opportunity to invite and entertain his friends at home and, under the haze of alcohol, he is goaded into crossing the final line.

At first, Morayo assumes she is being attacked by robbers when she wakes with "a large coarse hand across her mouth" (72). On realizing her assailant is none other than Tayo, she fights back, but is threatened with bodily harm and gang rape should she resist. She recounts:

My legs were thrown apart. I felt a sharp pain go right through my centre. As Bros T pushed into my unwelcoming body, my spirit floated up to the ceiling. Looking down, I saw a child with a familiar face on the bed below. Her terror-filled eyes stared away into nothingness, her mouth open wide in a silent scream. Then as quickly as I had left that trembling body, I was back inside. I felt a pain deep, deep inside me

Morayo's traumatic experience can be summed up by Matlin's observation that, although the reactions of victims are many and diverse depending on the nature of the attack they are subjected to, "almost all women who have been raped report that they were terrified, repulsed, confused, overwhelmed, and anxious during the time they were being raped... [and] some also feel detachment from their own body.

The sexual victimization Morayo suffers is also identified as "child-on-child" sexual abuse because both victim and abuser are adolescents. During the act, Tayo exploits the naivety of his victim, and uses physical force and threats to achieve his aim; after the act, he resorts to psychological manipulation to conceal his abuse. Skilfully and ruthlessly, he preys on her love for, and protectiveness of her sister, Eniayo, to keep her silent by threatening: "...if you say anything... [you will be] responsible for what happens to Eniayo. This threat, in addition to Tayo's constant monitoring, installs fear in Morayo, who is very protective of her fragile and innocent sister and discourages her from exposing him.

In addition to the emotional roller coaster Morayo experiences, her trust in her parents diminishes. She is particularly angry with her mother for her inability to see her predicament. She explains: "I kept waiting for Mummy to notice something different about me. A different way of walking. A new scent. Had she not said that she could smell a boy's touch on me?" (80). Morayo's disappointment and anger stem from the fact that she believes her mother when she asserts that she will be able to tell if a boy touches her inappropriately. However, not only is her mother oblivious of Tayo's abuse, she also indirectly facilitates it. On one such occasion, when Morayo ignores Tayo's call for help in his room, she is scolded by her mother who orders her to attend to him. This leads to another bout of abuse after which he taunts: "...so you think you can escape me?" (80), words which further increase her sense of helplessness and isolation.

Morayo hides her pain under a guise of calm but, ultimately, loses her zest for life - a situation which Tim Beneke emphasizes as one of the costs of child sexual abuse which, he notes, "inhibits [one's] expressiveness and ... diminishes [one's] sexuality, creativity, and delight in life... Tayo's assault continues until Morayo becomes pregnant and goes through a painful miscarriage, both unnoticed by other family members. Significantly, she is totally unaware of the implications of these happenings in her life. She only finds her voice when she discovers Tayo touching Eniayo inappropriately and realizes she has endured all the indignities he subjects her to - pain, fear, violence, shame, guilt, isolation and silence - all of which no child should ever have to endure for nothing as Tayo reneges on his promise to spare Eniayo from his abuse.

Morayo's revelation of Tayo's abuse shocks her parents who send him back to his mother. However, she is shocked to realize that her mother's first concern is about her husband would do to Tayo! She expresses her disappointment thus:

...she should have been worried about me! She should have been coming after me! I kept staring at the door. I waited for Mummy. I was sure she would come and look for me. Finally, just before dawn, I fell asleep on the floor beside Eniayo's bed. (88-89)

The culture of silence surrounding any form of rape, and the guilt of exposing their child to this ordeal also results in a wary silence on the part of Morayo's parents which further oppresses and victimizes her. She resorts to self-blame and, finding no outlet for her pain, becomes suicidal. Apart from Auntie Adunni who apologizes for not being there for her, only the perceptiveness and empathy of Morenike averts a greater tragedy.

Having been sexually abused herself as a teenager, Morenike is able to empathize with Morayo by listening to her and, more importantly, by giving her the much-needed support, encouragement and counselling which should have come from her parents, especially her mother. This enables Morayo to deal with her guilt and shame and, although she is unable to heal completely at this point, she manages to find the will to live.

