

# A Study of 2 Samuel 13:1–22 as a Solution to Intimate Partner Violence in Nigeria

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## Abstract

With particular reference to women abuse, this article examines how the Tamar rape narrative can be employed as a solution to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Nigeria. Applying the text in this way, Tamar's action of mentioning her experience encourages victims of sexual abuse to voice their ordeal as this would expose their assailants and serve as a deterrent to intending abusers. The role of David as a parent and family head reminds every father to aspire to be a good example to his sons as regards attitude to women; it also points to the need to re-awaken those African virtues of old which restricted sex to marriage. In the Nigerian context, the role of David as the custodian of the law relates to the fact that the relevant IPV laws should be updated and adequately applied. A proper investigation of Amnon might reveal that, apart from his family background which might influence his behaviour, he might also be under the influence of certain situational and individual factors.

**Keywords:** Tamar; Intimate Partner Violence; Old Testament; Nigeria

## Introduction

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a prevalent social problem all over the world. IPV refers to any act which a person carries out to hurt another person with whom he/she is/was in some form of relationship, such as between husband and wife. With particular reference to women abuse, this work examines the Tamar rape narrative with a view to employing it as a solution to IPV in Nigeria. The approach identifies the role played by each of the characters in the text, and subsequently examines the place of each of them in finding a solution to violence against women in Nigeria. To achieve this aim, the article begins with a literary analysis of 2 Samuel 13:1–22, after which it performs an exegesis of the text. The work also studies the concept and prevalence of IPV in Nigeria, and, finally, it applies the Tamar rape narrative as a solution.



## Literary Analysis of 2 Samuel 13:1–22

The books of Joshua through 2 Kings belong to the so-called Deuteronomistic History (DH) in Old Testament scholarship. Most scholars believe that though the Deuteronomistic historians (Dtr) used earlier sources and collections for its composition, the final edition of DH is the “work of editors-authors during the period of the exile” (Longman and Dillard 2006, 153). For the books of Samuel, source collections suggested include stories from the boyhood of Samuel (1 Samuel 1–3), the ark narrative (4:1–7:2), stories about Samuel and Saul (1 Samuel 7:3–12; 9:1–10:16, etc.), and a court history or succession narrative (2 Samuel 9–20; 1 Kings 1–2) (Longman and Dillard 2006, 153; cf. Boadt 1984, 376; Rogerson 2005, 39; Römer 2007). 2 Samuel 13:1–22 thus belongs to the so-called court history or succession narrative. The narratives of 2 Samuel 9 to 1 Kings 2 have long been recognised by scholars as a separate source document and labelled the “Succession Narrative for its major emphasis on who will succeed to the throne of David” (Birch et al. 2005, 243). There used to be unanimity among liberal scholars on the isolation and identification of this document, so much so that it was generally “viewed as a very early, almost eye-witness record of events during the reign of David” (Longman and Dillard 2006, 155). As Moore and Kelle put it, there was a general consensus by the early twentieth century “that these chapters were fine examples of reliable historical writing and that their composition was to be regarded as essentially contemporary with the events which they relate” (cited by Ademiluka 2016, 119). However, towards the end of that century historians were given reasons to review this position. The conclusion that the court narrative “might not be history writing close in time to the events it describes” implied that it was perhaps not historically accurate and required that the nature of these chapters be re-examined (Moore and Kelle 2011, 204).

Commenting on the issue of the historicity of the David stories, Noll agrees that “a few portions in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles might derive from sources dating to the tenth century” (Noll 2013, 218). However, he points out that since every biblical text was completed by scribes who lived many centuries later, it is evident that revisions to these texts must have been made in the course of their transmission. “For that reason, it is unreasonable to suggest that every biblical narrative about Saul, David and Solomon is a reliable account of a tenth-century event” (Noll 2013, 218). Noll also posits that, in line with the general agreement, most of the sources available to the scribes who wrote these stories “were not written documents but oral traditions ... folk memories about prominent families in Iron Age Cisjordan” (Noll 2013, 218). For him, since oral traditions are rarely transmitted in a fixed form, they can be highly unreliable. Noll finds supports in the Israeli archaeologist, A. Mazar, who opines that “much of the biblical narrative concerning David and Solomon can be read as mere fiction and embellishment written by later authors” (Noll 2013, 222). Many interpreters would agree with the opinion that changes occurred to biblical texts in the course of their transmission, and even that some of them might be what is termed “fiction”. However, it must be pointed

out that the word “fiction” is not necessarily synonymous with falsehood. According to Mann, “the word ‘fiction’ derives from the Latin word meaning ‘to form’” (Mann 2011, 8). Seen from this perspective, every historian engages in fiction in order to give shape to the past. This is what the authors of the DH and other biblical writers did; they were “writers, editors and redactors giving shape to the past in literary form ... they shape the past in order to speak to the present, and the remarkable dimension of scripture is that the text has continued to speak to people’s present down to this day” (Mann 2011, 8).

