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Addressing the Menace of Rape and Female Genital Mutilation through Theatre for Development

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ABSTRACT

Rape and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) are societal malaises that have bedeviled our local communities especially in Ekiti State, Nigeria, for quite a while. In most parts of Nigeria, while the former is a relatively new evil frowned at and condemned by every sane individual though without any legal action taken against the culprit most times, the latter is an age-long cherished practice actively and openly carried out with the full conviction that it is to the advantage of the girl child. Based on the above, TfD tools were deployed to two communities (Ijurin and Kajola) in Ekiti state, Nigeria, to educate, and re-orientate the people on these issues. At the end of the TfD intervention, rapists realized the legal consequences of their actions and rape victims became fully informed of their legal rights against rapists. In the same vein, supporters and die-hards of female genital mutilation became genuinely convinced of the enormous physical, medical and psychological damage, ignorantly done to the girl child through the act, that is, if it does not lead to death. Also, the people appreciated the fact that rape victims who became pregnant as a result of the act can still realize their dreams if shown love, understanding and encouragement. The research concluded that, with examples of TfD interventions at Ijurin and Kajola, it is obvious that many communities are living in ignorance and are ingrained in archaic and backward traditions that have led to the death of many innocent souls. It is equally ascertained that such obnoxious traditions have negative impact on the lives of the girl child and women. The research therefore recommends the TfD praxis for government, parastatals, and NGOs that are genuinely interested in the expected change and development that is highly needed in the local communities of Africa. A synergy could be created between those bodies and Applied Theatre practitioners to intervene in the desired orientation, conscientization, change and development for the local communities.

Keywords: Rape, Female Genital Mutilation, Theatre for Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Rape and Female Genital Mutilation (henceforth FGM) are social problems that lead to palpable angst, especially for the victims. It is known fact that rape is common in all the nooks and crannies of the country. In other words, rape is carried out in the big cities as well as in the remotest villages and hamlets in the country including Kajola, an ancient community in Ekiti State. In these two communities, it is very strange and mind-troubling that rape victims were not aware of their rights to litigation and the culprits were not aware of the legal implications of their actions. Also, it is very unfortunate that the villagers did not have precepts for reprimanding culprits. In contrast, FGM has drastically reduced in big cities but are still rampant in some local communities due to the erroneous belief of the people that uncircumcised female children would become promiscuous. This erroneous belief was one of our findings at Ijurin. Due to ignorance of the dangers inherent in FGM, the people found it difficult to accept our claim of the perilous nature of this obsolete inhuman act. To discourage these practices, a team of students led by a lecturer (this researcher) from the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, visited the communities of Kajola and Ijurin to deploy Theatre for Development tools for solving these entrenched victimization of the female gender. The results of the interventions show the potency of Tfd tools employed as its positive effects on the people was immediate.

2. EXTRAPOLATION OF KEY WORDS

Rape

Rape is the act of forcing sexual intercourse upon another person without his/her consent or against his/her will. Rape is a topical subject of crime against women (Sharma, Pardasani and Nandram, 363). This trend has increased alarmingly in recent times, especially in Nigeria. A total number of 150 reported cases of sexual and physical abuse were recorded in Lagos State for one year period as of April 27, 2016 (<https://www.purching.com>). Heise's (278) research reveals that "statistics around the world also suggests that rape is a common reality in the lives of women and girls". The rate of rape cases shows that it is a source of worry to parents, guardians, girls and women, especially feminists. This is essentially because of the aftermath of rape cases, especially as it relates to health issues on the part of the sufferers. This is aptly put by Heise (281) thus:

Elsewhere indirect evidence suggests cause for concern. Two studies from Nigeria, for example, document that a large percentage of female patients at STD clinics are young children. A 1988 study in Zaria, Nigeria found that 16 percent of female patients seeking treatment for STDs were children under the age of five and another 6 percent were children between the ages of six and fifteen. An older study in Ibadan found that 22 percent of female patients attending STD clinic were children under the age of ten.