Acquaintance Rape: Morenike

At the age of fifteen, Morenike's hopes for a bright future are dashed and her life disrupted and almost destroyed. The man responsible for her plight is no other than her father's friend, Chief Komolafe, a rich businessman and a supposedly "outstanding citizen". Morenike's parents entrust her into his care to be dropped at boarding school in Abeokuta, something he has done several times as a trusted family friend. However, when their journey is interrupted by highway robbers and they are forced to check into a hotel overnight, Chief Komolafe takes advantage of Morenike's naivety and trust and rapes her. H. Wallace defines acquaintance rape as the "unlawful sexual intercourse accomplished by force or fear with a person known to the victim who is not related by blood or marriage" (qtd. in Matlin 428). Morenike's abuse, therefore, fits this category.

Chief Komolafe gives little thought to the dangers and consequences of his action; the result of this violation is a pregnancy which Morenike is unaware of until she faints at morning assembly in school and is sent to hospital where she is tested and declared pregnant. Consequently, she is expelled from school.

At a time when she needs the support of her family the most, she is blamed by her father who labels her "a stone-cold liar" who, "has discovered that she has a womb and has put it to good use" Just like Chief Komolafe's driver who presumes she is guilty of seducing the Chief, Mr. Ajayi (Morayo's father) attests to his friend's innocence in the following words:

Komolafe? It cannot be so! Gbanjubola, tell me, what would a man with two grown women in his house want with a mere child? Has Komolafe not been taking Morenike to school for many years? Gbanjubola, ask your daughter to tell you the truth!

Mr. Ajayi's reaction validates Matlin's assertion that a victim of rape is "doubly victimized, first by the assailant and later by the attitudes of other people...family and friends ... and society [who] all tend to blame her and beat her negatively because of something that [is] not her fault" (433), while the culprit, in this case "an outstanding citizen", goes scot-free.

Chief Komolafe's sexist sense of entitlement is also evident in his attitude towards the entire situation. The traditional sanction of his polygamous lifestyle - two wives ready to satisfy his every whim - underlie his perception that he is free to have as many women as he pleases without any culpability. His egotistical response when confronted by Morenike's mother for being responsible for her daughter's pregnancy is quite revealing:

And so? Is that why you think you have the right to come into my office uninvited? Just because you neglected to teach your wayward daughter how to keep her legs together? ... Listen, the only reason why I have not called my security men to drag you out is my respect for your husband. I do not have time to listen to women who do not know their place. Leave my office. (120)

Chief Komolafe's condescension clearly reveals the typical chauvinism of the dominant African male who believes the woman's place is beneath him; as such she dares not question his decisions or actions irrespective of how vile they are.

The negative reactions Morenike is subjected to, especially by her father, are particularly damaging. When he decrees he will not raise a bastard in his home, she is banished to the home of her maternal grandmother in the village where she endures the disapproval of the little community until she births her son, Damilare. Ironically, the child's resemblance to Chief Komolafe is so uncanny that, there is no room to possibly doubt the child's paternity. Morenike's father's acceptance of the child and his demand that she returns home are as dramatic as his banishment and come with no apology. She receives the news with mixed feelings, knowing her life will never be the same. Her apprehension prompts the following advice from her grandmother which encourages her to rise above her victimization:

You cannot hide forever. Listen my child, we do not abandon the business of living life just because of what people will say about us...it is time for you to go back home... finish your schooling. Become that teacher that you have always wanted to be... (136) Unlike Morayo, Morenike has the support and encouragement of her mother and grandmother who impart to her the will to transform herself into a strong, determined and resilient young woman, ready to face the world and take her destiny into her own hands.

The Impact of Sexual Abuse on the Victims

Sexual abuse (or rape) can have an adverse effect on the health and development of a child because the after effects, physical and psychological, can last for ages. Apart from the immediate effects, long term consequences, among them post-traumatic stress disorder, "a debilitating psychological syndrome that involves detailed reliving of the traumatic event, panic attacks, depression, nightmares and sleep disorders" (Bates et al. 358-359) may also manifest, as does happen in the cases of Morayo and Morenike.

Morayo's life undergoes a drastic change after her abuse because her parents shy away from acknowledging, listening to and counselling her about her traumatic experience. The additional trauma of their oppressive silence pushes her to attempt suicide by taking an overdose of painkillers but for the timely arrival of Morenike who saves the situation. Morayo recounts:

Seeing the medicine bottle on the table, I suddenly wondered what it would feel like to empty the entire bottle into my mouth. As soon as the thought came, my body became rigid ...When I stayed awake in my room at night, I wondered what it would feel like not to be trapped in this heavy body but floating around free ...Tilting my head back, I emptied half the bottle of Panadol Extra into my mouth.

