

Child Abuse As a Menace To Society: A Case Study of Badagry, Lagos State

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Abstract

This research traces the background of child abuse to the middle ages: pre-Greco-Roman era, traditional period in Yoruba/Egun land and Biblical era; most especially the reigns of King Pharaoh in Egypt and King Herod the Great, when children were slaughtered like animals. It establishes the problems caused by child abuse, which includes: emotional instability, trauma, accident, unwanted pregnancy, retrogression on academic performance and separation from parents. This study aims at correcting erroneous approaches to child discipline, which includes sending them on errand at odd times. The scope of the study is limited to Badagry town. The study discusses brief history of Badagry town in Lagos State, causes of child abuse in Badagry communities, child abuse as a menace to the society and panaceas to child abuse in the society with emphasis on Badagry. It uses phenomenological research method to collect data. The findings reveal that child abuse is a relative and contentious term, so what is child abuse at a place could be a norm and value in another community. In spite of this, the research discusses some practices that are universally treated and accepted as child abuse. The importance of this study is validated by the increasing rate at which pedophilia, child trafficking and kidnapping are becoming common practice in human society. The study recommends that the Church, as well as other agents of change like the family, government, educational institutions and the media, should quickly respond to the situation.

Keywords: Child-abuse, Badagry, discipline, menace, panacea

Introduction

Children depend on adults to start their journey in life. This includes at first, that the parents meet the child's need for basic necessities such as food,

shelter, love and further give the child some sort of direction or map on basic ways of life. When parents or other adults with a caring responsibility towards children become abusive, the child's prerequisites change (Lindell, 2005, p. 9). A developing child is sensitive to verbal (Vissing, Traus, Gelles, 1991, p. 223) and physical assaults of different kinds (Creighton, 1996) and reacts by displaying symptoms and a variety of effects in the long run (Lynch, 1998,). Child abuse is a global and sensitive issue that affects all societies. It is an anti-human act, and of course it is an ungodly practice in human race. Therefore, it is very essential to give a background of the study for a systematic and swift flow of the subsequent topics in the paper.

The study at this point attempts to include a brief history of Badagry town in Lagos State, different views on child abuse, causes of child abuse in Badagry communities, child abuse as a menace to the society's future, as well as panaceas to child abuse in the society.

Abuse of a child seldom happens once. It is often a process that can persist over many years (Colin, 2016). As a result of this, the paper addresses the issue and its implication on the society.

Background to the Study

The issue of Child abuse has been an age long phenomenon in our society. There have been recorded cases of inflictions of harm to children by guardians and care-takers, and of course infanticide was reflected in many civilized societies from Greece to China (Maus, 1974,p.2). In Yoruba/Egun land (Nigeria), it has been the practice of some parents and guardians to put incision and marks on the children all in the name of delivering such from attacks of evil spirits. Such marks are put on the faces of innocent children; some parts of the body of a child are cut off, so that it might not return to the *Abiku* (still born) world.

The early first Century Rome witnessed the abandonment of innocent children at the foot of the famous lactarian column; the babies were left there to die, be picked by wishes slave dealers who would train them to be prostitutes or maim them and expose them on the streets to beg. Great philosopher like Seneca, Plato and Aristotle similarly consent to the killing of defective children. "To kill a man is often held to be a crime, but to kill one's child who is defective is a custom" (Akinrinola, 1991, p. 10).

In Africa, and Nigeria in particular, there are recorded cases of child kidnappings and consequent money rituals whereby innocent children are used. Olamide confessed to the police that he and one herbalist killed a mother and her son for money ritual (*Daily post Nigeria*, 21/3/2021). Another man called Odulaja confessed that he and Ifasuyi abducted a mother and her son, and used their heads for money ritual (*tribuneonlineng.com* on 3/4/2021). A 29 –years-old suspect, Lekan Raheem, has confessed that his gang had killed some children and sold their body parts for ritual purposes (*Vanguardngr.com* on 3/7/2021). Some communities in Nigeria still engage in human rituals, in which some missing children are discovered to have been killed and sacrificed for the community need, as demanded by the gods. Aghawenu quoting Igwe said, "Nigerians engage in ritual acts or children killing to appease the gods and seek supernatural favour to ward off misfortune" in a community (Aghawenu, 2020, p.119). The Nigerian society is not free from child sexual abuse either. Recently in Badagry, a teacher was caught sexually harassing his female student in JSS 1 at a bush opposite their school.

