

Failed Rescue Mission, Child Prostitution and Resuccumbing Factors in Gauteng, South Africa

Ephraim Kevin Sibanyoni and Sogo Angel Olofinbiyi*

Department of Criminology & Forensic Studies, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

Abstract: The study describes child prostitution as the worst violation of fundamental Human Rights – a pervasive trend that has been synonymous to modern form of slavery. There is evidence that children usually get initiated into prostitution either by being abducted or lured by promises of certain existential needs of life. Despite the degree at which prostitution renders children and youths vulnerable to physical health crises and psychological harm, they still resuccumb to prostitution after having been rescued by organizations of concern. It was discovered that most of the children that participated in the questionnaire-based survey had been rescued from prostitution more than once in their respective lifetimes. The study established that children's resuccumbing to prostitution is precipitated by factors such as money, drugs and alcohol addiction, as well as a sense of independence. The study recommends further research inquiries to be undertaken to better understand the intricacies associated with sexual exploitation of children and provide more effective and culturally sensitive measures to prevent affected children from these unscrupulous practices. Strengthening the effectiveness of counselling techniques in rehabilitating sexually exploited children is another way forward.

Keywords: Child prostitution, Child victims, Failed rescue mission, Resuccumbing factors, Safe shelters, Sexual exploitation.

INTRODUCTION

Studies have described child prostitution as the worst violation of human rights and has been equated to modern form of slavery; it destroys the psychological balance, health and the morale of children that are involved in the practice (Balakrishnan, 2020). In many cases, there is evidence of chronic exploitation in which the affected teens are incapacitated, chained, beaten, raped and burnt with cigarettes. Sexual infections and diseases are also deemed to result from these acts; and of which, HIV/AIDS is the worst holocaust. In addition, an appreciable number of children that are involved in the acts have become drug dependent, even at tender ages of their livelihood (Olofinbiyi *et al.*, 2016; Topi, 2004: 4). Throughout the world, children usually enter prostitution either by being abducted or lured by promises of educational opportunities. These children may also be sold into prostitution by their families, while they become the only breadwinner and economically active persons in those families. They often experience severe poverty; causing some of them to either drop out of school or never start schooling at all. Some of these children have become victims of severe physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as neglect. A significant number of children are victims of domestic violence – such that emanates from broken homes and dysfunctional families and results in

children running away from homes in search of better life. Put differently, those affected children end up on the street where they become vulnerable to ruthless pimps and/or syndicates that introduce them to prostitution as an alternative way of earning an income (See Olofinbiyi *et al.*, 2016:11; Nicolaou and Duriex, 2005: 14; Van Wyk, 2004: 16; Hessenlink-Louw, 2001: 223-237).

This study is of the view that children in the practice of prostitution should be seen as victims of circumstances that are beyond their control; thereby causing them to become susceptible to sexual molestation, abuse and reckless rape. It is established that children are not always active participants in prostitution but an external force has been observed to have rendered them victims of prostitution. This study contends that children, having become victims of prostitution, they mostly find it difficult to leave the industry. Even though some leave, they still resuccumb to the behavioural practice, regardless of the rigour of rehabilitative measures they might have been subjected to over time and space. Consequent upon the myriad of findings on child and youth prostitution in the extant literature, this study was designed (focussing attention on children who were sexually exploited, and are now under a rehabilitation programme in the Gauteng Province of South Africa) to unravel the contributory and resuccumbing factors that constantly degenerate children into prostitution even after having been rescued by government and non-governmental organizations of concern.

Address correspondence to this author at the Department of Criminology & Forensic Studies, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa; Tel: +27671017973; Fax: +27713870178; E-mail: sogoukzn@gmail.com

There are various Organizations such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), Social welfare and Social Development Agencies in South Africa, that are dealing with issues on child prostitution, trying to prevent and control the act by rescuing children who are involved using day or night outreach programmes. Research inquiries unfold that the rescue organizations go to the places where these children are being sexually exploited and thus recruit them. After having been recruited, they are taken to places of safety such as organizational shelters for rehabilitation (Faulkner, 2020). However, this study uncovers that these children are said to find their ways back into the streets or to their pimps, where they were formerly recruited. Based on the meta-analysis of empirical literature on child prostitution, this study sees preventive measures as a panacea to mitigate the trends among the affected children rather than the rescue measures that have hitherto not produced the desired results. The study also adds that many children are lured into prostitution in various ways; and their exposure has negatively impacted their health conditions, social, economic and educational lives at various levels of their livelihood (See Olofinbiyi *et al.*, 2019; Bamgbose, 2002; Baker, 2000). Despite the deplorable impacts of prostitution on the affected population, children are still driven by the societal pressure into the practice, even after having been rescued. Nevertheless, deciphering the resuccumbing factors that degenerate those 'salvaged children' into prostitution is one of the paramount questions being addressed in this study.