The above is quite too much a burden on these victims who were mainly children. This shows the heartlessness of those who perpetrate the act of rape on the girl child and women. Another effect of such act on women is the traumatic experience that victims pass through during and after the act. This can be explained through Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS), a psychological theory initiated by Ann Wolbert Burgess and Lynda Lytle Holmstrum in 1974. As Wikipedia puts it:

RTS is a cluster of psychological and physical signs, symptoms and reactions common to most rape victims immediately following a rape, but which can also occur for months and years afterwards. The symptoms of RTS and post-traumatic stress overlap ... a person who has been raped will generally experience high levels of distress immediately afterward. (Rape Trauma Syndrome <http://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that a rape victim will be entangled in distress and becomes a major sufferer of sleepless nights, unhappiness, fear of human being, especially men and eventually becomes a shadow of herself. Rape devalues the victims. It is a crime which stigmatizes the emotions, a crime of insult, oppression and revenge that needs to be punished because rapist is a criminal and all crimes and their beneficiaries must be punished (<https://www.purching.com>). This is the reason for the strong stance of the feminist, Naomi Wolf on the issue of rape when she states that:

Feminists agitate against rape not just because it is a form of violence- but because it is a form of violence that uniquely steals from the survivor her sexual spontaneity and delight ... The right to say no must exist for the right to say yes to have any meaning (in Heise, 288).

The cloud that sets on the lives of rape victims are better imagined than experienced. Unfortunately, the impact of such sexual assaults goes beyond those assaulted. Such impact, according to Campbell Wasco (abstract) “extends to Family, friends and significant others who are also affected”, this also affect “those who help rape victims, such as rape victim advocates, therapists, as well as sexual assault researchers, who experience vicarious trauma”

3. FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

FGM, also known as female genital cutting and female circumcision, “is the ritual cutting or removal of some or all of the external female genitalia” (Wikipedia <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). Okoh (3) sees FGM as the process of “cutting and deformation of the natural structure of the female genital organs”. FGM is defined by World Health Organization (WHO) as all procedures which involve partial or total removal of external female genital and/or injury to the female genital organs, whether for cultural or any other non-therapeutic reasons (Okeke, T. C., Anyaechie, UBD and Ezenyeaku, CCK, 74).

This obnoxious practice has been in existence for ages and it is a way of subjugating the female gender. UNICEF estimated in 2016 that 200 million women living today in 30 countries, 26 African countries have undergone the procedure (wikipedia). Nigeria, due to its large population, has the highest number of female genital mutilation (FGM) worldwide accounting

for about one-quarter of the estimated 115-130 million circumcised women in the world (<https://wwwncbl.nim.nih.gov>). Gayatri Spivak (244) sees this inhuman act of mutilating female genital as a way of subjugating the female gender in order for them to become subservient to their male counterparts. She came up with the theory of clitoral economy under feminism to argue that FGM is an attempt by men to reduce women to pleasure or a means to amputate women's clitoral erection. This, she believes, boils down to patriarchal sentiment meant to reduce women to pawns.

There are numerous risks involved in the FGM procedure. The procedure can cause severe pain, infertility, infection and increases the risk of newborn deaths. Girls exposed to FGM/C are at risk of immediate physical consequences such as severe pain, bleeding and shock, difficulty in passing urine and faeces, and sepsis (Muteshi, Miller and Bilizan, abstract). The practice of FGM can also cause behavioral changes in women and girls and lifelong psychological damage. Complications are common and often lead to death. This practice is essentially a terrible one because of its prevalence and grip on local communities of Africa, especially Nigeria. According to Okoh (8),

the practice of female genital mutilation is a cross-cultural and cross-religious ritual...it is generally believed that it had its origin in male desire to regulate and have control over the female body and sexuality, for no man will marry uncircumcised woman believing her to be promiscuous, unclean and sexually untrustworthy.

From the foregoing, it is clear and right to say that the practice of FGM is anti- female and meant to further subjugate the female gender. One major issue is FGM is that it “has deep societal roots that create societal norms in order for families to be accepted by the communities” (Klein, Helzner, Shayowitz, Kohlhoff and Smith-Norowitz, 109). Therefore, pressure is placed on families, parents to carry out FGM on their girl-child so gain the acceptance of the community.

4. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Theatre for Development (TfD) is a branch of Applied Theatre. TfD has been described “as an alternative communication strategy which is people-centered and is deeply rooted in community development by empowering marginalized groups to consciously take up the onus of effecting some change within their immediate environment” (Gana, 111). TfD produces peculiar theatre productions that offer communities the opportunities to reflect together by using the stage as a place to explore new ways of living and to express new visions of the future (DFID, 3). From the foregoing, TfD interventions possess the strategy to bring together the entire community to discuss their strong points and weaknesses and work on the latter for the development of such community through the use of theatre paraphernalia. This applied theatre, Theatre for development could be employed to stem the tide of gender violence. It is a potent tool that can address violence against women. Mitchell and Freitag (2) buttress this fact by saying that:

Gender violence prevention must address the societal structures that allow and sometimes encourage such behaviour. Bystander intervention education

emphasizes community responsibility for changing the societal norms that allow gender violence to occur. It calls upon individuals of all genders to become active, responsible citizens who intervene on one another's behalf to stop violence, and who, when empowered, can enact broad social change on the culture.

