

## **AN APPRAISAL OF STREET HAWKING AND PROSTITUTION IN ONITSHA ANAMBRA STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper is an appraisal of street hawking and prostitution. The problems of street hawking and prostitution, which exposes the individuals to the contraction and encourages the spread of sexual transmitted diseases, the paper is a response to the question to the factors that are responsible for street hawking and prostitution and the problem they face in trying to adjust to the status. Using the questionnaire method of eliciting information from respondents. Findings and recommendations were made.*

**Keywords:** street hawking, prostitution, sexually transmitted diseases and

### **INTRODUCTION**

The past few decades have seen the proliferation of street children in Nigeria, The evident in the number of children seen on the street scavenging, begging, and soliciting for help. Oloko (1999) expressed that the phenomenon of street hawkers on the street has been on the increase in most major urban areas, street hawking is a process of displaying wares for sale moving from one point to another by the traders. These wares could be pushed around in wheelbarrows or carts or carried in flat trays or pans or on their heads by the sellers. The wares on display for sale usually includes fruits and vegetables household items detergents and soaps, clothing-material, food items fresh meat, bread and many other item as deemed marketable.

Ahianté (2004) also expressed that street children are all over the markets, bus stops, car parks, garages, street corners, under the bridge and other public places across Nigeria major cities eg Onitsha, he also defined street trading as a method of sourcing for income and thus financially empowering the sellers or the actual owner of the goods. It is widely believed that these hawkers make profit as they do not spend money on renting shops to display and sell their goods this is a good strategy of selling as people who are unable to go to the market can buy from the hawkers closer to their home. Bourdillon (2001) said, most street hawkers in Nigerian cities e.g. Onitsha are notorious for crime for their survival they are involved in theft, burglary, prostitution and drug pushing. There is rarely any form of crime in which street hawkers are not involved.

Spring (1993) defined prostitution as a particular behaviour of sex trade, a relationship for economic gain. Although usually traded for money, prostitution is also bartered for almost anything that has monetary value. Prostitution is normally seen as the wrong way to earn a living, shameful and demeans a person. In many countries it is illegal. It is among crimes that guys refer to as consensual or a victimless crime due to the fact that no one involved is unwilling, on the other hand research shows that this may not be the case with prostitution. As a multi-million dollar industry prostitution is found in savannas, escort services and massage and beer parlors. Parriot Ruth. says that it may be an illegal or legal profession, all depending on the culture contrary. Where this is legal, there are rules set, by the government to ensure safe sex is being practiced, prostitute business activities to prevent the spread of STD (sexually transmitted diseases) Those who works in this industry are also usually required to have regular medical checks to guarantee that they remain healthy. Jacobson, Jodi L. (1992) says that the term "prostitute" customarily refers to a Female who is participating in prostitution as a way to earning a living, male prostitutes are usually seen less in this Line of work. Male prostitutes referred as 'gigolos' or 'escorts', for female clients and hustle rent boys when with male clients. Young boys are also sometimes seen working as prostitutes. Some estimates today claims these to be at least 300,000 children in the field of prostitutions and others believe these to be between 500,000 and 12 million. Many prostitutes are single women working on the streets in both small and large cities. Over two-third of these prostitutes have at least one child, with some women having more. Janice G. Raymond (1991) said like most occupation, a prostitute may work for an employer or work by contracting their own

jobs. Men who provide and market prostitution are usually called "Pimps". Women with the same job are called Madams. Both "Pimps" and "Madams" normally take a part of a prostitute's income as payment for promotional services. Research shows that 70% (percent) of prostitution is managed by a pimp who withholds most of a prostitute's earnings.

Gigen Back R.(1994) defined prostitution as a social problem that is wide spread all over the world including Nigeria, in most of the state capitals in Nigeria today, prostitutes can be seen parading the major street centers. He went further to say that prostitution is iced more openly today than it was twenty years ago. These prostitutes are in search for men who are interested and not interested in their services and as such they also invade areas they are not welcomed. They often get involved in criminal activities such as Robbery and Narcotic dealings. The problem has therefore become a National problem and is now the concern of all well meaning Nigerians in all spheres of life.

It is an obvious fact that prostitution causes more serious problems for any society and should not be condoned or encouraged. This Scourge has gained momentum and is now ravaging the society disastrously, there fore the need for an appraisal of these scourge.

