journals.unizik.edu.ng/index-php/jcpl
ISSN: 2736-0342
NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA
JOURNAL OF COMMERCIAL AND PROPERTY LAW

A Legal Insight into the Concepts of Suicide and Euthanasia within the Context of Individuality of Life

Emmanuel K. Adetifa*

Oluwayemi. O. Ogunkorode**

Abstract

Death is an inevitable occurrence in human existence. It is an event that puts an end to human life and activities. This occurrence may be natural or unnatural. It is natural when it is an act of God and it is unnatural when it is orchestrated by the victim himself or a third party. However, suicide and euthanasia are concepts that deal with unnatural termination of human life through human activities. In the case of suicide, the victim terminates his own life while in the case of euthanasia; the victim's life is terminated on his behalf by another. It is crystal clear that there are certain factors responsible for the deliberate and assisted termination of one's life. These are sensitive issues that attract a lot of sympathy and they are under reported by the media. This study gave an insight into the concepts of suicide and euthanasia, their causes and effects. This study adopted doctrinal research method, and it is descriptive in nature. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. These sources are case law, journal article, textbooks, periodicals, online materials etc. This study found out that suicide and euthanasia are distinct concepts that deal with human life while euthanasia otherwise known as assisted murder is legal in some countries and performed on health ground with or without the consent of the victim, suicide is an act that is never justified but rather condemnable. The study however concluded that both suicide and euthanasia are caused by negative factors.

Keywords: Death, Euthanasia, Human life, Suicide, Unnatural

1. Introduction

It amounts to an idle thinking to contemplate a life without existential challenges. Usually, solutions that are often conceived to address such challenges are commonly dependent on the nature and complexities of the besetting problems. While some people may become emotional and aggressively launch out to tackle any problem being faced by them, others may address same with philosophical calmness and with calculated or measured efforts. Some people may call in aid their religious belief and faith rather than the orthodox methods of solving such challenges. Often times, human beings embark on erratic or irrational methods to solve their arising challenges. An unemployed person who engages in drug trafficking or kidnapping or some other forms of criminality to make ends meet has willfully elected the option of crime as he can as well engage in any legitimate vocation to earn a living to keep the body and soul together. Some people may consider the option of suicide or euthanasia as suitable panacea to their prevalent situation while others in a similar situation may think otherwise and rather elect a different approach to solving same problem. It is truism that both the concept of suicide and euthanasia are solutions focused or inclined towards addressing challenges of life. While euthanasia has some semblance of legal backing in appropriate circumstances, suicide is entirely devoid of any statutory support or cognizance.

*__Emmanuel K. Adetifa,__ PhD, LL. B, LL.M, BL, PhD, Department of Public Law, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. Email Address: Emmanuel.adetifa@eksu.edu.ng.

**__Oluwayemi. O. Ogunkorode,__ LL.B, LL.M, BL, Department of Public Law, Faculty of Law, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. Email Address: yemiogunkorode@gmail.com.

Suicide is an act that is condemned and denounced by most religions such as Christianity, Islam, traditional practices among others. Though preventable, suicide has been reported by the World Health Organization as one of the leading causes of death in the World. It is a grave public health issue that accounts for 703,000 deaths yearly and globally. More people die as a result of suicide than HIV/AIDS, malaria, cancer, war or homicide.[1] It is notably on the rise in Nigeria and it cuts across all ages. People now commit suicide for diverse reasons such as huge indebtedness, inability to make ends meet, exam failure, terminal health challenge and broken relationships. Victims have over the years found it easy to take their own lives with the hope that it is the only solution to their disturbing challenges. Suicide is often a major concern than euthanasia because it is self-inflicted and often regarded as a wrongful act. There are arguments on the legality or otherwise of euthanasia, because the Nigerian Constitution only makes provision for right to life and not right to die. In order words, when a victim is in a state of helplessness due to severe medical condition that puts the victim in so much pain that the only option available to put an end to the pain is to end the person's life, can it be justified under the law? In this situation, some people do not see the need to live any longer and may be constrained to elect the option of euthanasia. However, notwithstanding the raging debate as to the constitutionality or otherwise of euthanasia, it should be borne in mind that life itself is rooted in individuality which connotes unfettered freedom and rights of individual to do whatever he likes with it.