Making the text speak to the present in this way is what is called synchronic interpretation, as against diachronic which focuses on the processes that produced the text, as in the historical-critical approach. According to Lusk, synchronic reading “treats the Bible as a finished product, as a coherent, logical, unified whole” (Lusk 2004). In view of the fact that countless readers to date have found the “text meaningful without knowing its historical setting ... there is a growing interest in a synchronic reading” (Mann 2011, 9). There is interest in knowing what the text says in the form in which we have it now. As Mann rightly affirms, “looking at the text synchronically prevents reading it only as editorial opinion speaking to the specific time of the editor” (Mann 2011, 9). At the same time, reading the text only synchronically would not adequately acknowledge the processes that produced the final product; hence, interpreters must be careful not to “lose sight of the conclusions of older literary critics regarding the sources” (Mann 2011, 9).

In focusing on the final form of the text, the synchronic approach is a corollary of Narrative Analysis which studies how the Bible uses the form of story to communicate its message. Narrative reading does not question the text for its historical veracity, but rather views it as a literary artefact that challenges the reader to probe its communicative strategies. Most importantly, “Narratology invites the reader to explore the dimensions of the narrative in its so-called ‘final’ form” (Oosthuizen 1994, 85, 89). Hence, the significance of a narrative and synchronic reading of the text, over against the historical-critical method, resides in the fact that it engages the text in its canonical form. B. S. Childs (1979) in his canonical criticism had emphasised the significance of the canonical form of the Old Testament. The thrust of the canonical approach seems to be an attempt to resolve the problem of bringing together the findings of historical criticism on the one hand and the needs of believers in the modern world on the other (Kruger 1994, 183).

Hence, the present study employs a synchronic and narrative reading of the Tamar rape narrative. The nature of the text as folk literature is recognised but given this approach there is not much concern about whether or not it accurately reflects the historical context within which it arose. Rather, the narrative is examined in its present form.

## Exegesis of 2 Samuel 13:1–22

Tamar was one of David's daughters, born to the same mother as Absalom. Amnon, her half-brother, was so infatuated with her that he desired to have sex with her. Jonadab, one of their cousins, perceived that Amnon was in some discomfort, and when Amnon disclosed the problem to him, Jonadab taught Amnon a trick to get Tamar. The trick worked, and Amnon raped Tamar against all her entreaties. In the exegesis of this narrative, the role played by each of the major characters in the story is examined; in the last section of the work this examination shall be the platform for seeking a solution to the problem of IPV in Nigeria, particularly violence against women.

The act of Amnon was doubly wrong; it was not just a rape but “an incestuous rape” (Mann 2011, 202). Tamar seems to know the social implications of the act particularly for herself, hence in her dilemma she pleaded with Amnon to “Please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you” (v. 13), the plea which many believe runs contrary to Hebrew laws which forbid marriage between siblings (cf. Leviticus 18:9, 11; 20:17; Deuteronomy 27:22). Hence there are various expositions on Tamar's suggestion of marriage. Mann opines that “her suggestion implies that David would be quite willing to ignore the illegitimacy of marriage between half siblings” (Mann 2011, 203), while Payne is of the view that the king probably “had the authority to suspend this law” (Payne 1994, 328). However, as many rightly affirm, Tamar's suggestion seems to be meant to get herself freed from Amnon's grip. For example, Guzik (2002) says, “Tamar probably said this simply as a ploy to get away from Amnon.” Similarly, Matthew Henry believes that Tamar's plea was just to divert Amnon from his wicked desire, and to get clear of him. Tamar “was confident that, upon notice given to the king by himself (Amnon) of this wicked desire, which he would scarcely have believed from any one else, he would take an effectual course to protect her from him” (Henry 2017a).

Amnon did not listen to Tamar's plea but went ahead and raped her. Many commentators describe Amnon's post-coital treatment of his sister as more grievous than the act of rape itself. “Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred; so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, ‘Arise, be gone’” (v. 15, RSV). And when she would not go, Amnon ordered his servant to “Put this woman out of my presence, and bolt the door after her” (v. 17). According to Mann, Amnon's post-coital feelings “in a way further reveal his utilitarian depravity” (2011, 203); for Amnon, Tamar was nothing more than a sex object. Some take a psychological approach to the interpretation of Amnon's wicked treatment of Tamar. In this regard, Hacker opines that “rapists become enraged after the act because they see their own weakness in their victims” (cited by Mann 2011, 203). It seems Amnon was angry and hated Tamar because she resisted his gesture and thereby “threw all the blame upon him” (Henry 2017a). Amnon's anger could also have arisen from the feeling of guilt. After the act he “felt guilt for his behaviour” (Moore

2017), and “Tamar was simply a reminder of his foolish sin [hence] he wanted every reminder of his sin to be put far away” (Guzik 2002).