The interventions are usually accepted joyfully and wholeheartedly by the communities because the facilitators must have engaged and involved the people in discussions, interactions, crafting of the story line, developing the scenario, rehearsals and performance. TfD employs the people's language, idioms and songs for TfD performances to properly integrate the people and for them to have a good understanding of the plot.

Limitation to Study

In both cases, Kajola and Ijurin communities, the people were at the initial stage afraid of volunteering information and even helping out as members of cast for the performance. This was quashed through incessant interaction and appeal. Another limitation was that at Ijuring community, it took the intervention of the drama skit for the people to see in reality the dangers inherent in FGM. At the initial stage they were cantankerous and unyielding at the discussion level because they see FGM as a tradition/practice that must continue. At the end, they see reasons why they should discontinue the infamous and dastard tradition.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study has extended the boundary of knowledge/discourse on Rape and FGM study. In the history of Ekiti State, there seemed not to have been any serious academic exercise geared towards the eradication of rape and FGM as well as non-availability of documents on TfD Intervention in these areas prior to this study. Therefore, this study filled such gaps.

TfD Praxis at Ijurin

The intervention at Ijurin Community in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria was carried out between 11th and 17th March, 2018. The 400 level students of the Department of Theatre and Media Arts offering TfD as their area of interest were scheduled to carry out this research under the tutelage of their lecturer, Dr, Ade Adeseke. The team put into practice the TfD praxis in the following order: Preliminary Stage, Community Research, Information Analysis, Scenario Development, Drama Rehearsal, Drama Skit Performance, Post-performance Discussion and Follow up.

Preliminary Stage

Students were asked to search for communities that needed intervention, especially on health issues. Names of four communities were submitted for analysis which was carried out between the lecturer and students. There were issues of contaminated water, malaria problem and FGM. At the end of the discussion, Ijurin Community was selected because of the serious negative impact FGM can have on the female children and the desire by the facilitators to persuade the people through theatre to stop this ancient cultural practice as quickly as possible. The reasons given by some of the people interviewed about FGM actually prompted the choice

of Ijurin Community and prompted movement of the facilitators to the community with immediate effect.

Community Research

This is the phase where information about the challenges and problems of the communities were gathered and documented so as to deduce a drama skit for audience viewing pleasure. The facilitators set out to meet the villagers and the information gathered was analyzed by everyone. The responses of the interviewees are as follow:

The first woman interviewed said, “circumcision is meant for everybody, both male and female, it is a life tradition and it is a taboo not to be circumcised, you must circumcise your female child, otherwise she will lose her kids at birth. The benefit of cutting is fruitfulness of marriage. The second woman said that, “the child’s head must not touch the clitoris, otherwise, the child will die. The Ijebus don’t do it because it is not in their tradition but it is our culture in Ekiti and we must do it”. The response of the third woman is that, “circumcision was inherited from our ancient mothers, they made us understand that it is essential for female children and it is dangerous when left undone because the clitoris makes females sexually active when they see the opposite sex”. The fourth woman said that “my parents did it for me so that means it is a good thing and I did it for my daughters too, I can’t allow any foreigner to take my culture away from me”. An elderly man said that “female circumcision is good and important to the society because it helps protect the family honour and keeps girls sexually safe till marriage”. Lastly, another woman said that “if there is no reason for FGM our ancient parents wouldn’t take it serious, particularly I did it for my first born but my last born who is in the University now has not gone through it but I must do it for her anytime she visits home or I may wait until she wants put to bed and ask the Nurse who will deliver the baby to help me cut it because if I fail to do it and the child’s head touches the clitoris, the baby will die. I can’t afford to lose any grandchild because of government’s speculation”.

From the above, it is obvious that, FGM is an ingrained and entrenched traditional practice in Ijurin Community. Therefore, the following is deducible from the above interview:

- i. It is a taboo not to be circumcised;
- ii. Circumcision preserves family honour;
- iii. Circumcision widens the virginal and makes delivery easier;
- iv. If the clitoris itches the girl, she will go after men and become promiscuous. Hence, the clitoris must be amputated;
- v. During pregnancy, if the head of the baby touches the clitoris, the baby will die;
- vi. an uncircumcised woman is a sex slave.