2. Concept of Suicide

Suicide is the willful termination of one's life that may result from depression, mental disorder, displeasure or some associated suicidal behaviour among others.[2] It is one of the leading causes of death in the society. This concept is derived from a *latin* word called *sui ceadere* meaning to kill oneself deliberately or intentionally.[3] It is an occurrence that is preventable but very difficult to eradicate because its causes vary from one individual to another coupled with the discreet execution method. It is a major cause of premature death across the globe because the victim terminates his life untimely.[4] Suicide is a self-inflicted death that is prevalent in Nigeria across various ages and ethnic groups. It can be committed through self-poisoning (i.e. intake of pesticide (sniper), insecticide or any[5] poisonous substance, deliberately harming or stabbing oneself, drowning and hanging. Studies have shown that the method adopted by victim in taking his life is often based on convenience and the most available means. Suicide is rising daily in Nigeria but it is often not reported due to the fact that it is a sensitive issue and the fact that family members of victims who commit suicide see it as a shameful act that they do not want to be associated with. It

[1] World Health Organization, Suicide Worldwide in 2019. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240026643> accessed 16 February 2024.

[2] EM Akpambang and OA Oniyinde, 'Rethinking the Laws on Death Penalty, Suicide and Attempted Suicide in Nigeria',<http://oer.biu.edu.ng/wcontent/uploads/2020/02/RETHINKING_THE_LAWS_ON_DEATH_PENALTY__SUICIDE_AND_-1.pdf>accessed 06 April 2024

[3] DT Anyam, *Issues in Moral Philosophy* (Makurdi: Obeta, 2016).

[4] M Becky, S Burroe, H Hjelmeland and D Gunnell,'Suicide Behaviour Across the African Continent: A Review of the Literature', (2014) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24927746/> accessed 06 April 2024.

[5] SA U Offiah and C CObiorah., 'Pattern of Suicide in Nigeria: The Niger Delta Experience' (2014)9(1) *Journal of Medical Investigations and Practice,* 8.

is often not made public due to stigmatization, religious sentiment and cultural sentiment.[6] There are countries in Asia that do not report cases of suicide statistics in their country.[7]

According to Shneidman, suicide can be classified into psychotic, surcease, referred and cultural suicide.[8] It is psychotic suicide when a person commits suicide as a result of impaired logic of illusion or hallucination connected to clinically diagnosed schizophrenia or manic- depression psychosis(i.e., people with mental disease are capable of committing suicide or ending their own lives due to their unstable state of mind).[9] It is surcease suicide when a person takes his own life in an attempt and with the desire to be relieved from pains which may be emotional or physical. It is referred suicide when the victim compares his life and experience with that of others (i.e. when they have undesirable image about themselves or when they are confused as to what others think about them).[10] It is cultural when a person takes his own life as a result of interaction between self-concept and cultural belief about death.[11] In the same light, suicide can also be classified into complete suicide, suicidal ideation, self-destructive acts.[12] Suicide is complete when the person who terminates his own life losses his life in the process; it is suicidal ideation when it involves expression of wish to die, suicidal threats or communication or behaviour.[13]

According to Anyam, suicide is an act that raises questions that are conceptual, psychological, sociological, theological and moral in nature and which has attracted the attention of many scholars across the global.[14] In the Plato's era, it was believed that the soul trapped in the body and can only be released from the body through sessions of incarnations.[15] As a result of this, suicide was regarded as a capital offence and complete cowardice. Plato believed that the body of the person who has committed suicide should be treated with disdain to deter others who might be contemplating suicide.[16]