### **Paper problems.**

However various factors has been established to be responsible for the persistence of adolescents street hawking as a social phenomenon in our society which brief explanations are needed to be given in order to proffer solutions which will facilitate the elimination of the wide spread of adolescents street hawking and prostitution in our various societies today.

In other words, the impacts of hawking and prostitution have been related to various factors such as:

- Lack of parental guardians and care  
Inability to choose from right and wrong acts
- Peer influence on Adolescents street hawking and prostitution
- Illiteracy and lack of sexual education
- Adolescents' personal will
- Adolescents' exposures to societal or public acts
- poverty
- Lack of adequate socialization

The consequences of street hawking and prostitution on adolescent's health and physical well being, educational attainment, risk and exposures to societal danger.

### **FUNCTIONALIST THEORY**

The functionalist standpoint buttressed by notable sociologist such as Emile Durkhleim and Albert Cohen (1858-1917) holds that some degree of deviance is inevitable for the society to be effectively functional . More especially Cohen shows that prostitution as a form of deviance performs a safety value function without threatening the institution of family. He goes further to explain that it can provide a release from the stress the pressure of family life without undermining family stability since prostitution is void of emotional attachment.

Talcott Persons (1902-1979) a Harvard University sociologist. For over four decades, his writings dominated sociology in the United States with his advocacy of Functionalism .He saw the society as a vast network of connected parts, each part helps to maintain the system as the whole. The Functionalist approach adds that if an aspect of life does not contribute to a society's stability or survival, and it does not serve some identifiably useful function or promote value consensus among members of a society it will not be passed on from generation to the next generation in other words it will cease to exist. The functionalist perspective on prostitution according to Talcott Parsons say that prostitution is widely condemned continues to display such persistence and validity because the functionalist suggest that prostitution satisfies the needs of patrons that may not be readily met through more socially acceptable forms such as courtship or marriage. The 'buyer' receives sex without any procreation or sentimental attachment at the same time; the 'seller' makes a living through this exchange. Such an examination leads us to conclude that prostitution does perform certain functions that society seems to need.

However this is not to suggest that prostitution is a desirable or legitimate form of social behavior.

### **FEMINISM THEORY**

There are different Feminists views on prostitution, with some seeing it as a form violence against women and a continuation of gender based violence others arguing that prostitution is a form of empowerment for women, Feminists scholars such as Kathleen Mackirion and Sheila Jeffery's argue that most of the prostitutes

are forced or coerced into prostitution by pimps, human traffickers, extreme poverty and lack of opportunities and underlying causes of the drug addiction and past trauma (Mackinnon 1993) they therefore advance the argument that prostitution can therefore not be viewed as an independent choice This group of scholars also submit that there is actually an over representation of the world, over the issue of women from the largest socio economic classes and the question is "If prostitutions is a free choice why are women with few choice the ones most found doing it" (Mackinnon 1993). It is further proposed that in prostitution money acts as a form of force just like in a rape case. Not as a measure of content because one engages in sexual activities with men they would not otherwise have had sex with Sullivan contends that consent to prostitution can never be possible because it is a coercive practice by nature and economic coercions makes consent impossible and as such prostitution has long term effects on those who are involved. The anti-prostitution Feminists propose that some of these long-term effects are severe trauma depression anxiety stress and self-medication through drug abuse alcohol and high risks of suicide and self-harm. The exposure of the prostitution customers to whom she is attracted also exposes women to psychological, physical and sexual violence. "prostitution in and of itself is an abuse of woman's body and once one is involved they can never be whole again, it tears away part of the woman. A further argument is that prostitution is perpetuation of the male attempts to dominate and control women because the relationship in such a situation favours the person who pays. Once the prostitute has been paid, the buyer decides on how he wants the sexual act to be performed and how without any regards to whether the prostitute's feelings. The woman is reduced to an instrument of sexual pleasures for the client.

It must be noted that there are varying theories within the Feminist perspectives ranging from socialist feminism which view prostitution as oppression with social and psychological routes, Marxists argue that prostitution is a form of reinforcement of the exploitation of workers in a capitalist system and liberal feminist who argue that prostitution reduces a human being to apiece of merchandise.

#### **POPULATION OF STUDY**

At Onitsha there are no official statistics on the number and prevalence of these activities by adolescents, but causal observation in most major streets suggest an increasing in population of these youngsters engaged in many activities., which have adverse effect on their development. At Onitsha child abuse in form of street hawking and prostitution are regarded as a normal procedure in the process of child rearing and up-bringing.