Thus, in order to put away the object of his weakness, Amnon threw Tamar out into public completely shamed. Tamar was shamed permanently! Hence, she hints at her irreparable damage in her resentment in verse 16: “No, my brother; for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other which you did to me” (RSV). Tamar’s statement is loaded with meaning in her social context. In Hebrew culture a woman’s virginity was absolutely crucial to maintaining her honour and eligibility for marriage. A “new wife who was found not to be a virgin was subject to death by communal stoning” (Mann 2011, 201; cf. Baldwin, cited in Ademiluka 2014, 15; Deuteronomy 22:20–21). Thus, Tamar is “now not only a rape victim but also no longer marriageable, part of the shame that she must bear” (v. 12) (Mann 2011, 203). The last we hear of Tamar in the story is that she left the scene of her violation towards Absalom’s house, “crying aloud as she went” with her robe torn and ashes on her head (v. 19), thus “signifying that her virginity was rent from her in a forcible manner, or that she was ravished” (Gill 2017a). In Absalom’s house Tamar lived as a recluse “in solitude and sorrow, in token of her modesty and detestation of uncleanness” (Henry 2017a). Baldwin may therefore be right when he concludes that the effect of Amnon’s act in Hebrew society was that “she would become a desolate woman, isolated from society and disqualified from marriage” (cited in Ademiluka 2014, 15).

“When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry” (v. 21, RSV). The New English Bible (NEB) adds from the Septuagint, “but he would not hurt Amnon because he was his eldest son and he loved him” (Payne 1970, cited in Ademiluka 2014, 15). Thus, Tamar’s abuser was not called to account. From David “we hear no word of compassion for his devastated daughter” (McKinney 2015); David did not channel his anger to bring justice, instead “he simmered in silence and left his dysfunctional family to their own devices” (Moore 2017). Mann attributes David’s ambivalence in dealing with the crime in his home to the cultural privileges of the firstborn, here being extended to “amnesty from immoral and criminal acts” (Mann 2011, 204). Due to David’s favouritism for his first son, there is no “justice for the abused as the rapist gets off scot-free while the victim’s life is ruined forever” (Mann 2011, 204). According to Payne (1994, 308), the Deuteronomists added this story to show how David’s own household produced calamity for him, fulfilling the curse placed on David on account of his adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam 12:11). And, as Marshall (2008) observes, David’s failure to punish Amnon was one of the factors “that disastrously split the royal family asunder” (cited in Ademiluka 2014, 15). However, from its foundation David’s home was meant to be dysfunctional. Sensenig graphically paints his home foundation thus:

Consider King David and his wives. Ahinoam was King David’s first-place wife and mother of Amnon—David’s firstborn son—the crown prince of Israel. Maacah, another wife, was mother of Absalom (David’s favorite son) and Tamar. There was also Michal,

daughter of King Saul; Abigail, widow of Nabal; three more wives from Jerusalem; a crowd of concubines; and the wife David took through lust, deception, and lethal force: Bathsheba. The story of King David and Bathsheba immediately precedes the story of Amnon raping his half-sister, Tamar. (Sensenig 2015)

Mann is therefore right to suggest that when it comes to family dynamics, David created “a model of family dysfunction” (Mann 2011, 200). As Guzik expresses it, David’s lifestyle had pointed towards lust for women, displayed in his multiple wives and adultery with Bathsheba. “A child will often model a parent’s sinful behavior, and go further in the direction of sin the parent is pointed towards” (Guzik 2002). The biblical message here, then, is “like father, like son” (Sensenig 2015). Hence, David could not do anything about the rape of his daughter by his own son probably because he “was conscious of his own guilt in a similar matter (the case of Bathsheba) and therefore felt the lack of moral authority to discipline his own son” (Guzik 2002).