There were also cases of child abuse in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand where children under fifteen years worked predominantly on commercial Agricultural farms. In the 18th Century, there was a great exploitation of every young child in the mining and industrial factions, all these practices are being regarded as “Child Labour”(University of Chicago, 1948, p. 503).

Different Views on Child Abuse

Child abuse is defined in the *World Book Encyclopedia* as:

a state of maltreatment of a child by their parents or guardians. The vice may include acts such as beating a child so badly resulting in physical harm or inflicting them with burns and starving them. It is also defined as the physical, sexual or emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child, especially by those responsible for his or her welfare" (William, 1978, p. 363).

It could also be defined as “the physical and mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18, by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare, under circumstances which indicate

that the child's health and welfare is harmed or threatened thereby” (Post, 2004, p. 44).

However, views vary from place to place on child abuse. The acts that are tagged as child abuse in one society may be cultural value in another society. As earlier discussed, making incisions in a child's body may be seen as a child abuse in a society. While in another society it may serve another purpose. For instance, in some Yoruba societies, it plays the role of protection against evil or to avert perpetual evil occurring to that child. Hence, the paper discusses below the different views on child abuse.

1. Conservative View of Child Abuse

Some conservative commentators oppose the current child protection model, and want the existing act-of-home care system to be replaced by rapid and even coerced adoption of most children in care (Post, 2004, p. 44). Child abuse and child protection have always been a highly contested area of policy and practice. Historically, views have ranged from structuralist, on the radical left who view child abuse and neglect as closely linked to broader social disadvantage, to behaviouralists on the conservative right who attribute child abuse solely to individual pathology. The view generally holds that the provision of concrete support services such as housing, food and payment of bills to relieve the immediate stress of poverty will directly prevent harm to children (Mendel, 2014, p.8). The view suggests that individuals need treatment or punishment to prevent them, further from abusing their children; for example, while many poor and working class families are exposed to stressors such as poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing and violent neighbourhoods, most families subjected to these experience do not abuse or neglect their children . In fact, child abusers do appear to have particular characteristics such as lack of adequate personal coping skills (Mendel, 2014, p.7). The conservatives believe that child abuse is relative in the society. While some parents are wealthy to take proper care of their children, some are not. What people see as child abuse in the financially incapacitated families may not necessarily be according to the situation of things, that is, socio-economic factor in each society. More so, as good as the adoption might be, it also leads to traumatic experiences for adopted children.

2. Liberal View on Child Abuse

Liberals believe that a child has the right to decide what happens with him/ her. If you are liberal, you also want to tell people how and what to eat, a liberal parent's argument in support of child abuse is that no one gets to tell children what to do. The reason why the liberal supports child abuse staying legal is because the real reason they want a child abuse, is that it is inconvenient (Mappes, 2007, p. 45). Liberationists proposed a series of rights that children should have such as the right to choose where to live, the right to vote and the right to have the same financial status as adults.(Wilkins, 2012, p. 151). Their view is that children should have same right as adults. Age is seen as irrelevant and self-determination as paramount. In respect of physical abuse, the development of anti-corporal punishment legislation and policy reflects the influence of liberationist views (Wilkins, 2012, p. 151). It also encompasses the right to economic power, which involves the right to work and achieve financial independence, the right to political power, such as the right to vote, and the right to the information received by adult members of the society (Holt and Forson, 2000, p. 121).

3. Protectionist Views on Child Abuse

Protectionist thinking about children has been applied to the question of child care through legislation since the late nineteenth Century and still underlines much of current policy and practice in the field of child abuse. Essentially, the argument from this view point is that children have the right to protection from their parents by outside bodies in circumstance where their health and welfare are at risk (Carby, Wilkins, and Shemmings, 2012, p. 152).

4. Psychological Views on Child Abuse

Psychologically, abuse is sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behavior treating, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Psychologically, abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development (Colin, 2006, p. 8).

5. Sociological View on Child Abuse

Sociological perspective on child abuse did not have a major influence on child protection thinking and work in the UK before the 1990s, except in the case of abuse and the question of gender.

The reason for this probably is that, such perspectives do not provide clear indicators for practice, in that they look broadly at the conditions that create the climate for child abuse rather than at how this works out in individual cases (Cassidy, 2008, p. 143). It can be argued from this perspective that a society that approves of the corporal punishment of children in schools and endorses the old adage “*spare the rod and spoil the child*” sets the scene for a variety of unwanted forms of violence of which physical abuse is one.