5. INFORMATION ANALYSIS

This phase involves the collation and analysis of information collected in the field. It is at this point that facilitators come to grip with the cause of the problems, the effect on the immediate society and the likely solution. Immediately after this is the formation of the plot, the making of the drama skit and scene by scene development of the performance.

Rehearsal

This phase involves rehearsals of the drama skit for the villagers' consumption. The villagers are really involved in this stage. Most of them who have been discovered during the preliminary stages were invited to join at this stage. They were asked to volunteer relevant traditional songs. Those who could act were given basic and short instructions about the rudiments of acting and how to handle their roles. The rehearsals started in earnest and we discovered that many of the people, especially the students among them have great potentials because they grasped their roles and lines quickly. Some of them were trained as singers while some played the drums. Some of the older and younger people refused to join us at the early stage, probably because they were apprehensive of our mission but later quite a few of them decided to join the rehearsals when they became convinced of our good intentions. The rehearsals progressed rapidly and within three days, the performance was ready for the audience.

Performance

The performance was staged at the Town Hall on Saturday 17th March, 2018. The play opens with a discussion between two women and a circumciser who joins them to share her experience about the successful cutting of the clitoris of a young girl that was carried out recently. Argument ensues when one of the women, drawing from what her children told her when she visited them in Lagos, decides to enlighten the other two of the dangers inherent in FGM. She mentions that FGM is an archaic tradition that must not be practiced anymore but the circumciser who wants to protect her business, speaks glowingly of the practice. The circumciser pleads with the second woman to do it for her girl in the University without delay. She claims that the girl will become promiscuous if FGM is not performed on her on time. The woman invites her daughter home and FGM is performed on her and this leads to heavy bleeding which later results to the girl's death. The circumciser's girl in school turns promiscuous and becomes pregnant. A Doctor intervenes in the conflict and enlightens them on the dangers of FGM. The performance was appreciated with a resounding applause. The audience included the King of the community who was unavoidably absent but was represented by a High Chief. Among those who graced the occasion were Chiefs, men, women, the youths and the children. It was as if the whole community was there because the hall was filled to capacity. They were happy seeing their children participating in such an entertaining and enlightening performance.

Post-performance Discussion

This phase came up immediately after the performance. It was anchored by this researcher. It was quite illuminating and revealing. The audience was asked what they learnt from the performance. Many of them commented that they have realised their mistakes of holding tenaciously to the tradition. At the end, some elders, mostly men, spoke against FGM while one of the elders spoke in its favour but we were surprised when he was shouted down by other members of the audience. Four of the female circumcisers said that now that they have seen the outcome of FGM in the performance, they would definitely stop the practice. They said they regretted the ones they had carried out in the past and promised not to venture into it again. After the discussion, the chiefs and other elderly men were full of praises for the team of

facilitators. They prayed for us and treated us to some beverages to show their profound appreciation.

Follow Up

A preliminary follow up was carried out on the 30th of April, 2018. This phase entails revisiting the community to ascertain whether there is compliance with the promises made during the post-performance discussion. On our visit to the community, it was found out that there has not been any record of circumcision in the community since the facilitators left the place. One circumciser even retorted that she has not heard any noise from her colleagues' houses who ply the same trade except if they are now doing it inside the bush which she said was not likely. The success of this intervention shows the potency of Tfd in the reorientation that is necessary for the survival and development of local communities. The final follow up was carried out in July 2018 with the same results as above.

Tfd Intervention at Ijurin in Pictures



Figure 1. A choreographed danced by the actors



Figure 2. The performance in session



Figure 3. The Lecturer in charge addressing the audience during post-performance session.



Figure 4. One of the members of the audience making comment during the post performance discussion



Figure 5. Another member of the audience making comment during the post performance discussion



Figure 6. Cross Section of audience during the intervention phase

Actors from Ijurin Community included Ogunyebi Tolu, Adeyeye Timilehin, Ariyo Lekan, Akanbi Adebayo, Jegede Feranmi, Fabiyi Remi, Faniyi Omowumi Akinwumi, Faith Adelana, Adejoke Adegoke. (All actors were selected from the village).