It is important to note, however, that David failed not only as a father and head of his family but also as the king of Israel, that is, the head of state and the principal custodian of the law. There is no certainty regarding the specific laws that David could have enforced against Amnon. Historical critics usually assign most of the Old Testament legal documents to an exilic or a post exilic date which implies that the relevant laws might not be contemporaneous with David. But according to the narrator, Tamar objected to Amnon’s demand for sex on the grounds that “such a thing is not done in Israel” (v. 12), which implies that certain traditions forbade rape or sex between siblings. In other words, even if not strictly in the form in which they are cast in the present canon, there were laws against incest in the time of David which might not be too different from the ones in the final form of the Torah. Relevant laws in the present canon prescribe a fixed compensation to the amount of the normal bride price in the case of the rape of a virgin, and that the culprit is under compulsion to marry the victim for life (Deuteronomy 22:28–30). If the father disagrees to the marriage, the rapist must pay the normal bride price (Exodus 22:16–17). In the case of Tamar, the payment would mean to compensate for “the fact that Tamar was now less likely to be married, no longer being a virgin” (Guzik 2002; cf. Ademiluka 2014:15). In view of Leviticus 18:9 and 11 Amnon could not have married Tamar, as already discussed, and the payment of compensation might also not be rational since they were of the same father. However, there is a punishment prescribed for incest (Leviticus 20:17) which David could have imposed on Amnon. It reads:

If a man takes his sister, a daughter of his father or a daughter of his mother, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a shameful thing, and they shall be cut off in the sight of the children of their people; he has uncovered his sister’s nakedness, he shall bear his iniquity (RSV).

There are various interpretations of the “cutting off” in this verse. In the opinion of Matthew Henry (2017b), this verse recommends death for both of them; this view is premised on verses 12 and 14. In verse 12, a man who lies with his daughter-in-law commits incest and should be put to death; in verse 14, if a man sleeps with his mother-in-law, the two of them as well as his wife shall be burnt to death. Henry’s argument is that since death is recommended for incest in the cases above, the same is the recommendation in verse 17. Similarly, Gill thinks that the phrase “and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people [implies death] either by the hand of the civil magistrate, or by the hand of God, by the pestilence, as the Targum of Jonathan” (Gill 2017b). However, in view of the fact that the expression “cut off from among his people” is used in Exodus 31:14 as a punishment for any violator of the Sabbath, some suggest that excommunication is similarly being recommended here. “The more full expression here used probably refers to some special form of public excommunication, accompanied, it may be, by expulsion from the camp” (Bible Hub 2017). Whatever might have been the relevant punishment at that time, David did not apply any against Amnon.

In today’s language, Amnon’s offense would be described as intimate partner violence against Tamar, more precisely rape or sexual violence or woman abuse. The remaining parts of this work deals with how the Tamar story can be employed as a solution to the problem of intimate partner violence today with particular reference to Nigeria.

## **Intimate Partner Violence in Nigeria**

As defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Intimate Partner Violence encompasses acts of stalking, psychological aggression, physical violence or sexual violence—behaviors and tactics through which an intimate partner seeks to establish and maintain power over another” (cited in Hasstedt and Rowan 2016:40). As further explained by the CDC, an intimate partner is a person with whom one has or had a close personal relationship that is characterised by “emotional connectedness, regular contact, ongoing physical contact and/or sexual behavior, identity as a couple, familiarity and knowledge about each other’s lives” (CDC 2017). As mentioned above, in today’s language Amnon’s offense against Tamar is described as sexual violence, among other terminologies. Sexual violence is a prominent form of IPV, and the CDC defines it as “an attempted or committed sexual act perpetrated against a person who has not freely given consent or is unable to refuse ... [which] includes rape [and] other forced or unwanted sexual contacts” (CDC 2017). The term “domestic violence” is often used synonymously with “intimate partner violence”. Thus, according to the United States department for justice, “Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over the other intimate partner” (cited in Essien 2017). Putting it simply, Kunhiyop states, “Domestic violence involves the abuse of power in intimate relationships within a household” (Kunhiyop 2008, 244). Intimate partner violence is

often equated with women abuse, in that although women perpetrators of IPV are not lacking, most often females are the victims (Kirk-Dugan 2012, 259). As Kunhiyop (2008:244) puts it, women are usually the victims of domestic violence as it is rarely perpetrated by women against men.