The distinctiveness of this study is premised upon its dominant quantitative approach based on a positivist paradigm, and the fact that a wide array of previously conducted studies had solely adopted either document analysis or a review of the literature. Furthermore, most studies conducted internationally and nationally had focused attention only on children that are on the streets, whose livelihoods are subject to the socio-economic pressure of their neighbourhood; and who are still repeatedly trapped into prostitution as a consequence of the societal pressure. Identifying this gap, the current study focuses interest on the children who were already rescued from prostitution and are now in safe shelters in Gauteng, South Africa. From the available literature, it is evident that most researchers and scholars across the global spectrum have paid little or no attention to the resuccumbing factors that push a sizeable number of children into prostitution despite all measures being put in place to salvage them from making a life out prostitution. This research will

contribute to the existing body of knowledge by addressing the following questions: Which factors contribute to children's resuccumbing to prostitution after being rescued? And who rescues these children from prostitution?

Issues on Child Prostitution: A Global Phenomenon

Roby (2005: 48) observes that the problem of child prostitution is that it consists of activities that are conducted underground (secretively done although publicly known), and therefore, data information is difficult to obtain or may be incomplete. Fraley (2005: 79) highlights the fact that many countries do not even collect data on this scourge any longer. However, what is currently in vogue is that the figures of children being sexually exploited in different countries can add up to a million. A research inquiry by Denisova (2001:15) unfolded that girls as well as boys are the victims of child sexual exploitation for a profit; and that children as tender as six years of age had been documented to have experienced sexual and violent exploitations (See Henry-Lee, 2020). An excellent and comparative study advanced by Olofinbiyi *et al.* (2016; 2015) gives credence to this study by arguing that adolescent girls in commercial sex business are in the age-range of 10–19. Given the mean age of adolescent prostitutes in Nigeria as 16.9 years old, the scholars concluded that the highest proportion of children who are actively engaged in prostitution joined the business at the earlier ages of their productive lives. In the same vein, more agitation on the pathetic trends and the rate at which children run into prostitution was well illustrated in the work of Klain (1999:11), when he espoused that the majority of teenage prostitutes is probably younger than 16 years of age.

These trends appear to be occurring worldwide with a significant record in countries such as Thailand, Mexico, India, Asia, Latin America and the United States. Corroborating this assertion, the existing data unearthed that roughly 1.5million children in India, 1 million in Asia, 100,000 children in the United States and 500 children in Latin America had involved in prostitution (Olofinbiyi *et al.*, 2019:4; Healy, 2009:35). However, from the standpoint of Jubilee Action Report (2005:10), an approximate population of over one million female children join prostitution each year on the global spectrum. Nevertheless, the secretive nature of child prostitution across the global contemporary societies makes it virtually a difficult task in terms of calculating the exact number of working

prostitutes in urban centres (Olofinbiyi *et al.*, 2019:3). Emphasizing on the pervasive spread of child prostitution in the later part of the 20th century, the International Labour Organization estimates that between 0.25% and 1.5% of the total female population is engaged in this trade in urban areas (ILO, 1993-1994).

Congruently, roughly 1 million children are compelled into prostitution every year and the total number of child prostitutes could be as high as 10 million (Willis and Levy 2002: 14, 17; See also Hesselink-Louw 2001: 30-32;). A report by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Report (2002) showed that, up to 30,000 child prostitutes are currently a common sight in the United States. Santos (1996: 60) declared that these children who are of common sight in the United State are less than 11 or 12 years of age and can be as young as 9 years old. It is synonymously reported by Olofinbiyi *et al.* (2016:10) and Santos (1996:61) that children may enter the world of prostitution through different means. This assertion was confirmed in the insightful study conducted by the former authors, when they submitted that an appreciable number of children, about 45.9% were introduced to the profession through peer group influence at school, 36.6% through personal effort, 12.4% through peer group influence on the street, while 2.4% through mass media and 2.1% through a family member. Looking from the lens of the foregoing studies, this article adds that children can also be kidnapped and abducted into prostitution, sold by the family, or dragged into the act as a result of the constant pressure of poverty. By the same token, children may enter prostitution industry through adult revenues by prostituting in bars, brothels, streets, and at parties.