Suicide is not a crime that attracts punishment in Nigeria because once a life is terminated, such life is brought to an end and it is unthinkable to seek to punish a dead person. However, an attempt to commit suicide attracts one year imprisonment under the criminal code.[17] The Penal Code[18] provides that:

> *Whoever attempts to commit an offence punishable with imprisonment or to cause such an offence to be committed and in such an attempt does any act towards the commission of the offence shall, where no express provision is made by the penal code or any Act or Law for the time being in force for the punishment of such*

[6] TP Oyetunji, *et al*, 'Suicide in Nigeria: Observation from the Content analysis of Newspapers (2020) *General Psychiatry* 1-7, 7.
[7] K Chien-Chang, Y Chen and P S FYip., 'Suicide Methods in Asia: Implications in Suicide Prevention' (2012)9 *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 1135-1158, 1136.
[8] E S Shneidman., *The Suicide Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 99.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Ibid.
[11]Ibid.
[12]T Alhaji, 'Suicide among Youths in Nigeria: A Counselling Response' (2020)8(1) *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 240.
[13]Ibid.
[14] D T Anyam, *Issues in Moral Philosophy* (Makurdi:Obeta, 2016).
[15]Alhaji, (n 12) 239.
[16]Ibid.
[17] Criminal Code, s327
[18] Penal Code, s95

> *attempt, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one half of the longest term provided for that offence or with such fine as it provided for the offence or with both.*[19]

The fact that attempted suicide is a crime often prevents people from sharing their suicidal thoughts and actions for them to avoid being stigmatized. In this process, they hide their concern, pain, sorrow and depression which may eventually lead to loss of life.[20] Attempted suicide also makes it difficult to collect reliable data because attempts at committing suicide is often not reported due to the fear of being stigmatized, monitored and reluctance to ask for help. When it eventually leads to suicide, the victim's funeral rite is not performed, as he/she may be seen as cursed and the body neglected by the community.[21]

Under the Penal Code also, anyone who abets the commission of suicide by a child, insane person, an idiot or a person who is intoxicated will be sentenced to death.[22] However, where a person who is assisted to commit suicide does not fall in any of the categories of persons stated above, the person who assists such person will be sentenced to ten or more years imprisonment and also liable to payment of fine. Efforts are ongoing at reducing suicide globally through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved in the year 2030.[23]

3. Concept of Euthanasia

Euthanasia which is otherwise known as mercy killing or assisted murder, is derived from a Greek word '*eu'* and '*thanatos'* which means 'good death' or 'easy death'.[24] It is an act of providing a medical means to end the life of a person. This act is often committed by the physician and not the victim. Euthanasia can either be active or passive. It is active where a person takes specific steps to cause the death of another through various means such as injection, medication, overdose among others It is passive where a person is allowed to die by withdrawing the life support such as respirator or feeding tube.[25] It is an act of compassion and it provides relief to someone in pain or someone who has lost hope of survival and it makes scarce resources readily available to those who are ill and have a chance of survival.[26]

Euthanasia can be classified into two categories such as Voluntary and Involuntary Euthanasia. It is voluntary when the patient or victim consents to the termination of his life by a will or directive when he was physically active that his treatment be stopped. Involuntary euthanasia dispenses with the consent of the patient due to the incapacitation of the patient at the time consent is needed. A patient may be unable to consent to euthanasia when he is in a state of unconsciousness. In *Airedale N.H.S v Bland*[27] Anthony Bland, one of Liverpool football club supporters had a crushed and

