

The Role of Libraries/Librarians in Curbing Prostitution in Nigeria Universities.

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Abstract

The study investigated the roles of librarians in curbing prostitution in Nigerian Universities. Some concepts like meaning and types of prostitution why people engage in prostitution, the kind of people that partake in prostitution and the impact of prostitution were discussed. It was discovered that certain factors were responsible for people engaging in prostitution, including poverty, lack of parental care, and peer-group influence among others. However, some challenges were encountered, and the role librarians play in curbing prostitution was enumerated. It was recommended that librarians need information literacy on students who are part of these vices and also use Nigerian Library Association (NLA) to help such people set up businesses their own no matter how small. Federal government and NGOs need to provide entrepreneurship education and skills for the people involved to replace the abnormal trade as these were provided as part of the solution to this form of trade.

Keywords: Libraries, Librarians, Prostitution, Universities, Nigeria.

Introduction

Prostitution is an age-long practice that is as old as man himself, it has caused a lot of problems in our society and all over the world. Prostitution is the exchange of sexual services for money. It could be between a man and woman, woman and woman, man and man. It is commonly seen as a women selling sexual service to man. Generally, prostitution is sexual contacts multiple partners, that means that a prostitute is not tied up to only one partner.

Children can also be involved in prostitution especially when their mothers are involved. Prostitutes may be school dropouts, educated adults or those who abscond from their homes due to suffering or other related issues. It is possible to note that the university play a major role in the development of manpower of any Nation as it provides high and middle-level manpower that is socially, economically, politically and technologically necessary to advance the Nation through teaching, research and community development.

However, Aboyade, as cited in Horsfall and Ukaegbu, (2015) asserted that the provision of information through libraries/librarians has been a major factor in giving new knowledge, raising consciousness, strengthening links.... Which mobilizes people for social, political and economic development. This means that prostitutes who have been rehabilitated can gain new knowledge through information they get from the library thereby becoming socially, politically and economically transformed in the society.

Statement of the problem

The manner and dimension of promiscuity among university students have reached an alarming state and it has since become a source of public concern. Prostitution as a social vice has affected every aspect of the society. The role that sex plays in society is not static but changing overtime. With the emergence of private property, sex has become not merely a means of procreation and satisfaction in man but has acquired an economic value. In our capitalist economy, sex has been commoditized like labour and responds to market faces. However, the number of students that are exposed to prostitution has greatly affected the image of our universities with the dreadful HIV, and its attendant spread which has resulted in death. Therefore, the concern about this situation in university campuses in Nigeria gave rise to the examination of this issue and the part libraries and librarians could play in curbing this menace.

In this regard, it is therefore necessary for the librarians in different universities to look into the situation and see how they can be of help in curbing the vices in the universities and society at large.

Objective of the study

The objectives of the study include to:

- i. Find out the meaning and types of prostitution.
- ii. Identify the kind of people that partake in prostitution.

- iii. Identify the factors that lead to prostitution.
- iv. How librarians can aid in curbing prostitution.
- v. Examine the side effects of prostitution.
- vi. Identify the challenges associated with prostitution

Literature Review

Meaning of Prostitution

Prostitution is the practice of engaging in sexual activities in exchange for money/material things. Defining prostitution is not as easy as it might seem. The reason is that the subject, “prostitution” is full of hypocrisies and ambiguities. Some people think that what makes prostitution a crime is because of the monetary involvement but it includes vague ideas (Times Magazine, 1971). Some defined prostitution: as promiscuity (Tin as a system of social violence and oppression against women and girls (Breaking Free Incorporation, 2017). According to Encyclopaedia of Prostitution and Sex work (2006), prostitution is the exchange for money or other valuable Prostitution is also seen as engaging in sexual activities with another person in exchange for compensation like money or other valuable goods (Wiktionary According to Webster's Dictionary, prostitution is the act/practice of prostitution or offering of the body for an indiscriminate intercourse with men, common lewdness of a woman. Prostitution is the act or practice of engaging in promiscuous sexual relationships, especially for money (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prostitution>).

Female prostitutes are called harlots, call girls, sex workers, whores, slots etc. A female prostitute must be physically attractive and good in bed while a male must have high sexual drive, good sexual skills and maintain a strong erection during sexual activities (Ukaegbu, 2004). Some people patronize prostitutes on a short-term basis while some have long-term contracts with their clients. Prostitution is legalized in some countries while in some, it is not legalized, and it is believed to be the oldest profession in the world. Male prostitutes are called ‘gigolos’, ‘rent boys’, ‘toy boys’, ‘pansy boys’ etcetera Lesbians and Gays are also prostitutes.

