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AN EXAMINATION OF ABORTION POLICIES AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

There are many reasons that may lead to a woman wanting to have an abortion, such as to complete her education, conception as a result of rape, or due to socioeconomic reasons. Findings revealed that while there are abundant laws, treaties and policies governing women, however, the provisions of many of the policies in the health sector which includes right to safe abortion, and focuses primarily on family planning, child healthcare. In Nigeria, induced abortion is illegal except in circumstances where a woman's life is in jeopardy during the pregnancy. However, and notwithstanding the illegality of abortion, the incidence of induced abortion is widespread in Nigeria and as a result, many women of reproductive age. Most abortion procedures are clandestine, and many are carried out in unsafe circumstances and are therefore, unsafe abortion. This article argues that women occupy a fragile position in reproduction and encounter negative consequences on their reproductive health. Nevertheless, women's struggle should not be on legalising abortion but should be on the incidence of unwanted pregnancies. Thus, efforts at promoting abstinence and safe sex should be intensified through sensitization. The Nigerian government should incorporate abortion service in the National Health Policy and take action as appropriate.

Keywords: Abortion, Rights, Reproductive Health and women

1.0 Introduction

There are many reasons a woman (young women being in the majority) may want an abortion as aforementioned, which includes; wanting to complete their education, conceived the child through rape, or lacking socioeconomic resources to raise the child. Near the top of their list of considerations is also the social stigma associated with being pregnant outside wedlock.¹ The right of every citizen, particularly women, to the highest standard of health must be secured as good health, in particular, reproductive health rights, is a *sine qua non*. The right of all citizens to

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¹Tolu A. Rethinking Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Nigeria: Why Abortion Law Matters, available at < <http://www.republic.ng/vol1-no1/rethinking-sexual-and-reproductive-rights> > accessed on 18th January, 2018.