The prevalence of IPV is attested all over the world. Folayan et al. (2014) affirm that worldwide women frequently “face tremendous sexual violence.” This fact is buttressed by a 2014 UNICEF report which confirms that “around 120 million girls worldwide ... have experienced forced intercourse or other forced sexual acts at some point in their lives” (Babajide-Alabi 2017). IPV is prevalent also in Nigeria as in other parts of Africa. Some “reports have shown that 4–6% of all adolescent girls in southwestern Nigeria experience rape” (Folayan et al. 2014). One study reveals “181 rape cases within six months in Lagos State alone” (Baffour 2014). In Nigeria there is no age limit to rape; “children, babies, adolescents, matured adults, mothers, grandmothers, and women of over 70 years are being raped” (Baffour 2014). There are other forms of IPV often referred to as physical violence. In Nigeria, as in many parts of Africa, corporal punishment for wives “is widely sanctioned as a form of discipline” (Ose 2009). Hence, when men beat their wives, they “believe they are instilling discipline in them ... [as women] are regarded as children who can be prone to indiscipline if not disciplined” (Agbonkhese and Onuoha 2017). Unfortunately, in some parts of Nigeria, as in other parts of Africa, even the women themselves “believe that physical abuse is most times justified” (Agene 2017; cf. Okenwa et al. 2009). This might explain the widespread nature of domestic violence in Nigeria. It is reported that in Nigeria, 25 per cent of women “go through ordeal of domestic violence” (Hart 2016). As enumerated by Antai, in Nigeria acts of physical violence against women include:

- i) pushing, shaking or throwing something at her; ii) slapping her or twisting her arm;
- iii) punching or hitting her with something harmful; iv) kicking or dragging her; v) strangling or burning her; vi) threatening her with a weapon (e.g., gun or knife); and vii) attacking her with a weapon. (Antai 2011; cf. Ademiluka 2018a, 353)

Igbelina-Igbokwe includes other acts like “wife battery, acid bath ... harmful traditional practices (e.g., female genital mutilation), widowhood rites/disinheritance, deprivation of material and economic resources [and] ... restriction of mobility...” (Igbelina-Igbokwe 2013; cf. Ademiluka 2018a, 353). Delano affirms that these forms of abuse are widespread across sub-Saharan Africa. According to the author, surveys conducted in this region reveal that in Nigeria “81 percent of married women report being verbally or physically abused by their husbands. Forty-six percent report being abused in the presence of their children” (Delano 2017; cf. Ademiluka 2018a, 353).

Intimate Partner Violence is a social problem with profound effects not only on the victim but also on the society at large. Hasstedt and Rowan identify IPV in general as “undeniably a public health crisis that disproportionately affects women and has



profound implications for their sexual and reproductive health and autonomy” (Hasstedt and Rowan 2016), which observation buttresses the fact that rape is a risk factor for HIV in women (Folayan et al. 2014). Apart from physical injuries often inflicted on victims of rape, they also suffer feelings of shame, humiliation, and stigmatisation. In addition, victims are said to have reported, among others:

a feeling of perpetual defilement, an inability to feel clean, an overwhelming sense of vulnerability, and a paralyzing feeling of lack of control over their lives ... Others experience long-term disruption of sleep or eating patterns or an inability to function at work. In addition to these psychological effects, in some societies victims of rape face the danger of ostracism or even death at the hands of relatives seeking to preserve their family's honour. (Rape 2011)

Hence, Klopper is right to consider rape as “the worst act of violence against a woman ... [which] shatters her most intimate sense of security and leaves her disadvantaged, vulnerable and exposed” (Klopper 2010, 655). As a human rights professional, McKinney considers “domestic violence the most ubiquitous human rights violation ... that occurs across lines of nationality, culture, race, and class” (McKinney 2015). IPV is also said to have psychological effects on children, as children who witness domestic violence “experience depression and psychological distress, and are more likely than other children to be physically violent” (Gelles 2009).

IPV is thus a social problem which deserves the attention of all members of society to curb it. Perhaps one of the reasons why women abuse seems to defy solution is that rather than studying each case and using it to find a solution, the problem is often blamed on patriarchy. It is claimed that since subordination and oppression of women are inherent features of every patriarchal culture, violence against women inevitably occurs in such cultures. For example, Becker claims that “the oppression of women is certainly an important part of patriarchy” (Becker 1999, 70). However, as the present author argued extensively elsewhere, patriarchy is not the cause of women abuse (Ademiluka 2018a, 354–8). In the first place, in ancient and modern societies there is evidence of women perpetrators of violence against men. In this regard, Kirk-Dugan writes, “While most perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence are men, we recognize there are times when women engage in these acts” (Kirk-Dugan 2012, 259). A recent study in South Africa shows that “over 40% of women and 16% of men had been sexually assaulted” (Kalichman et al. 2005, 299). It should also be noted that it is not all men in any given patriarchy that indulge in violence against women. In fact, in many parts of the traditional African society “sex was particularly chastised outside wedlock because it was seen as sacred, only to be practiced in marriage” (Ojua et al. 2014, cited in Ademiluka 2018b, 58). Hence, contemporary attitudes to sex including sexual violence must have been inherited from the Western orientation. It is therefore correct to say that while patriarchy may induce violence against women, it is not necessarily the cause. According to Goldsmith (2016), “violent behavior often is caused by an interaction of

situational and individual factors” such as influence of alcohol and/or drug, and most especially personality disorders (cf. Ademiluka 2018a, 356).

