A sharp voice full of agony and resistance was heard screaming from the next room at the girl's hostel. Her utterances could not be heard as they were engulfed in her weeping. The poor helpless girl's scream faded out with time and a hoarse voice was heard saying 'After all you are my girlfriend', that was the end of the long argument.

Date rape is a situation where one is forced into having sexual intercourse with a partner he or she is dating. It is important to note that when a partner forces his or her counterpart into having sexual intercourse against their will, it is rape and it should be reported to the police. Sexual advances like kissing, touching, hugging among other things should be mutual. The moment one is coerced to engage in any sexual activity it becomes rape regardless of the relationship that they have with the perpetrator.

In Zimbabwe's patriarchal societies men think they have control over women they date or are married to. This is a serious societal challenge with repercussions on women's sexual and reproductive health. Zimbabwe universities are some of the places where the most adolescents are found and they stay there with little or no control from parents and guardians. They feel that they are old enough to make decisions independently. Many want to experiment sexually and a lot of sexual myths circulate.

Hostels and houses around university campuses usually hub different types of sexual abuse and manipulation. These are places where students cohabit, enjoy their sexual rights and exercise their sexual freedom, but sadly, at times there are undesirable consequences and girls are the most affected.

Girls are usually forced to divert from their values in order to protect their relationships. College girls also get involved in unprotected sexual acts to protect their relationships especially where there are financial benefits. This exposes them to sexually transmitted infections like HIV. Young girls sometimes get into sexual encounters when they are afraid to lose their relationships. The because they are afraid of losing a man. At times their boyfriends force them on themselves, this is also referred to as date rape. There are also cases of young women who are drugged by their partners at parties so that they can easily have sexual intercourse. Sexual abuse is also common when students are on work-related attachment.

However, young women rarely report such issues to the police or college authorities. Most of young women think they need to be careful with relationships which may expose them to abuse. They fear being labelled as backwards by their counterparts. At times they are scared to be exposed as victims.

Students and Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) calls upon the government to ratify student funding challenges that have affected students for years. Absence of funding through student grants and loans is a major factor exposing the young women in colleges to date rape. Young women are forced by circumstances not to report such sexual abuse. Besides the student funding, there is need to also strengthen the justice system so that reported cases are decisively dealt with without embarrassing or judging the victim.

The views expressed in this article are those of SAYWHAT and not necessarily those of National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO). SAYWHAT is a member of NANGO.