6. Biblical View on Child Abuse

A survey of the Bible reveals that both the Old and the New Testament are not silent in respect of the issue of Child abuse. People of the ancient were involved in the odd practice, and of course we are able to understand the mind of God in such respect, which without any argument is to give a fair treatment to children. In the story surrounding the birth of Moses, King Pharaoh ordered the killing of all male children born to the Israelites, but made way for the rescue of Moses, since he had a mission to fulfill in life (Exodus 1:15-22). Abraham one of the faithful patriarchs who was counted a righteous man was also prevented from sacrificing Isaac, covenant child, by giving a ram as a substitute for his soul. It was also the practice of the pagans during the old times to sacrifice babies in fiery furnaces of a deity called *molech* as recorded in Leviticus 18:21.

Jesus Christ was also exposed to the evil of child abuse during his early birth, when King Herod ordered the elimination of all male children from the age of two downward, but God provided safety for Jesus in Egypt.

The disciples of Jesus Christ were also rebuked by Jesus, when they were preventing the little ones from gaining his attention. This occurred when people were bringing babies/children to Jesus Christ, to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus Christ called the children to himself and said “*let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these*” (Luke 18:15-16 (NIV)). The scriptures direct parents to nurture, strengthen, discipline and teach their children and not to abuse them. In many pagan religions, parents have a life and

death power over their offspring, in Christianity, the command to honour parents is followed by the prohibition of murder (Exodus 20:13). Parents are to be respected, but the authority of the parents is not without limits. Parents are under God and must obey the law (Walton, 1989, p.49).

The Church should help family build a “*fortress*” of protection against the storms of life. Parents should know the capacities of their children and not to expect more from them than is proper. Discipline is an expression of love (Proverbs 21:1, 13:24) and it must never be exercised in wrath or meanness (Walton, 1989, p. 49). God shows special concern for the children as recorded in Mark 10:14 which says: “*For of such (children) is the kingdom of God (heaven)*”. To torment or torture them is to kick against the kingdom of heaven. Bible encourages discipline of children and not to maltreat them.

A Brief History of Ogu people in Badagry Lagos State

One of the major settlements of the Ogu in Lagos is Badagry. A town, which is noted for being a one-time transit camp of slaves, captured from the interior and transported to Europe. This town is one of the major tourist centers in the State. It is noted for museum of relics and artifacts relating to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Nigeria. More importantly, the town is noted for being the first settlement in Nigeria where Christianity was preached in the nineteen Century, and the Bible translated into Yoruba language. The town houses the first story building in Nigeria and can boast of many kilometers of aquatic splendour. The Egun (Ogu) speaking people are descendants of those who migrated from Whidah, Allada, Weme, which are now part of Republic of Benin, but were all geographically and politically one with Egun (Ogu) speaking people, founded before and after 1900 in Nigeria (*Ethnic Composition and Culture History*)

Some of the migrations were induced by need for new water for fishing, good farmland and largely because of the Dahomian war of 18th Century. In terms of spatial distribution, the Ogu people are made up of about 15% of the state population, and present a district ethnic group, such as Badagry, Igbogbele, Ropoji, Iwesere towns and villages. Ajara (14 groups), Ikoga and Ajido town, etc. are today in Badagry Local Government Area, and are division of Lagos State (*Ethnic Composition and Culture History*). Linguistically, they form sub-ethnic groups of the large Egun (Ogu) speaking people of the Benin

Republic formerly Dahomeh.

They found their way to the area as early as the 15th century for security purpose. Also salt production encouraged the development at the place. It is on record that Bapo village at Igbogbele beach was a famous salt factory for large production of salt. Some Yoruba people traveled to Badagry in search of this essential product in the 18th Century and during the Second World War of 1939. Besides salt making, the Ogu speaking people tap wine and involve in garri production and coconut processing. The people are dynamic and are today found in both the public and private sectors management, both at home and abroad. (*Ethnic Composition and Culture History*)

The Ogu can also be found in Yewa community of Ogun State but their number is marginal compared to other sub-ethnic groups in the State, hence developing their communities has been difficult. Traditionally, the Ogu are very religious and ritualistic and every traditional Ogu community has sacral shrines. It is also a common thing to find Egun (Ogu) speaking man respecting and adoring his ancestor's cultural heritage. Zangbeto is highly regarded and respected in Badagry and its neighbouring communities. Zangbeto may be considered as a deity, youth masquerade or a myth used in sustaining the law and order of the society. Zangbeto remained the traditional town Police among the people. The various shrines and divinities perform different roles in the development of the community. The town, up till 1968 served as the divisional headquarters, thus maintaining its territory from Seme Border to Orile in Ajegunle as a Local Government headquarters. Generally, the Egun (Ogu) and the Awori speaking people of Badagry are peaceful and good neighbours to their visitors. (*www.MobeetoursInternational*)