Therefore, studying individual cases of women abuse may be a surer way of finding a solution to it, rather than blaming it on patriarchy. Thus, employing the Tamar rape narrative to find a solution to sexual violence in contemporary Nigeria would involve an examination of the actions or inactions of the major characters in the story. First, the information is given in the text that the relevant laws were not enforced against the offender. In addition to this, this approach envisages a scenario whereby Tamar reports her violator to the police; and in the course of interrogating Amnon, findings are made to the effect that he comes from a dysfunctional family, and a father with a history tainted with women abuse. Further investigations are carried out to ascertain if Amnon has certain other situational and individual factors that may have influenced his behaviour. The police make their report available to relevant agencies of the Nigerian government for implementation towards finding a solution to IPV. In the following section suggestions are made for a solution for IPV based on this hypothesis.

### **The Tamar Rape Narrative as a Solution for IPV in Nigeria**

Tamar’s report to the police is the beginning of finding a solution to the problem of sexual violence against women in the contemporary world. Its significance resides in the fact that she divulged her ordeal. One factor that has stood against solving the problem of women abuse, not only in Nigeria but all over the world, is the fact that the act is grossly underreported (Gelles 2009; Bloomfield 2008), which stems from “the strict code of silence among victims” (Folayan et al. 2014). In a study conducted recently in Nigeria, it was shown that less than one in five of victims “who have been raped in Nigeria report the offence to the police” (Folayan et al. 2014). Another study reveals that about 54 per cent of the participating women said they would not disclose IPV (Okenwa et al. 2009). There are many reasons why victims of sexual abuse opt for silence, one of them being that “rape results in stigmatization of the victim, [sometimes] resulting in rejection by families and communities” (Folayan et al. 2014). Apart from the fear of stigmatisation, sometimes victims are apprehensive of retaliation and embarrassment from their abusers. In fact, sometimes victims have their lives spared by their assailants on the condition that they keep silent (Okenwa et al. 2009). When women abuse occurs in the home, it is seldom reported to external bodies because “in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, marriage is considered a family and community affair” (Okenwa et al. 2009). In such places it is preferred that the family arbitrates in marital conflicts rather than involving law enforcement agencies, and when a marital problem is thus externalised it “is viewed as disrespect for the family” (Okenwa et al. 2009). As mentioned earlier, in some parts of Africa physical punishment of wives is accepted as necessary, and culture makes it imperative for women to accept that manner of discipline (Antai 2011). It may be for the understanding of this custom that in Nigeria the police often advise victims of sexual abuse who make reports to them to go and

settle their matters at home. There are reasons for underreportage of sexual abuse from the legal perspective. In the case of rape, for instance, the process of trial usually involves humiliation as the complainant must be able to give evidence of rape (Bloomfield 2008). In Nigeria, the Criminal Code stipulates that “a victim of rape needs to establish that penetration occurred, corroboration (or validation) of the crime needs to be established, and proof must be provided that consent was not given” (Folayan et al. 2014); or that the “consent is obtained by force or by means of threats or intimidation of any kind” (Agary 2017). The Code does not permit a wife to accuse her husband of rape as her consent is implied in the marriage contract. In view of the humiliating nature of rape trials, and the fact that “it is difficult to prove a crime for which there are usually no third-party witnesses ... those charged with rape have a higher-than-average rate of acquittal” (Rape 2011). Thus, the low prospect of receiving legal judgment for rape “stifles enthusiasm in seeking legal recourse” (Folayan et al. 2014) as a result of which many “victims choose not to report the crime to police or refuse to press charges against their assailants” (Rape 2011).

Nonetheless, if sexual abuse would be curbed, victims should take a cue from Tamar whose rape became an eternal story because she voiced it. As Van der Walt rightly observes, Tamar’s courage to name her experience can be “the starting point to offer resistance against acts of violence and abuse” (Van der Walt 2012, 200). Sensenig also opines, “While using her voice did not prevent the rape, Tamar’s testimony emboldens subsequent generations to raise our collective voices to prevent sexual violence and abuse” (Sensenig 2015). Hence, Tamar’s report to the police would encourage Nigerian victims of sexual abuse to tell their stories of physical and mental intimidation; they are emboldened to “speak out their pain and make the world aware of the problem” (Klopper 2010:655). In this way, intending women abusers are scared and the menace is reduced in the society.