[19]Ibid.
[20] WHO, WHO, Policy Brief on the Health Aspects of Decriminalization of suicide and Suicide Attempts (2023) <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/9789240078796> accessed 06 April 2024.
[21]Ibid.
[22] Penal Code, s227
[23] WHO, (n20)
[24] B E Oniha and M O Oniha., Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide as Basic Constitutional Rights Under the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria', <https://www.nigerialawguru.com> accessed 15 March 2023.
[25]B E Oniha, 'Legality of Euthanasia and the Right to Die in Nigeria', (2017) <https://edojudiciary.gov.ng> accessed 06 April 2024; Center for Health Ethics, What is Euthanasia? <https://medicine.missouri.edu>assessed 06 April 2024
[26]Oniha, (n 25).
[27] (1993) ALL ER 82 (HL)

punctured lung. He suffered catastrophic and irreversible brain damage. This led to his persistent vegetative state for three years. There was no guarantee whatsoever that he would ever recover from his condition; his parents and the Doctor were also of the view that the continued medication prolonging his existence should be stopped. As a result of this, the hospital sought a declaration from the English High Court and subsequently from the House of Lords on the pronouncement that Bland should be allowed to die. The lords reached their unanimous decision that Bland be allowed to die.[28] In the case of involuntary euthanasia, the patient is able to give an informed consent but his consent is not sought. This form of euthanasia is often regarded as unlawful and a crime due to lack of consent.[29]

4. Causes of Suicide and Euthanasia

Suicide is a public health concern and a phenomenon that is caused by numerous factors. It is a concept that may occur as a result of family history of suicide or suicidal attempt, traumatic events, psychosocial stressors, cognitive distortion among others.[30] The social media outlets also create means and avenue for people to commit suicide. This may be achieved by showing a live video of someone committing suicide or viewing contents/searches on how to commit suicide or end one's life. Suicide is linked to multiple, complex and intersecting, economic, cultural and psychological challenges such as denial of access to resources, loss of means of livelihood, pressure, discrimination and other crisis which may be general or specific. The nature of the act that may lead to suicide is peculiar to the victim because what may lead to suicide by Mr. A may not move or have any effect on Mr. B.

Another major cause of suicide is depression. According to the World Health Organization, depression is a mental disorder that is accompanied with constant sadness and complete loss of interest in activities that the victim enjoys doing. It may lead to loss of appetite, anxiety, guilt, lack of concentration, restlessness, hopelessness with the thought of harm or killing oneself.[31] Partum and Post partum depression which exist during pregnancy and after child birth may lead to suicidal conditions if not well managed. Increase in depression may be associated with the use of social media platforms and its content; especially where the contents portray envy, hostility, cyber-bullying, and hopelessness this may lead to suicide.[32]

Sickness or terminal disease or mental disorder may lead to suicide. This occurs in situations where there is no chance of survival and absence of moral support from friends and family. Disappointment from partners or broken relationship or failed love affair is worrisome causes of suicide and suicidal attempt. For instance, in 2019, a 300level student of University of Benin committed suicide over failed love affairs by mixing insecticide (i.e. sniper) with soft drink, her lifeless body was eventually discovered in her room.[33] The deceased student in the suicide note she left behind stressed that she took her life because the person she was dating broke up with her.

---

[28]Ibid; *Aruna Shanbaug v Union of India* (2011) 4 SCC 454.
[29]Oniha, (n 25).
[30] SNaveed, T Qadir, TAfzaal and A Waqas., 'Suicide and its Legal implications in Pakistan: A Literature Review' (2017)9(9) *Cureus*
[31] R Ogbolu, *etal,*'Situation Report on Suicide in Nigeria', (2020)23(1) *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues* 97-107, 99.
[32]Ibid.
[33] P Adekunle., '300level Uniben Student Committed Suicide over Failed Love Affair' (2019)<https://punchng.com/how-300-level-uniben-student-committed-suicide-over-failed-love-affair/?amp> accessed 03 April 2024