Before the beginning of Christianity in 1842 and Islamic religion, the main religion of the people were different types of traditional religions and beliefs which are still existing till date, but people have chosen to embrace Christianity and Islamic religions than the fore religion, with about 65% Christians, 30% Islamic and 5% Traditional religion.(Alokan, 2010, p. 43). There is a need to establish here that, the cultural, religious, economic and social backgrounds of the town (Badagry) encourage Child Abuse. This would be discussed within the paper later.

Causes of Child Abuse in Badagry Land

The occupations of the people are “farming, fishing, arts, mat-weaving, pottery making, trading and recently tourism and hospitality business” (Adewoye, 2018, p.14). Since they need their children for hawking, it enhances other child abuse attitudes. Based on the observations and empirical studies by the researcher, the following are the causes of child abuse in Badagry and its environs:

1. Failure in parental responsibilities.
2. Lack of education or illiteracy in some villages.
3. Poverty and joblessness by some parents.
4. Neglect of duty on the part of government in providing basic amenities and proper legal frame work for the populace.
5. Ignorance of possible danger and lack of social education.
6. Loss of either or both parents – orphanage.
7. Inadequate care on the part of parents and guardians.
8. Insecurity i.e. failure on the part of parents to provide necessary security for children at home in terms of good shelter.
9. Moral laxity of the parents which resulted in poor upbringing of their children.
10. Large family size and polygamy cum lack of family planning.
11. Single parenthood and divorced parents.
12. Under developed and bushy areas expose the children to danger of sex even incest.
13. Porous borders with Republic of Benin and boundaries with Ogun State.
14. Topography that is, the Island and peninsula nature of the town.
15. Smuggling exercise or job that enhances daily income which could be used to entice the children. Sometimes it does not allow women to take care of their children properly.
16. Quest for skill acquisition or vocation at the expense of education.
17. Hawking during the odd hours of the day, that is, early in the morning and night when some workers have gone to work.
18. Religious activities without inculcating God's fear in children rather religious indoctrination.
19. Lack of love for humanity.
20. Transportation means, most especially motorcycle owned by some guys

from the North. The atrocities of these guys in Badagry on the children are numerous.

The factors contributing to the cause of child abuse in Badagry are stated above. Factors that can contribute to the likelihood of abuse and neglect include parent's personality and attributes, the characteristics of the child and situational stressors (Oladipupo, n. d. p.1186). Rana Escher opines that, child abuse can be caused by a number of factors which include; parental, ecological and child factors that could make children vulnerable to abuse. These are briefly expatiated below:

a. **Parental Factors:** It is well known that abusive parents often report having been physically, sexually or emotionally abused as children. Parents' lack of knowledge of childhood development may result in unreasonable or unrealistic expectations. Lack of parenting skills and inappropriate attitudes can contribute to abusive behaviour.

b. **Child Factors:** The child's age and physical, mental, emotional and social development can greatly increase or decrease the likelihood of abuse younger children, due to their physical size and developmental status, are particularly vulnerable to certain forms of abuse, such as the *“battered child syndrome”* the *“shaken infant syndrome”* and the *“failure to thrive syndrome”*.

c. **Family Factors:** Specific life situations of some families can increase the likelihood of abuse, such as marital conflict, domestic violence, unemployment, financial stress and social isolation.

d. **Environmental Factors:** Environmental factors are often found in combination with the above factors. The incidence of child abuse is higher in some cultures and societies than other. What one culture defines as child abuse may be a socially acceptable interaction in other cultures. She also observes the economic pressure, physical punishment, and the degree of social support for parents; stress caused by poverty and lots more (Rana, 2008, p.4). Contemporary thinking emphasis the importance of social factors and the social context of families where the following social factors are parents:

intergenerational patterns of abuse where children learn violent or non-coping behaviours from their parents, unsupported and unstable family structures, social stresses triggered by a variety of social conditions such as unemployment, poverty, poor housing, social isolation, barrier to accessing resources because of language, culture, religion or migration status, psychological illness and stress arising from some family conflict situation, urbanization, peer group and social pressure, misplacement of value system of the society and corruption and porosity of some of the nation's borders with homelessness of some parents (Colin,2006, p. 10).

