

Prostitution of children and child prostitutes

[Family](#), [Children](#)



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PROSTITUTION Prostitution is defined as the act, practice or profession of offering the body for sexual relations formoney. (New Webster’s Dictionary 1995: 802). The Encyclopedia Americana (1997) defined prostitution as “ the performance of sexual acts with another person in return for the payment of a fee. ” Child prostitution is therefore, prostitution embarked upon by children who are below the age of 18 and are supposed to be catered for by their parents.

It is commonly acknowledged that acts of prostitution are performed by women for men nevertheless occasions arise when the acts are done by men for men. The context of this work deals particularly with female child prostitution. UNICEF considers child prostitutes as young girls in sex trade, who are between the age bracket of 8 and 16. (Jubilee Action Report 1995). In the Nigerian milieu, prostitutes below the age of 18 are regarded as child prostitutes, since only persons above 18 years of age are statutorily regarded as adults.

Child prostitution is the “ sexual exploitation of girls and teenagers” (Awake February 8, 2003: 6). Available data show that approximately 1. 5million children in India, 1 million in Asia, 100, 00 children in United States and 500 children in Latin America are engaged in prostitution (Healy, 1995: 35). Awake (February 8, 2003: 2) reported,“ there were about 300, 000 child prostitutes on the streets, in another land where drug trafficking flourishes”. According to Jubilee Action report (1995: 10), up to 1 million female children join prostitution each year around the globe.

However, the clandestine nature of child prostitution makes it impossible to calculate the exact number of working prostitutes, nonetheless the <https://assignbuster.com/prostitution-of-children-and-child-prostitutes/>

International Labour Organization (ILO) analysis (1993-1994), estimates that between 0.25% and 1.5% of the total female population are engaged in this trade. Globally, child prostitution is illegal and it is also regarded as a barbarous crime, yet it persists. Why? Child prostitution does not just happen. It is caused by a variety of factors some are perpetrated by the prostitutes themselves, while other factors are external to the prostitutes themselves.

This is really a growing problem in developed world and developing world like Nigeria (Quintanilla, 1997: 20). CAUSES OF CHILD PROSTITUTION IN Owerri Municipal Council

1. Misery and POVERTY: Poverty is the most common reason why most families sell the services of their female children to augment their income in order to buy food or clothes and other necessities of life. (Janssen, 2001: 10). The case of child labour is a typical factor that exposes children to prostitution. The hired female children are sent out to hawk food items on the streets, motor parks, and mechanic garages thereby exposing them to rapes as well as sexual harassment s.

Barnes H. C. (1959: 95) observed that some females take to prostitution due to sheer destitution. Awake (February 8, 2003: 5) reported that some street children resort to prostitution because they see it as their only means of survival. The Awake further related an experience of a mother of 14-year-old girl who lured her daughter into this ignominious trade. The woman said about her daughter, “ she was beautiful and that men would like her very much. Besides, she would earn a lot of money. ” In the evenings, the woman takes her daughter to a motel where they make contacts.

The mother stays nearby to receive the payments. Each night, this girl has sex with three or four men. 2. UNEMPLOYMENT: Unemployment of either the parents or the child results in unreliable source of income thereby forcing children into prostitution as an alternative means of income to support the family. Ironically, the International Labour Organization observes that a child's ability to earn money is limited. It is estimated that the money earned by the child only contributes to approximately 10% of the family's overall income and therefore has minimal effect on the family's monetary gain (Dimenstein, 1994: 12).

Due to high degree of unemployment, the brothels employ some female children who serve in their drinking spots to promote their business. 3. HUMANS TRAFFICKING: Human trafficking is another evil leading to child prostitution. Human trafficking which represent the world's third largest criminal activity following only after drug and weapons trafficking is sometimes purported to send teenagers to other countries to work. These would-be workers who sometimes end up prostitutes actually "work" and repatriate money to their respective home countries (Awake, February 8, 2003: 5).

Many times, hard times hit these fellows as they are deported to come and continue this profession at home. Some of the female prostitutes come home to take some younger females to their places either to help them or to make them their servants and at the long run they get converted to prostitution, which is their boss' profession. 4. DECEPTION ENCOURAGES PROSTITUTION: Pimps or brothel owners deceive some parents by paying them money and

assuring to enlist their children in their “ domestic services”, which later turns to be prostitution.

These brothel owners who are termed the girl’s “ owners” take control of the child’s’ activities. Moreover, these owners do everything possible to retain these girls who earn money for them to maintain their lavish lifestyle (Robinson, 2001: 50) and (Dimenstein 1994: 10). Apart from the pimps, other intermediaries who benefit from child prostitution do anything possible to see the act continued. Most females are led into this act of prostitution by their masters.