In recent times, economic hardship following the removal of fuel subsidy has increased the rate of suicides in Nigeria. Currently, the economic situation of the country is not favourable to most of its citizens due to high inflation. For instance, in 2023, an unidentified man jumped into the Lagos Lagoon from the Lekki-Ikoyi Bridge,[34]Safullahi from Niger State committed suicide due to his indebtedness,[35] Adegoke, a 200 level student at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State killed himself after losing his school fees to sport betting.[36]Orfega, an Abuja based man took lethal chemical following business failure and inability to repay his loan, a young pastor jumped from a multi-storey building after a failed relationship,[37] a 20 year old University of Ilorin student took her own life over an unpaid loan.[38] According to the Lagos State Management Agency (LASEMA) a total number of 82 suicides were recorded in Lagos between January and July alone.[39] Also, in April this year (2024), a Deputy Commissioner of Police also took his own life,[40] Lateef consumed sniper and Bello jumped into a well for unknown reasons.[41]

Euthanasia on the other hand is usually based on health ground. Many factors are considered before the act is committed. Factors such as the local laws and personal belief are often put into consideration.[42] Certain causes tied to this health ground are fear of suffering, illness causing pains and suffering, inability to participate and enjoy physical activities among others.[43]

5. Religious Perception of Suicide and Euthanasia in Nigeria

Religion plays a vital role in human life and existence. Therefore, its role and perception cannot be overemphasized. The Nigeria traditional and Christian religions see suicide as a taboo that should not be perpetrated by its followers. Suicide is one of the Biblical injunctions of the Holy Bible which says thou shall not kill.[44] This scripture forbids all forms of murder including suicide and euthanasia. Examples of people who committed suicide in the Bible are Saul, Ahitophel, Samson, Zimri, Abimelech Judas Iscariot among others.[45]

The Islamic religion sees suicide as a criminal act that serves as an hinderance to the victim's spiritual journey. This was emphasized in the Quranic Hadith which states that:

> *He who commits suicide by throttling shall keep on throttling himself in hell fire (forever) and he who commits suicide by stabling himself shall keep on stabling*

[34] E Onyegbula., 'Hardship in the Land: Suicide Spike',<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/08/hardship-in-the-land-suicides-spike/> accessed 01 March 2024; Punch Editorial Board, 'Too Many Nigerians are opting for Suicide' <https://www. punchng.com/too-many-nigerians-are-opting-for-suicide/ > accessed 01 March 2024

[35]Onyegbula, (n 34).

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40] H Ale., 'Deputy Commissioner of Police Takes his Own Life (2024) <https://neptuneprime.com.ng/2024/04/deputy-commissioner-of-police-takes-own-life/> accessed 03 April 2024.

[41] U Salami and S Omotere., 'Lady Jumps into Well and Man Consumes Insecticide', (2024) <https://punchng.com/lady-jumps-into-well-man-consumes-insecticide/> accessed 30 April 2024.

[42] T J Legg and K Holland., 'Euthanasia: Understanding the Facts', (2019) <https://www.healthlinecom> accessed 06 April 2024.

[43] A Morrow., Reasons for Requesting Physician-Assisted Suicide (2020)<https://www.verywellhealth.com> accessed 06 April 2024. The type of euthanasia that is administered in this situation is the physician assisted suicide

[44] Exodus 20:13

[45] A O Omomia., 'Religious Perceptions of Suicide and Implication for Suicidology Advocacy in Nigeria' (2017)5(2) *International Journal of History and Philosophical Research* 34-56, 37.

> *himself in the hell-fire[46] whosoever purposely throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, will be in the (hell) fire falling down into it and abiding therein perpetually forever, whoever drink poison and kills himself with it, he will be carrying his poison in his hand and drinking it in the (hell) fire wherein he will abide eternally forever and whoever kills himself with iron weapon will be carrying that weapon in his hand and stabbing his abdomen with it in the (hell) fire wherein he will abide eternally forever.[47]*

Unlike the Christian religion where suicide is not specifically named as a wrong doing or against the religion, Islamic religion makes specific provisions for suicide, clearly forbids it and states the consequences of the suicidal act. It further states that the mode explored by a person to terminate his life will be repeated in hell fire when the person dies.

