

Chapter 39

Transient Marriages, Child Rights Abuses, and Mediatic Gap: A Theoretical Coverage of Crime Instigators in Nigeria

Jegade Ebenezer Ajibade

Department of Sociology, Covenant University, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

A few abusive occurrences in the Third World escape the lenses of the media, portending danger to our collective existence. One such social ill that defied the radar of news coverage is the growing transient consummation and abortion of conjugal relationship implicating male gender and instantiating abuses affecting the children from such relationships. Regrettably, the 'hit and run parenthood' posture attendant of this practice often populate the crime cells cross-culturally and raises the probability of social dislocation laden with colossal cost to societies. Consequently, this chapter attempts to descriptively investigate the depth of this sexual pervasion and the predicaments of children raised under such milieu. A passionate appeal is thus made to galvanize dissuasive participation in such practices and to generate more media attention in order to alleviate the excruciating socio-economic condition and discourage crime among the affected children.

BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The nature and conditions of children all over the world present myriad of setbacks in realizing their full potential as future adults. Mostly in their ages of 'human becoming', setbacks appear remarkable in their accessibility to functional education, qualitative health, self-protection and better condition of living. Comparatively, the lives of children are overwhelmingly more affected than those of adults due to their powerlessness and precariousness in confronting annihilable threats surrounding their existence. Due to

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the realization that we seem to live in violent and increasingly difficult times bearing its pernicious rage engulfing the world of children, pragmatic steps at arresting the tide then becomes necessary (Collins and Makowsky, 2005:262). Hitherto, deplorable attention has attended the deprivations affecting the children globally, only in the latter half of 20th century did the world community formally decide on a common accord that children should have rights and that violence of any kind against them constitute abuse and ultimately unacceptable infringement of those rights. This translated into a codified policy put in place to guide the handling and treatment of the minors, with the U.N.O. taking the lead. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sought to find means to protect children from abuse, to eliminate the root causes of abuse, to apprehend and heal the abuser and to rehabilitate and integrate abused children so that they can live normal lives. (Arnaldo, 2001: xvi). Drawing conclusions from the provisions enshrined in the international convention, children should have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Further supports were also put in place by regional blocks to drive the global concern on the inalienable rights of the children. In own region, the indigenous instrument “African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), also represents a concerted effort to extricate children from all forms of maltreatment and this was formulated with the view of ushering them into a purposeful future and for the enhancement of better condition of living. Unfortunately, there are number of inhibitants that are making this unrealizable and setting children on a collision course with multiple abuses. With empirical cases of persistent abuses of children intercontinentally, it then behoves on governments across board to help families and guardians who cannot afford the basic requirements, to fill the gap by providing the most essential—with regard to food, clothing and housing (CRC, article 27). Outside the institutional mandates that are expected to be mitigated by governments, better living conditions for children is often a herculean task under the current milieu of economic condition across the globe and this is helping to fan abuses at varied levels. The core of inhibition threatening the existence of children which incidentally becomes the focus of this discourse resides in the private arena of the home, family patterns, parenting styles, and the consistently depreciating economic capacity of the caregivers. The problems emanating from the home front is made complex by other life threatening cues often engendered by the public institutions. At the core of the public lies the roles of schools, labour camps, community and the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in promoting secondary abuses of children. One should quickly notice that the structuration of families under which children are raised represents one of the sources of child abuse. Few number of children often got enmeshed in both overt and covert violence and these involves all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse (UNICEF, 2016:1). The family is implicated in the promotion and persistence of these complications leading to myriad of abuses. The most potent of the family contributions to child abuse emanates from the quality of marital unions often contracted by parties across board in major societies of Africa. In a recessive environment of the Third world, there are diverse dimensions of marital relationships and parenting practices with correspondingly exposure children to risks of diverse magnitudes. Risk or vulnerability factors are fairly enduring characteristics of an individual’s external and internal world that are likely to lead to maladaptive or negative functioning. It is that factor that increases the chance of an individual developing a psychopathological condition (Keenan, 2002:236). External factors of risk mitigating abuses include the family, social dynamics and the general environment of children mostly predisposing them to risks (p. 237). The epicentre of current discussion revolves around the family environment of most abused children and tinkering with the nature, dynamics and complexities affiliatory to sundry marital arrangements in Sub Saharan-Africa. The spate at which men contract women for af-

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