Apart from informing the reader that David did not enforce the laws against Amnon, the text also gives a hint as to why he did not. In addition to many concubines, David had multiple wives, a few of whom he seized by foul means. The notorious abusive attitude towards women particularly from elderly men like David is a factor that is capable of perpetuating women abuse in the contemporary world (Sensenig 2015). In Nigeria this information is relevant in the context of the attitude of government to the problem of sexual abuse, in which regard the suggestions here are directly relevant to government. The failure of David is a reminder to government of the need to adequately enforce the laws relating to intimate partner violence. In the Nigerian context, the specific demand goes beyond this to include the need to review these laws to accommodate current acts. For instance, in both the Criminal Code and Penal Code, contrary to current happenings,

the offence of rape is gender specific; (that is) only men can commit the offence of rape ... [R]ape is limited to penile penetration of the vagina; anal or oral sex or penetration using objects or other parts of the body such as the tongue or finger, do not constitute

sexual intercourse for the offence of rape ... Both codes provide (with certain exceptions) that sexual intercourse between a husband and wife cannot constitute the offence of rape. (Agary 2017)

There is the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPPA) of 2015 which is a vast improvement on the existing laws on partner violence but unfortunately it is limited to the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (Law Pavilion 2016). This law recognises sex as going beyond the primary sex organs and is not gender specific. Thus, in VAPPA “rape is when a person intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with any other part of his or her body or anything else without consent, or where such consent is obtained by force or means of threat or intimidation of any kind.” The law prescribes life imprisonment for the offence of rape; a maximum of “3 years or a fine not exceeding N200,000.00 or both” for spouse battering; 10 years without an option of fine for incest, among other verdicts. The Act provides more protection for victims than the older ones by virtue of the Protection Order which “restrains an individual or State actors from further abusive behaviour towards a victim.” Another preventive measure in VAPPA is the provision for a register for notorious sexual offenders: “where a person has more than one conviction of sexual offence, the court may declare such a person a dangerous sexual offender” (Law Pavilion 2016). It is important to note that the Lagos State Protection against Domestic Violence Law (2007) already had provisions similar to those of VAPPA (Agary 2017). However, it will go a long way to curb IPV in Nigeria if other states would adopt VAPPA or enact similar laws. When the sexual violence laws are updated offenders are caught up with some of the acts they get away with at present. And in this way government is creating a social environment that is intolerant towards IPV, one that “would make it more difficult for perpetrators to persist in their violent behavior” (Antai 2011).

As mentioned above, interrogating Amnon would reveal his dysfunctional family background which probably contributed to his heinous act. David had so many wives and children and did not care for the movement of his sons, several of whom became deviants (cf. Absalom, 2 Samuel 13–15). Today this aspect of the story is relevant in finding a solution to IPV in the context of family discipline. In the first place, enforcing the laws against IPV would put men with high emotions like David in proper check. Moreover, to curb the menace of sexual violence by young men the role of the traditional African family in the education of the child would have to be re-awakened. Indigenous African education placed considerable emphasis on character-training; indeed, it was the corner-stone of African education (Amaechi and Duruji 2013; Akanbi and Jekayinfa 2016; Ademiluka 2014, 19–21). In the traditional African setting the family was the means “for the transmission of traditional norms and values ... to the members of the society for their future survival” (Ojua et al. 2014). These cultural and moral norms of the community “applied within the extended family nurtured the individual child to grow into a productive and respected member of the community ... [and] served as a blueprint for his life” (Mbiti 1969, 108). A child brought up in this way is not likely to

become a rapist. Unfortunately, like that of David, the traditional African family has long been dysfunctional. In the dysfunctional family, due to the absence of a role model for the children they often “become street-wise and learn to survive on their own, often resorting to unconventional and lawless methods” (Bauers 2014). The result of the dysfunctional African family is that the society is replete with young men with behavioural disorders including sexual violence. Such men lack the traditional education in which sex was sacred and allowed only in marriage, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, one way of curbing sexual violence in Nigeria is to re-awaken the traditional family role in the education of the child. The younger generation of men has to be taught to respect the traditional virtues and moral norms, particularly those norms which held sex and marriage as sacred institutions. In this regard, in the Nigerian context the report of the police on Amnon would be suitable for implementation through the National Orientation Agency (NOA) which can come up with policies geared towards strengthening the family for the inculcation of African norms and virtues regarding sex in the younger generation (Ademiluka 2018b, 68). The report can also be implemented by the Ministry of Education, particularly in the primary and secondary schools. The ministry would ensure that those old traditions which regarded sex outside marriage as a taboo are included in the school curriculum. This purpose can also be achieved through the religious studies curriculum.