To the traditionalist, suicide is a condemned act and anyone who commits it is treated with disdain and such person is often not given a befitting burial. Sometimes, some mandatory sacrifices are performed to avert the wrath of the gods and to avert future reoccurrence of such suicidal act. For instance, under the Yoruba traditional belief, suicide is known as bad death and a taboo. This is also frowned at among the Ibos, as suicide is seen as an offence against the goddess.[48] The traditionalist believes that life is sacred, and no one should be deprived of his or her life.

Euthanasia on the other hand, is not an acceptable practice under the Christian religion because life can only be given by God and no one has the right to terminate the life of another person for any reason. It is regarded as an act that is not compatible with the Christian religion. Christian religion does not support the recognition and enactment of euthanasia into Law.[49] It is regarded as murder simpliciter and an offence against the dignity of the human life. Islam also forbids euthanasia and its legislation or enactment into law. However, both religions support the withdrawal of medications where the patient's condition is critical. These religions also do not support the most common form of euthanasia which is the physician assisted suicide despite being legalised in some jurisdictions.

6. Legal Framework on Suicide and Euthanasia in Nigeria

Suicide and Euthanasia are legal terminologies that deal with the termination of human life. There is no specific legislation that criminalises suicide and euthanasia in Nigeria. However, the Penal and Criminal Codes make provision for unlawful termination of human life and attempted suicide. In the case of suicide, it is impossible to punish a man who dies by suicide because a dead man is lifeless and cannot feel any pain or be subjected to punishment after he is gone. The main criminal law statutes, which are the Criminal and Penal Code have provisions that can be directly or indirectly associated with suicide and euthanasia.

Section 306 Criminal Code[50] provides that any form of killing of any person is unlawful unless such killing is authorized, justified or excused by law, any person who causes the death of another

[46] Sahih al-Bukhari, 2:23-44.
[47] Sahih al-Bukhari, 7:71:670.
[48] K E Obasola and O A Omomia., 'Religious Perceptions of Suicide and Implications for Reduction of Suicides Advocacy in South West, Nigeria', (2016)14 *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry* 37-54, 47.
[49] K Pettus., 'Perspectives of Major World Religions on Euthanasia and Assisted Dying', (2023)24(4) *International Association Hospice & Palliative Care* ,3.
[50] Criminal Code Act.

person directly or indirectly by any means whatsoever is deemed to have killed the person.[51] The provisions of section 306 and 308 Criminal Code are clear examples of unlawful termination of life that may lead to murder and manslaughter. By virtue of section 315, murder can be committed under the following instances:

> *Where the offender intends to cause the death of the person killed or that of some other persons:*
>
> *if the offender intends to do to the person killed or to some other person some grievous harm:*
>
> *if death is caused by means of an act done in the prosecution of an unlawful purpose which act is of such a nature as to be likely to endanger human life;*
>
> *if the offender intends to do grievous harm to some person for the purpose of facilitating the commission of an offence which is such that the offender may be arrested without warrant or for the purpose of facilitating the flight of an offender who has committed or attempted to commit any such offence;*
>
> *If death is caused by administering stupefying or over powering things for either of the purpose aforesaid;*
>
> *If death is caused by willfully stopping the breath of any person for either of such purpose.*

Section 220 of the Penal Code also provides death may be caused by doing an act with the intention of causing death or such bodily injury or doing an act with the knowledge that he is likely to cause death or by doing rash or negligent act. Conversely, killing of oneself is not a crime and it is not provided for under the criminal Code except where it fails. Where a person attempts to kill himself and he fails, the person will be liable to imprisonment for one year.[52]

However, Section 311 has a provision that is connected to euthanasia.[53] Section 311 Criminal Code provides that a person who does any act or make any omission which hastens the death of another person who, when the act is done or the omission is made, is labouring under some disorder or disease arising from another cause is deemed to have killed the other person. This provision is an instance where death of a patient is accelerated or mercy killing. This is a form of killing when read in conjunction with Section 306 raises the question whether mercy killing is excused, authorized or justified? However, since the law recognizes the fact that some killings are excused or justified, then mercy killing may be justified on health ground most especially where the patient has no chance of survival.