Child Abuse as a Menace to Society Using Badagry as a Case Study

The word menace connotes something or somebody that causes, or may cause serious damage, harm or danger. Future does not spoil without the causes(s) being traced to the past and present. And that is what the paper had discussed under the immediate preceding topic.

All manners of mishandling of little one have a serious implication on them, even as all have been able to recognize four major divisions of child abuse, namely: Physical, Verbal, Sexual and Emotional. Children are good observers, but they sometimes due to their limitations make mistakes in interpreting their experiences, they often draw wrong inference and choose wrong means to find their places. A child that is not shown due love, and given sense of trust, if he feels unwanted, rejected and unsure can develop serious withdrawal from the society, pose aggressive and hostile attacks on physical environment and people.(Drelkur,1964, p. 12)

The product of victimization are seen in our dailies reporting all forms of anti-social behaviours such as highway robbery, rape, drug addiction, vandalism, political thuggery, cultism and other vices.

Abused children are known to be psychologically and physically affected, as they eventually develop sickness, loneliness, lose concentration in their studies at school as well as experience unusual relationship among their mates. (Courtney, 2003, p. 38).

It is also discovered that relationship problem is developed by a child that is sexually abused, has skepticism or is reluctant towards marriage due to early odd experience. Some grow up to be lesbians or homosexuals and end up developing hateful pattern of behaviour (*The Guardian News Paper*, p. 6).

In addition, abused children develop fear and anxiety; they suffer variety of psychological problems that do not impair their day-to-day functioning, but nonetheless make them unhappy. They abuse drugs, attempt suicide, experience severe depression, and lose the ability to trust anyone. The emotional development is often arrested to the age they were, when the abuse began and some of these abused children do grow up to become offenders (*The Guardian News Paper*, p. 7). Some of the abused children in the future involve in Adolescent suicide, Drug and Alcohol Abuse and become depressed.

Findings reveal that physical abuse child has been commonly discovered in boys with attempted suicide, while physical and sexual abuse have also been confirmed as promoting self-mutilation behaviours such as cutting or burning oneself (Grant, 1977, p. 94). One study has shown that 64 percent of sexually abused survivors are usually clinically depressed, while sexually abused teenage girls score significantly higher on test measuring anxiety and depression than no abused girls (Nigerian Tribune, 2000, p.13). Other dangers of child abuse include: borderline personality disorder, criminality and violence, dissociation and eating disorder, truancy, psychiatric illness, psychosomatic illness and poor health, teen pregnancy and sexual violence. An abused child, if not well monitored, will pollute his or her groups with abusive acts, most children who suffered abuse due to divorce situation and some other factors will emit or manifest such behaviour in the church and the entire society (Nigerian Tribune, 2014, p. 13). All these kinds of children are found in Badagry. Unequivocally, it is affecting the development of Badagry as a whole and if not checked could put the future is in jeopardy. The underdevelopment experience of Badagry today is a product of child abuse in the past. And if care is not taken, the future of Badagry would be worse than present. It is very unfortunate; Badagry has not been able to produce a governor in Lagos State, neither a president of Nigeria. They are always at the lower level compare with others. Badagry which happens to be the cradle of Christianity, education, administration, economy and trading in many ways! And the reason cannot be far-fetched from the ancient child abuse. Therefore, there is urgent need to clamour for eradication of child abuse in the society in order to enhance growth.

Panaceas to Child Abuse in a Society

Child Abuse has become a problem in our society. Therefore, the church

needs to give prompt response to the menace as follows:

1. **Church Response through Family and Friends:** Parents are role models to their children. They are the first and direct guidance of the children. In fact, if child abuse is to be eradicated or minimized, parents must be at the front burner. Indeed, they are to play major roles. They are to train their children and be ready to sacrifice what seems to be precious to them. Parents must give their children sex education at home. When parents dedicate their lives to their children, it will become difficult if not impossible for such children to fall victim of child abuse. The society also must join hands with the parents in preventing child abuse. The society can do this by quick intervention and reporting any culprit to the appropriate authority (Harlock, 1955, p. 27). Parents should inculcate in their daughters the moral values of dressing decently so that when they grow up they would abhor immoral or seductive dressing (*The Nation, Newspaper, 2015, p. 51*). They should not encourage male live-in relations/ friends. Some rape cases involving minors are carried out by family members. Parents should not allow unauthorized people to carry their children or their children to sit on such people's laps. Individual Christians, families and the church should contribute to the prevention of abuse of children by supporting in cash and in kind to cater for the children who are vulnerable to abuse (*The Nation, Newspaper, 2015, p. 51*).