However, apart from his family background, there are other areas in which investigating Amnon might assist in seeking a remedy for sexual violence in the modern world. As mentioned above, certain situational and individual factors could be responsible for violent behaviour. Hence, today it would be necessary to find out if Amnon was influenced by factors such as some personality disorder, alcohol and/or drug abuse. Recent studies have shown that persons suffering from “the antisocial, sociopathic, or psychopathic personality disorder ... [may exhibit traits which] include sexual promiscuity or sexual aggression and drug addiction or alcoholism” (Personality Disorder 2011; cf. Ademiluka 2018a, 356). The idea that rapists act under some antisocial disorder is further buttressed by the fact that “for a man to commit sexual assault, he must be a relatively ... antisocial person—enough that he isn’t too constrained by empathy for his victims” (Newman 2017). Personality disorder may also manifest in some men’s inability “in regulating anger and other strong emotions” (Goldsmith 2016). Hence, “men who justify wife beating to control and discipline their wife” may be influenced by some personality disorders (Antai 2011). Such women abusers may “have antisocial personality disorders [which have impaired their] ability to feel guilt, remorse, or anxiety” (Gelles 2009). Some rapists are said to have psychological motivations which “include the desire to punish, to gain revenge, to cause pain, to prove sexual prowess, and to control through fear” (Rape 2011). As indicated above, personality disorder is closely linked to alcohol and drugs in that drug addiction and alcoholism may be traits of antisocial disorder, apart from the fact that alcohol and drug in themselves often increase the rate of IPV. According to Living Without Abuse,

“domestic abuse is far more prevalent ... in households where alcohol or drugs are being misused.” Also, “alcohol and drugs may contribute to violent behavior [because] a drunk or high person will be less likely to control his or her violent impulses toward their partner” (Goldsmith 2016).

Thus, investigating Amnon further might reveal that he had certain situational and individual factors which would indicate that some form of therapeutic treatment would need to be sought. Such therapeutic programmes for offenders such as rapists obtain in the Western world. For example, in America “courts often require offenders who are found guilty of physically or sexually assaulting their partners to attend these programs as a condition of their sentences” (Gelles 2009). Many such programmes are said to be educational, seeking to counsel men in anger management and encourage them to reappraise their attitudes towards women. In Nigeria, if Amnon was a juvenile the report of the police on him could be referred to the borstal institutions under the administration of Nigerian Prisons Service. These institutions receive “offenders from age 16–19 who must be discharged out of the place on or before the attainment of 21 years of age” (Ogundipe in Ademiluka 2014, 23). The policy thrust and measures of the programme involve provision of educational and vocational opportunities to meet the diverse needs of young persons. The borstal institutions recognise that young persons “are less likely to continue to offend if their physical, emotional, educational and social needs are met throughout, with protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, exploitation or poverty and opportunity for development of full potentials and achievement” (Ogundipe 2011). However, the current state of these institutions will have to be improved, as a recent study found that due to inadequacy of facilities in the borstal centres many juvenile delinquents are sent to adult prisons where they become more hardened criminals (Zarki et al. 2018, 17). Moreover, there is need in Nigeria to make provision for therapeutic treatment for adult sexual offenders, as the menace of old men raping teenagers keeps increasing.

## **Conclusion**

The Tamar rape narrative would be a viable tool in finding a solution to the problem of IPV in contemporary Nigeria. Tamar’s action of crying out represents the first step in finding this solution as it indicates the need for victims of sexual abuse to voice their ordeal in spite of all odds. Telling their stories as Tamar did would not only expose their assailants but would serve as a deterrent to intending abusers. The narrative also shows that the dysfunction of David’s family contributed to Amnon’s crime. In contemporary Nigeria, this points to the need for cultural renaissance so as to re-awaken those virtues of old which restricted sex to marriage. The information that the relevant laws were not applied to Amnon is also relevant in the scheme of finding a solution to IPV today. In the Nigerian context, apart from applying the relevant IPV laws, these laws have to be updated to take care of modern trends in sexual violence. A proper investigation of Amnon would yield some fruitful results useful for a solution of women abuse today.

Apart from his family background, Amnon might have been under the influence of certain situational and individual factors such as alcohol or drug abuse or have suffered from a personality disorder. Today, sexual offenders who are found to be influenced by such factors are put through therapeutic treatments. In Nigeria the borstal institutions can be used for this purpose, but there is a need for therapeutic facilities for the increasing number of old men who sexually violate under-age girls on a regular basis, given the fact that such men are most likely to suffer some personality disorder.

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