A contrary provision is also in Section 326 of the Criminal Code which provides that:

> *Any person who-*
>
> *(1) Procures another to kill himself, or*
> *(2) Counsel another to kill himself and thereby induces him to do so; or*
> *(3) Aid another in killing himself;*

[51]Criminal Code Act, s308.
[52] Ibid, s327.
[53] Ibid.

Is guilty of felony and is liable to imprisonment for life.

The Penal Code also does not criminalize suicide but makes specific provision for abatement of suicide in section 228 which states that if a person commits suicide, anyone who abets the commission of that suicide shall be punished with imprisonment for a term that may be extended to ten years and payment of fine.[54]

This provision is silent on consent in euthanasia. It expressly punishes anyone who kills or counsels or aids in killing another person. Any physician who kills a patient is liable under this section. When read alongside Section 299 Criminal Code that provides that consent by a person to cause his own death does not affect the criminal responsibility of any person who caused the death. In other words, consent is immaterial in murder and in certain situation in Nigeria, euthanasia may not be legally defensible.[55] This will also be based on the facts and circumstances of each case.

7. Relationship Between Suicide and Euthanasia

While suicide is committed by the victim, euthanasia is committed by a third party and often on medical ground. However, there are situations where euthanasia may be classified as suicide, that is where the doctor or physician helps a patient suffering endlessly to end his life, this method is often with the consent of the patient and it is known as assisted suicide or patient assisted suicide (PAS).[56] The major difference in this case is that in suicide, the victim kills himself while in assisted suicide or physician assisted suicide (a type of euthanasia), the physician assists the patient to terminate his life through some medical means. While victims of suicide often look for the most painless means of ending their lives, physicians in assisted murder also administer painless method to their patients.

While suicide remains an unlawful act, there are several debates as to the legality and ethical value of euthanasia. Some countries have legalized assisted suicide in their countries with varying legal requirements. For instance, in the United States, (States such as Washington, California, Vermont, Montana, Colorado and Hawaii), Japan, Germany have legalized assisted suicide based on different conditions.[57] Countries that have legalized euthanasia and assisted suicide are Canada, Belgium, Netherlands etc.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Suicide is regarded as an evil that is legally, morally and culturally wrong. Depression, failed promises, poverty, illness may lead to suicide while euthanasia often arises on medical ground. Apart from termination of life, which is common to both suicide and euthanasia, patient assisted suicide is a phenomenon that connects them together. In other words, it is applicable to both euthanasia and suicide. Suicide and Euthanasia are different ways lives can be terminated. Society and extant national and international laws do not accept suicide because no one has the right to take his or her own life for any reason whatsoever while euthanasia on the other hand has been accepted in some States across the globe. Suicide is on the rise in the society because the instrument used by victims to terminate their lives are easily accessible and has led to numerous untimely deaths. This study however recommends that methods and materials being used for suicide should be controlled, regulated and possibly banned. In other words, substances or materials that can aid

[54] Penal Code Act, s228.
[55] Oniha(n25) 12.
[56] Legg and Holland op.cit
[57] Ibid.

suicide should be made scarce commodities in the society. Law should back regulations on the use or sales of these materials so that anyone found in the possession of such materials should be prosecuted to serve as deterrent to others. Various social media platforms should be regulated so that methods, means and objects that may aid suicide are not made available to users. To reduce the incessant rate of suicide, there should be constant suicide awareness and sensitization programme both in the media and the various social media outlet. This can be organised by NGOs and relevant government institutions alike to provide free counseling and guidance to those facing one depression or the other. With respect to euthanasia, countries that have legalized euthanasia and physician assisted suicide should ensure that there are stringent conditions attached before they are administered so as to avoid situations where murders are committed under the guise of euthanasia or physician assisted suicide.