2. **Church Response through Society and Workplace:** Society should have strategies for preventing child abuse in their communities, most especially the community head. It should be joint responsibility of all people in the community to protect children from harm and to put in place the corrective measure to correct such. On the part of the traditional rulers or leaders, they should redouble their efforts in keeping strict surveillance on any suspected human abuser. Leaders should endeavour to alleviate poverty, create employment opportunities for graduates, monitor and cater for the children, youths and create welfare package for all and sundry in the country (Nigerian Tribune, 2000, p. 13). The Child Right Act demands protection of children from any form of abuse. When we notice a case of abuse, it is pertinent that we immediately swing into action by contacting any child right organization available and making sure that appropriate action is taken. (Nigerian Tribune,

2014, p. 20). The churches can plan with the community environment with aim of encouraging home and church cooperation in child abuse guidance. The involvement of Christians who are professionals such as medical doctors, teachers, nurses and social workers will give a more competent guidance to the members of the society (Harlock, 1955, p. 27). The church should do everything possible to discourage parents from sending their little children of indecisive ages to go and learn trade, to hawk and to go for labour in the public place like canteen or restaurant, where they can be physically and emotionally abused.

3. **Church Response through Educational Experts:** The educational experts offered tips on how to instill discipline in pupils without necessarily subjecting them to cruel treatment. Teachers must be professionally trained on the use of aggression. The subject on human rights should be included in school curriculum to expose pupils to their fundamental rights while the school environment should be child-friendly (The Nation Newspaper, 2015, p. 51).

4. **Church Response through Media:** Church can make use of our social media, Television, Radio announcements or programmes to campaign against child abuse. Parents must teach their children on how to wisely use their internet facilities at their finger's tip. They must help the church by being vigilant and watchful on the way their children use the handset bought for them. If possible under age children should not be allowed to use handset, except for official purpose.

5. **Church Response through Government Agency:** The global initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (GIECPC) recommended the use of legal and legislative measures to curb cruelty against children in home, educational settings and penal institution. The government agencies should do everything possible to pass necessary information for the children through every available medium. For instance, children must be informed not to get into any car or ride with people without their parents' consent. They should quickly get away from anyone who tries to take them somewhere without adult's supervision which is well known to their parents or guardian and they should not accept invitation to sleep over in a friend's home. Government needs to put in place policies that will help the victims of child abuse, such as locating and

placing victims in rehabilitation centers. The government should also support free education for the children as well as adults. All the hands of government agencies in charge of child abuse must be on desk to avert this menace. The Church should make sure government inflict stiff punishment for those found guilty of Child abuse through their agencies.

6. Church Response through Non-Governmental Organizations and Social Organizations

These organizations are many e.g. Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) and lots more can be of assistance. If the people in Badagry can be acquitted with these hints, child abuse would reduce drastically in the area. Also, the traditional, political and religious rulers in the areas should beef up security in their Lagoon Ports that link to the neighbouring State (Ogun State). These have always been the routes where the hawkers and child traffickers come in. They should cultivate their bushy areas, cut down the bush within the main towns and encourage the owner of uncompleted buildings to complete them on time, lest it would be sold for whoever wants to build house there. The owners may be relocated. In a nut shell, bush or forest should not be allowed within the towns. It is common in Badagry that family planning seems to be a taboo, the health workers should be empowered to visit all the rural areas and teach people on family planning methods. Children are exposed to some basic trades in the area at tender ages. This is not too bad, but it affects their academic life and encourages immorality. Some little ones were lured with money before sexually abusing them. The study emphasizes that child hawking, most especially on the part of children from Lagos State should be totally eradicated. Rural area empowerment programmes should be set up by the government.

Conclusion

Child abuse is an age-long menace but people are not well educated about it. Most of the time, people often treat little ones as personal properties. Our society must respect the rights of children and stop treating them as domesticated animals, but as human being. We should engage in frantic campaign and enlightenment programmes to educate and discourage the misfit. The church should fight all available battles with a view to putting an end to the

child abuse syndrome that has been wrecking tremendous havoc on the society and which will continue to re-occur, unless the challenge is appropriately and spontaneously addressed. The future of any society that could not curb child abuse would be in severe dangers. Children are the leaders of tomorrow. Their experience today would be their experiment tomorrow at wherever they find themselves. For them not to become ill wind that blows nobody good, they must be catered for.

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