TfD Praxis in Kajola Village

The intervention at Kajola village took place between 4th and 11th February, 2018. The intervention goes as follow:

The Preliminary Stage

The team of facilitators visited Kajola village thrice. First, the team of facilitators visited the village to conduct a feasibility study in order to ascertain if the village is suitable for such research. Kajola was chosen because of the perennial social problems bedeviling the community. The second visit was to present letters from the University to the Baale (Leader) of the community to show the approval of the University authority for the exercise. The third time was to settle the issue of accommodation. Unfortunately, there was no suitable accommodation for the facilitators comprising 36 members. We only got the village market stalls to rest our heads at nights. This did not discourage the facilitators because of the urgency attached to the intervention as reflected in the outcome of the community research.

Community Research

This is the most sensitive phase of TfD praxis because it is at this point that information is gathered to identify the problems of the community that require intervention and solution. The residents of Kajola, mostly farmers, hardly stay at home due to their vocation. This made it difficult to get the needed information in good time. Therefore, facilitators had to visit the people at night, between 7 and 8 pm to gather information. Another problem was that the people, especially the elders, were reluctant to expose their youths who perpetrate rape on young girls of the village. They only mentioned problems of bad roads and absence of social amenities. The gimmick we later used was that one of the facilitators practiced make up on one of the young girls and before long the girls came in large numbers. The interaction brought about several

issues and social malaise suffered by the villagers, especially young girls. They mentioned the prevalence of rape cases and early pregnancy which is the fall out of rape incidence in the village.

Information Analysis

There were so many problems mentioned by the villagers such as bad roads, non-availability of social amenities, parents' neglect of children during pregnancy, absence of storage facilities for their farm products, neglect by the government in the palm oil trade that the villages is known for, rape, early pregnancy, and neglect of rape victims by family and villagers.

Scenario Development

This is the stage where the plot of the drama skit was developed and the scene-by-scene analysis was conducted. The performance was titled "Ojo Ola" (The Future).

Drama Rehearsals

The rehearsals were quite enjoyable because of the readiness and enthusiasm of the youths who wholeheartedly supported the exercise. They got their lines quickly and were able to supply songs for the performance. They were fast in getting their lines and the few rudiments of acting given to them.

Community Performance

The plot of the drama revolves round two families of Animashaun and Fabunmi. Mr. and Mrs. Animashaun have three kids namely Aduke, Taiwo and Kehinde while Mr. and Mrs. Fabunmi have only one female child, Boluwatife. The children attend the same school, Ifeoluwa Community High School, Kajola. Aduke becomes pregnant, due to the uncaring attitude of her parents. She is neglected by the parents who abuse her every day. Boluwatife, on the other hand, becomes a victim of rape. Her parents are not deterred, they treat and send her back to school. The culprit is reported to the Police and he is sentenced to seven years imprisonment. The parents of Boluwatife, though illiterates, give her support and she becomes one of the best students in her school, despite the traumatic rape incident. She is awarded a scholarship to study abroad and the community celebrates her success. This outcome makes the Animashauns regret their actions of neglecting Aduke and stopping her education when she becomes pregnant.

Post Performance Discussion

The whole village watched the performance and gave a thunderous and resounding applause after the performance. Almost all of them were surprised at the outcome of the intervention and some even apologized for being apprehensive of the visit at the beginning. Others apologized for the delay in giving their total support. The comments of young boys and girls, including the elders showed that they never knew that there was such a punitive measure against rape under the law. They all agreed that it is bad to neglect the girl child when she becomes a rape victim or when such leads to early pregnancy. They also agreed to continue to sensitize the youths about the dangers in rape, in churches, mosques and town hall meetings.

They showed much love and appreciation for the tolerance, perseverance and doggedness of the facilitators.

Follow Up

The first follow up was carried out on the 26th of April, 2018. It was discovered that there was no rape case recorded between the period of the intervention and that of the first follow up. The second follow up would be conducted in July, 2018.

TfD Intervention at Kajola Community in Pictures



Figure 7. The performance in session.



Figure 8. The performance in session.



Figure 9. Members of the audience during the performance.



Figure 10. A member of the audience making comments after the performance.

The Second Phase of the Follow-up took place on the 23rd July, 2018 at Kajola community. We gathered that since the intervention in the first week of February, 2018 there had not been any case of rape. The Village Head, Chiefs and other well meaning villagers were full of praises for the facilitators. It was the same experience at Ijurin on 24th July, 2018 as the information garnered showed that the community had completely abhorred Female Genital Mutilation. They were also full of commendations for the intervention.