The ages of these female hawkers range from the ages of 18-25 and above were involved in the study. The population of the study comprises of 122 street hawkers and prostitutes. The simple random sample helped to identify the respondents which comprise the 122 respondents.

#### **EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION**

RESPO NSE	NO	%
DEGREE HOLDER	12	5%
SEC SCHOOL CERTIFICATE	102	45%
1 <sup>ST</sup> LIVING SCHOOL CERTIFICATE	87	37%
BELOW 1st LIVING SCHOOL CERTIFICATE	23	10%
TOTAL	222	100%

The table shows that the percentage of the education level of the degree holders are 5%. Secondary school certificate holders are 45% 1st living school is 39% below 1st living school certificate is 10% it shows that the street hawkers and prostitutes with secondary school certificate are higher than the others.

**TYPES OF HOME OF THE STREETHAWKERS AND PROSTITUTES.**

RESPONSE	NO	%
STABLE HOME	47	21%
BROKEN HOME	77	35%
SINGLE PARENT HOME	98	44%
TOTAL	222	100%

The table shows that the percentage of single parent home is 44% the percentage of Broken home is 35% and percentage of stable home is 21% This result shows that the female hawkers who are from single parents are more. This result shows that the female hawkers who are from single parents are more

**REASONS WHY ADOLESCENTS ENGAGE IN STREETHAWKING.**

RESPONSE	NO	(%)
PRESSURE FROM PARENTS / GUIDANCE	40	33C
POVERTY	60	49C
PEER GROUP INFLUENCE	10	8%
LACK OF PARENTAL UP BRING	12	10<
TOTAL	122	10<

The table shows that the percentage of the poverty rate among the street hawkers are 49% and the pressure from guidance are 33% and the peer group influence is 8% while lack of parental up bringing is 10% this shows that most of this street hawkers do this because of poverty.

**THE DANGERS INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION.**

RESPONSE	NO	%
Money Rituals	25	25%
Contact sexually transmitted diseases	30	30%
Kidnap	13	15%
Women Trafficking	10	10%
TOTAL	100	100%

The table shows that the percentage of prostitution involve in sexual transmitted disease is 30%, money rituals 25% trafficking 10% while kidnapping is 15% this shows that the danger which this prostitutes involve is mostly sexual transmitted diseases.

**THE REASONS WHY PEOPLE ENGAGE IN PROSTITUTION.**

RESPONSE	NO	%
To Earn a living	48	48%
To impress	40	40%
Trying to belong	10	10%
Out of frustration	2	2%
Total	100	100%

The table shows that the percentage of prostitutes involve in prostitution to earn a living 48% involve to impress 40% involve in order to belong 10%, 2% involve in prostitution out of frustration. This shows that some many of this prostitution engage in this act because they want to earn a living.

**INCOME RATE OF THE PROSTITUTES PER DAY**

REPONSE	NO	%
N300, 00	5	5% .
N10, 000	40	4%
N500.00	50	50%
N1000	–	5%
Total	100	100%

This table shows that these prostitutes that earn 14500 are 50% while those that earn N300,000 are 5%, those that earn N10,000 are 40% while those that earn N100,000 is 5%. This shows that must of these prostitutes earn N500 Per day.

**HOW THE MONEY THEY GET IS BEEN SPENT (PROSTITUTES)**

RESPONSE	NO	%
INVEST	20	20%
SHOPPING	15	15%
UPKEEP	50	50%
LAVISHLY	15	15%
TOTAL	100	100%

The table shows that the money these prostitutes spend, some use the money for shopping 15%, 20% use the money they get to invest, 50% use the money for there upkeep while 15% lavish i.e.. This shows that most of these prostitutes use the money for their upkeep.

**HEALTH OF STREETHAWKERS**

Response	No	%
They look worn out	60	49%
They look hungry	40	33%
Malnourished	22	18%
Total	122	100%

The table shows that the percentage of these street hawkers. 49% look worn out, 33% look hungry while 18% are malnourished could engage in stealing. This shows that most of these street hawkers look worn out.

**STREETHAWKERS ARE INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION.**

RESPONSE	NO	o/ /o
YES	65	53%
NO	40	33%
MAYBE	17	14%
TOTAL	122	100%

The table shows that most of these Street hawkers involve in prostitution 50% believed that they are involved 33% do not believe 14% are not sure. This shows that most of these Street hawkers are involved in prostitution.

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