The meaning and significance of prostitution differ with time and society is tolerated in some societies while it is abhorred in other places. For instance in Ancient Greece, in a certain period of history, some prostitutes were valued because of their intellect, social and sexual companionship. In some ancient societies, prostitution was part of religious rituals where sexual relations between prostitutes and men took place in Temples and other places, which

we considered 'Sacred Act'. A man in this business was seen to be representative of a deity (Crooks & Baur, 1990).

In medieval Europe, prostitution was tolerated while in England during Victoria Era, it was seen as a scandalous and social outlet for men. Prostitution was seen not as a serious sin for men hence sexual relations between the late and the former were preferable to that of men and other men's wives or daughters (Taylor, 1970). Prostitution exists because of the demand for their services.

There have been incidences of serial killings of women in hotels in some states in Nigeria. It became so much that the serial killer was tracked down, investigated and arrested when the incident occurred in one of the states. However, there was a claim that all who were victims of serial killers were prostitutes. This was not always the case because two hotel attendants were also victims of the serial killer, he confessed that he was possessed, that something moves him to hunt for women and strangulate them with a piece of material which he cuts from the pillow case (Wazobia FM News, 2019). According to a report, (Pulse News, 2019), the police boss advises women against prostitution as they are usually victims of serial killers. He reported that in as much as society values degenerate, women need to go back to educate their fellow women and advise them against prostitution since they are targets of such crime. In light of these, women blamed most dead victims saying, that prostitution is not an option. Women should distinguish themselves in such a way that other women and even men would admire and want to emulate them for good conduct as role models (Horsfall, 2017), not in prostitution. Ogba Magistrate Court, Co Lagos sentenced six (6) sex workers to three months imprisonment with an option of a fine of forty thousand Naira (N40,000.00) each for prostitution and conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace.

Types of Prostitution

Some types of prostitution include the following;

- a. **Office Prostitution:** directors, bosses engage in office prostitution whereby they have office wives, husbands, girlfriends, boyfriends, etc.
- b. **Political Prostitution:** this is a situation where politicians sponsor undergraduates for political entertainment and lavish those with money and gifts like buying them flashy cars, and phones, some even get houses/buildings as gifts. They also take the prostitutes along with them to different cities as companions while on their trips (political and non-political). Some others or their family members are taken overseas to live there.

c. Street Prostitution: are streetwalkers who solicit customers on streets. They hang around looking for customers to service them. Other forms of prostitution include Lesbianism, Gayism/homo sexualism.

Hotels, brothels, bars, massage parlours: These are places where prostitutes operate for sexual gratification. A brothel is a building where a group of prostitutes work. Those in bars charge less than those in brothels or hotels and are prone to police arrest because of their visibility on the street. In Niger setting, the North, for instance, call brothel Bayanger?, Igbo call it 'Ama good evening', and Rivers call it 'Akamas', etcetera.

Why Women Engage in Prostitution

The reasons women engage in prostitution are many and complex. The complexity may be because of either being simplistic, making generalizations or being judgmental and thereby falling prey to stereotypes.

The common thing about all types of prostitutes is that they are all streetwalkers, drug addicts and willing to Prostitutes are of different categories. They are workers whose lives are awful. Some women provide sexual favours in massage parlours, small hotels and in their apartments. There are yet other women who are escorts/professional sex workers. These often work for themselves and charge huge amounts of money for a night out. Sometimes their clients are politicians, movie stars etc. Nevertheless, they feel that attraction for huge amounts of money may create a way for payment of educational development/further advancement, enhance their marriages because of their sexual expertise, also help men chase away loneliness especially when on business trips.

Conclusively, studies have shown that a large number of prostitutes were sexually abused during their childhood which led to their being prostitutes (Crooks & Baur, 1990). Some girls are snatched from their homes and sent to faraway countries especially Europe/America for prostitution. This is an international sex trafficking that attracts millions and billions of dollars.

This is a form of enslavement. Some see prostitution as a way out of poverty. Here economic necessity drives them into prostitution. They are either bread winners of their families or unable to get jobs (<https://www.sciencedirect.com>).

Why men engage in prostitution

According to Schwartz (1995), men said among other reasons already listed by the article are as follows;

- i. They are believed to be ugly and unable to have sex without paying for it,
- ii. Wanting sex but without all the emotional involvement /attachment that comes with family, has to do with sex without obligation.
- iii. They are convinced that their genital organ is small and will not be laughed at
- iv. They want to have quick sex without emotional attachment/romance because there is no time for such dating.