Morenike's empathy, acknowledgement of the situation and comfort serve as a positive outlet for Morayo's pain and turbulent emotions and the level of the post-traumatic stress disorder she suffers is revealed years later when Tayo (now resident abroad) suddenly returns home for

the burial of their grandmother. On seeing him, Morayo suffers a severe panic attack - clammy hands, buzzing ears, racing heart, and numbing cold and, despite his plea for forgiveness, she flees, falls and ends up unconscious and hospitalized for days.

Morenike, on the other hand, appears not to have been as deeply scarred as Morayo on the surface, but this proves to be untrue. A perceptive Morayo describes her cousin thus: "Morenike often had a faraway look in her eyes as if her mind was elsewhere while her body sat still ..." (56). Stigmatized by her victimization, Morenike assumes a no-nonsense and prickly demeanour often accompanied by mood swings. In her case, the observation of Bates et al. that victims may become "unmarriageable members of households and hence, further victimized" (358) proves to be true. Although she excels academically and achieves her professional goals, she is unable to commit to marriage and remains a single parent until her death.

Morayo's sexual victimization and trauma, however, come at a high cost. At the university, she develops behavioural problems and finds solace in alcohol, cigarettes and sexual promiscuity as a salve to her diminished self-worth and confidence. This persists until she completes her education, reconnects with her childhood love, Kachi, and marries him. In her marital relationship, Morayo struggles with intimacy and trust issues, before finding herself on the path of healing.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is evident that child sexual abuse or rape is a major form of sexual victimization in the African society. As postulated by feminists, sexism and sexual victimization are inextricably linked. The unequal power relations in the patriarchal African society promotes male dominance and, invariably, affects gender relations in the various institutions in society. The consequences of male dominance are far-reaching in the sense that, apart from gender-based discrimination, it also breeds perceptions and attitudes which are internalized and manifest in the abuse of the power and privileges ascribed men and boys. This often results in the sexual abuse of women and girls with dire consequences for their well-being, growth and participation in society.

Sexism is, therefore, an integral part of gender inequality and violence against women and girls. This is depicted in Kilanko's *Daughters Who Walk this Path* through the imbalance of power relations and the resultant subordination of the protagonists in the novel. Socially conditioned and conscious beliefs about male superiority and female inferiority (such as that exhibited by Chief Komolafe towards Morenike's mother during their confrontation) inevitably produce and sustain female subjugation and victimization.

An intriguing irony, however, is that Morenike's child is the only son fathered by her assailant and, in a culture, which places premium on the male child, Komolafe is forced to seek acknowledgement as the father of his son. A typical African chauvinist who is unused to eating humble pie, his humility does not last for long; he soon reverts to type, demanding that as his only heir, the rightful place for his son is his home, with his family. He declares: "a

child belongs to his father, and so Damilare rightly belongs to me. Even the law of the land recognizes this” (146). Morenike, however, stands by her decision to keep her son and, this time, has the support of her father.

The novel ends on a positive note with Morayo and her husband, Kachi, dancing in the sunshine. This highlights the importance of recognizing not only the vulnerability of the victims of child sexual abuse but also their strength and resilience as survivors. Kilanko reiterates this by pointing out that, “while the novel addresses difficult issues, it was important ... for it to end on a life-affirming note ... to reinforce the belief that life can still be beautiful after horrific things happen to us” (“The Spark”).

Kilanko's effort reflects the perception of feminists of how important it is for women writers to tell the woman's story, express their own realities and, in so doing, create awareness, not only of sexism and sexual victimization, but of possible avenues through which “[victims] can find recovery through their own courage, through the support of other women, through friendships, community and love” (Edoro “A Body”).

Women writers must recognize and expose the limitations that sexism places on the growth of not only women, but also men, as individuals and humans. For this reason, they must use their platform to challenge all forms of sexism and begin and sustain dialogues about sexual victimization and its negative impact on women, girls and society. Ultimately, the culture of silence that surrounds sexual victimization, particularly rape, must be broken and the awareness of the public raised through proper sex education. It must be realized that, a society that devalues its women through sexism, encourages sexual victimization; all forms of sexism must, therefore, be discouraged and the needs of women recognized and met, instead of being trivialized and ignored. In this way, there will be zero tolerance for sexual victimization, and women and girls will feel safe from sexual abuse.

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