

Abstract:

There is a general public perception in Kenya that rapists are “sick” people who deserve to be put far away from the society. Consequently, rape perpetrators are left to be dealt with by the criminal justice system while most of the research has focused on the rape survivors without taking into consideration the need to explore and understand the motivations and sociocultural factors that could predispose men to rape. This paper examines this form of “deviant” sexuality characteristic of some men. The paper is based on findings of a study conducted in three main prisons in Kenya between January and March 2008. The study sample was drawn from the Kamiti, Naivasha, and Nyeri main prisons. Respondents were convicted rapists serving their jail terms. The findings suggest that a number of factors may predispose a man to rape. These factors could be either individual motivational factors, sociocultural factors, or a combination of both. The individual motivational factors identified included drug consumption, marital problems as an excuse for rape, inability to negotiate for consensual sex due to being shy or afraid of women, rape as a form of sexual access, psychological factors like pornographic influence and rape hallucinations, impersonal sex and power, and use of rape as a “tool” for punishment. On the other hand, the sociocultural factors identified included the view of rape as a sexual act rather than an act of violence, social attitude that the woman “invited” the rape, early childhood environment, cultural practices, peer influence, and a lack of parental advice on sexual activities.