How libraries can aid in curbing prostitution

Libraries can disseminate information that will go a long way in reaching out to prostitutes through mobile library systems and outreaches. This can be done by providing information services like film shows, storytelling and engaging them in reading books that will broaden their views against prostitution. According to Mingers and Willcocks (2014), the utilization of any information leads to some form of action or result which could be a reply, an activity, or just a decision not to respond. Therefore, persons who are well informed and conscious of using the information at their disposal are those who will make the right change and not suffer any avoidable predicaments.

Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Rivers State chapter and the National I body as a whole through information dissemination can organize conferences and workshops where university communities can be invited for health talks specifically by medical librarians on the effects of prostitution. This can also -take place during the orientation exercise of freshers where awareness can be created to sensitize members of the university community and the society at large using social media networks or the university platforms to guard against indecent dressing, prostitution, drug intake and their likes. Hence, information is a very vital instrument for maintaining a healthy society and sustaining steady development in all facets of life (Nkiko & Iroaganachi, 2015)

Factors responsible for Prostitution

- i. Hard drug intake can make people indulge in prostitution.

- ii. Peer group influence could lead teenagers to get entangled with prostitution.
- iii. Lack of parental care can make teenagers lose control of themselves. Thereby become a menace to the society.
- iv. Victims of rape/child labour and trafficking could also make people engage in prostitution.
- v. Quest for materialism; - laziness and thirst for quick wealth could lead people to emulate others who are well do and in trying to meet up with the society, they get involved in prostitution so that they will 'feel belong'.
- vi. Poverty is said to be a 'disease' which could also be one of the factors that influence people to get entangled with prostitution.
- vii. Prominence and power have made many people dent their destinies because they want fame and to be in control over others. They feel with such authority, they are the happening babes and guys in town.

Side Effects of Prostitution

- i. Internal organ damage: some people who are mostly addicted (drug addicts) develop serious health problems like HIV/AIDS STDs that could damage their organs or even lead to death.
- ii. Prostitution could result in unwanted pregnancies leading to the birth of hoodlums who will in turn be menace to society.
- iii. It could lead to the destruction of one's body.
- iv. It could lead to physical assault like battering.
- v. Prostitution can bring about emotional distress which could cause hypertension, depression, guilt, and self-destruction.

Problems associated with curbing Prostitution in our Universities

The following are some of the problems associated with curbing prostitution;

- i. Librarians are confined to their immediate work and think less abo other social problems.
- ii. The library association of the state is not committed to such matters, as prostitution, maybe because it does not concern them directly.
- iii. The public lacks confidence in the ability of libraries/librarians to make any positive impact on curbing prostitution.

- iv. Poor funding of libraries by the government is a stumbling block to making any meaningful contribution to the issue of prostitution and other social vices in society.
- v. Poor ICT awareness among some librarians hampers the dissemination of information on prostitution.

The Way Forward

The following are some of the ways to curb prostitution in our society

- i. Librarians can play great roles in information literacy by organizing conferences, training to acquire skills, seminars and workshops against the intake of hard drugs and prostitution.
- ii. Stopping/banning the sale of hard drugs like tramadol, marijuana cocaine and the like; that lead them into the act. Librarians must counsel/advice, guide them through books they have read on Human Immune -deficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immune Deficiency (AIDs), and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), publishing books in the areas for users to read, lecturing them on the dangers of prostituting and drug intake.
- iii. Using signposts to discourage the use of hard drugs and illegal dressing (for dress code).
- iv. Creating laws abolishing prostitution of any sort in the country and enforcing them so that anybody caught in the act would be prosecuted and jailed (both the patronizers and those in the act). Our traditional methods can also be applied to put fear in the participants who do not want public disgrace.
- v. Supporting their financial needs by empowering them through jobs, starting up businesses and sending them to school which takes care of their welfare. However, the provision of finance through NGOs, Library associations, even Federal and State governments for empowerment in skills acquisition to become good entrepreneurs so that they too can be wealth creators and employers of labour (Horsfall, 2017).
- vi. The federal and state governments should live up to their responsibilities in condemning the acts on media links, supporting library associations with finances to help set up businesses/sending the practitioners to schools.
- vii. Brothel owners could be charged with conspiracy for harboring prostitutes, conduct that is likely to constitute a breach of peace and unlawful possession of illicit drugs.

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