Some of them could be anaesthetized by their masters in order to have fun with them and when eventually the woman of the house gets to know about the act she will be thrown out side to continue the act with other men including the master. 5. DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILYENVIRONMENTPROMOTES PROSTITUTION: Children of broken homes sleep wherever they see space to do so in the day, and go to the disco and nightclubs in the night. Ekejiuba I. K. (1996: 13) discovered that ill treatment of children at home might make them to take to the street in order to find solace.

Then the end result may be the hawking of their body to support themselves. 6 POOREducation: Some children cannot support themselves materially in view of low educational training they received, so they resort to prostitution as their only profession (Rodriguez- Garcia, 1999: 55). Girl-child Education Initiative In Africa (January 2003: 20) highlights the effect of poor education in the whole of Africa. In connection with poor education, peer pressure, bad association The causes and effects of child prostitution in Owerri Municipal Council and street ganging contribute to child prostitution.

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Identifiably, a girl may end up as a prostitute by her association, peer pressure and by running with a street gang (Okebugwu, 1989: 25); Adetore, (1974: 60); Oti (1984: 15); and Daily Times (May 15, 1999: 12). 7. AIDS SCARE PROMOTES CHILD PROSTITUTION: The high incidence of sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS make customers of prostitutes to look for children who are considered to be of low risk, and most probably virgins (Robinson, 2001: 13). Patrons of child prostitutes are willing to pay a great deal of money to be a girl's first client.

In the streets, brothels and drinking spots these days a lot of female children are being employed to help lure more male customers to their spots. Places like Amaram by Tetlow Road and some places in Onyeche Street in Owerri have a high number of female child prostitutes who are employed only to facilitate their business. This is because there is the fear that other older female prostitutes in the same profession could have various STDs. 8. DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION ARE PRO-CHILD PROSTITUTION

The influence of drugs can subject a child to prostitution and to certain indignifying acts of prostitution which she may otherwise never agree to given her sound mind (Lewis 1980: 70); and Udechi (1987: 15). 9. REBELLION AND FEELING OF INDEPENDENCE This is another factor promoting child prostitutions. Some girls are shamelessly bold. What is more, they feel that the body is theirs thus they should decide what to do with their body. (Bennet, G and Robert, P. 1985: 207). 10. PORNOGRAPHY AGGRAVATES CHILD PROSTITUTION: Pornography also puts viewers at increased risk for developing sexually deviant tendencies. Awake July 22, 2003: 7). Pornography is identified as promoting “ the rape myth” which is a belief

that women cause and enjoy rape. Additionally, the repeated use of pornography interferes with the ability to enjoy and participate in normal marital intimacy. Dr. Victor Cline, who specializes in treating sex addiction claims that “ deviant sexual acts results” when a viewer tries to act out the pornography-based fantasies. 11. Incestuous violation and rape in homes as a factor: Some youths were raped in their own homes, which act changed their outlook in life.

Some of such ones give vent to prostitution. Two other closely related causes of prostitution are glamor associated with it and insatiable sexual urges in some females. Blag(1976: 68) observed that some prostitutes take to this lifestyle because of their innate desire for glamour or that they want to maintain a standard of life, which is impossible by ordinary means of earning, a life reminiscent of Greek aether. On the other hand, Ekejiuba(1996: 14) identified other females, nymphomaniacs, who engage in prostitution for the sake of “ fun” or pleasure they derive from it. 2 SUDDEN EXPOSURE: Furthermore, illicit love affairs in the presence of children may subject them to early prostitution. Some parents perform extra marital affairs in the presence of their wards. This exposes the children to early sex life. The premature death of one or both of the parents has also been discovered as one of the causes of child prostitution. Because of the chasm created by such loss, a teenage girl may be fraught with the onerous task of catering for herself and other family members. More importantly, no one may exist to give stern guideline on her.

One Owerri girl who returned from Kumasi Ghana claimed that her father died when she was eight years. This demise of his father left her with

theresponsibilityof catering for her younger siblings and her mother who hails from Kumasi, Ghana. These challenges make her to dabble into prostitution. Child prostitution is not without its consequences, some of which are seemingly pardonable, whereas others are taboo at mere mention of them. High patronage of child prostitutes by wealthy men is another factor that has caused and sustained child prostitution (Ekejiuba 1996: 13).

Some teenage girls find it difficult to resist the temptation of prostitution because of huge sum of money they receive there-from. This accounts for why some IMSU, Alvan and FUT0 ladies readily avail themselves for this business. Marxist oriented scholars see prostitution as an outgrowth of capitalism. Many of these see the gradual removal of subsidy from petroleum, which is the main balance of Nigerian economy as exposing many persons to difficulty and leading to sexual promiscuity.