The Cast of “Ojo Ola” (The Future) at Kajola Community includes: Mrs. Adebayo, Mr. Agbaje, Mrs. Oluwadare Omolare, Atolagbe Pelumi, Oyewumi Babalola, Oyeniyi Femi, Segunfunmi Samuel, Adekoya Opeyemi, Adeniyi Boluwatife, Funmilayo Aina, Aremu Marvelous, Hannah Halima, Afolabi Olusola, Olaoye Christianah, among others.

Observation and Findings

One of the major issues with our local communities in Africa is ignorance. Usually, the people are ignorant of the consequences of some of their actions. They hold tenaciously to some traditions and culture without considering those at the receiving end of such cultures and traditions. Most times, the sufferers or the oppressed are the girl child and women. This is obvious from our findings at Ijurin Community where the people were ignorant of the consequences of FGM on the girl child and women. Our findings revealed that many children had died in the past in the village due to hemorrhage.

Our findings also showed that the same blade is used for several girls during the circumcision exercise which must have led to infection of different types and likely death of innocent girls and women.

The people saw the warning from the government to discontinue FGM as an attempt to dissuade them from practicing their cherished ancestors’ tradition. At Kajola, our findings showed that the people were ignorant of the repercussions of rape on the culprit because it used to be a common practice before the intervention. The people also believed that early pregnancy is tantamount to dropping out of school.

They did not know it is only a temporary stoppage and that the victim can continue her studies after child birth. The performance brought a relief to the entire community, especially women. On the two issues, especially FGM, the exposition of Naffisatou et al (1) is quite reassuring:

the harmful social norm of female genital mutilation, common in some 30 countries around the world, rest on the shakiest of foundation, it is a constellation of faulty beliefs, perceived obligations and inferred expectations, tied together in a durable knot. Given the strength of social mutilation has proved difficult to unravel. But the practice cannot forever withstand the harm in causes; the fact it violates laws and human rights meant to protect women and girls; the moving voices of survivors; and mounting evidence of changing attitudes. Female genital mutilation cannot withstand the force of collective action and social evolution. Our work is to accelerate the inevitable demise of the practice.

Therefore, all stakeholders must put all mechanisms, methodologies and policies in place to push for the total eradication of this dastardly act.

Developmental Impact of Tfd on Kajola and Ijurin Communities

The developmental impact of Tfd on the communities can be measured through the level of education, reorientation and liberation the people received from the intervention. Many of them regretted their past deeds and embraced attitudinal change. Another impact is that the people are now wiser and better equipped to face life challenges.

It is an obvious fact that in a village where rape is rampant and attracts no penalty, the social, capital and personal development of young people will be grossly affected. This will, without doubt, affect their vocation and farming which is their major occupation. If farming is affected, the repercussion on the well being of the people is better imagined than experienced. A society can only develop sustainably when the citizens are free from molestations, harassment, health-related issues as a result of rape and FGM. The future of communities will become bleak if their youths suffer from rape and Female Genital Mutilation and such community can never grow in any sphere of life.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The obvious fact from the above Tfd interventions at Ijurin and Kajola is that many communities are living in ignorance and are ingrained in archaic and backward traditions that have led to the death of many innocent souls. It is equally ascertained that such obnoxious traditions have negative impact on the lives of the girl child and women. Quite unfortunately, the media has engaged, over the years, in massive information and orientation without the expected result because the people believe such information is a mere imposition by the government. Therefore, the people living in those communities need more than the media to facilitate and engender durable and enduring reorientation, change and development that will transform the communities.

They need one-on-one interaction that Tfd can engender. The Tfd praxis reflects empathy on the part of the facilitators and this draws the people to the intervention thereby making the needed change and development possible and easier. The Tfd tool is therefore recommended for government, parastatals, and NGOs that are genuinely interested in the expected change and development that is highly needed in the local communities of Africa. A synergy could be created between those bodies and Applied Theatre practitioners to intervene in the desired orientation, conscientization, change and development for the local communities. Nigerian government should do the needful by taking measures and concrete steps to stem the tide of rape and FGM perpetration. Relevant government parastatal and officers should key into efforts going on in the world in achieving this.

For example, efforts are going on around the globe, especially by the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) geared at “eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. This effort titled ‘The Spotlight Initiative’, brings attention to violence against women and girls in order to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment” (Williams-Breault, 2).

This has resulted in people’s changed attitude towards FGM through the current waves of modernization and growing awareness and changed behaviour (Ahmady, 11). There are rooms for more efforts to be put in place to end this wicked and inhuman act against the girl-child and women in general. It is a project that is worth our combine efforts.

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