Studies have described Thailand as another significant source, transit and destination country in the trafficking of children for sexual purposes (Tsai and Dichter, 2019). Selling sex for money is offered on the streets, private settings, as well as popular tourist areas. The estimated total of child prostitutes living in Thailand ranges from 12,000 to the hundreds of thousands (Frely,2005: 34). According to Hipolito (2007:11), prostitution is closely linked with poverty, lack of education, social conditions, and pressure to contribute to the family income. Moreover, an extensive research inquiry by the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund revealed that, as of June 2000, more than 16,000 children in Mexico were involved in prostitution. This particular research asserted that, girls

as young as 13 to 17 years old, were prostitutes in Acapulco and Cancun, working out of cafés and bars, where they were waitresses (UNICEF, 2001). Research has also established that escort agencies and massage parlours often offer sexual services provided by under aged children; and this service also seems to have been openly promoted via the social media (Thompson, 2020). On the whole, the following countries, being referenced in literature, have served as a platform through which scholars, researchers, government and non-governmental agencies, as well as policy makers, could have an oversight of the extent at which prostitution has created several social vices for children across a diverse range of contemporary global communities.

Empirical Studies on Child Prostitution in South Africa

In South Africa, there are relatively no reliable figures regarding the nature and extent of child prostitution. Various researchers (Neethling, 2007; Bolowana, 2004: 2; Smith, 2004: 1-2; Hesselink-Louw, 2001: 29-30), reported that there are no national statistics and/or official police records available on the actual number and age of children involved in child prostitution. On the contrary, during the year 2004, empirical studies by (Bolowana, 2004: 1; Smith, 2004: 2) reported that approximately 40 000 children in South Africa were involved in child prostitution. It was equally stated that approximately 25% of prostitutes in South Africa were children, and up to 25% of street children were involved in child sex work. From the standpoint of Police Child Protection Unit in Johannesburg (2007, April 18), "about 48,000 children are engaged in prostitution and approximately 15 new girls between the age of 15 and 18 are arrested every month".

Cooper's (2003:1) research findings indicated that Pietermaritzburg and Durban in KwaZulu-Natal feature prominently in the trafficking of children for prostitution in South Africa. The "point area" in Durban was identified as a popular area where young girls were sold as prostitutes. Studies by Karlsen (2019) and Cooper (2003:1) comparatively revealed that groups of school girls between 11 and 16 years old frequent discos and prostitute themselves at various prostitution rings operating in Kwa Zulu-Natal province of the nation. Similarly, a link between economic difficulty and prostitution is also evident in Cape Town where about one-fourth of Cape Town's street children are estimated to be engaged in prostitution (Van Niekerk,2003; ECPAT, 2001).

Neethling (2007) stated that in Gauteng, children from the age of 11 years are a common sight on the streets of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Most of these victims are addicted to substance such as alcohol and drugs, especially crack cocaine. Furthermore, Neethling maintains that these girls are regularly assaulted by their pimps and clients, the money they earn from sexual activities or services rendered to “customers” is not paid to them, but to the people who own them, who force them into prostitution; and some of these children are even forced to have unprotected sex (See Olofinbiyi *et al.*, 2018:5).

According to Neethling (2007), it is easy to manipulate and intimidate child prostitutes, as most of them are still ignorant and very naive about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). They are also uninformed about their rights (i.e. to be protected against violence, abuse and slavery) and their position under the law; and this creates an open access to their vulnerability (Van der Merwe, 2007: 1-5; Hessenlink-Louw, 2001:166-167,219,244). The Department of Health (2000) states that this vulnerability exposes them to abuse and assault, and may even cause a threat to their lives. It is further established that the children may lack the inherent privilege of childhood experiences, self-esteem, opportunities for good health and education (DoH, 2000).

Precipitating Factors and Child Prostitution in South Africa

The rationale for entering prostitution differs across societies; yet children offering sex for materials exchange have a regular arena where they patronize themselves to clients and this scenario seems to have predisposed them into victimization (Jones, 2019). Similarly, it becomes crucial to understand some pushing factors of prostitution outside the circumference of rational choice ideology. It is found that lack of formal employment opportunities or required skills are drivers to enter prostitution. Even with the deficit of job opportunities, the choice to begin offering sex may have other financial drivers (Hounmenou, 2016). Actually, as indicated in the extant literature, monetary earnest needs, vagrancy and absence of adequate assets are the essential drivers for individuals to enter prostitution (Olofinbiyi *et al.*, 2015; Outshoom, 2019). No wonder Font, Miyamoto and Pinto (2020) argue that children in such awkward situations will definitely turn out to be casualties of sexual abuse.

The trend of child prostitution in South Africa is diverse and encompasses the involvement of young sex workers who act as professional whores in certain urban areas (Sumon and Khan, 2020). In the same vein, the evolvement of the “blesser and blesse” relationships purportedly commenced when some young ladies posted pictures of themselves home and abroad, shopping and driving costly autos or wearing costly garments. It appears the wonder has turned into a web sensation, with numerous young ladies searching for more established men to support their costly ways of life (Jonas, 2019). Nevertheless, this phenomenon is said to have precipitated a new form of child prostitution in South Africa.

The financial prospect of sex work has made it a profession desirable to more women and it entices young girls who voluntarily go in search of elderly men (Jonas, 2019). This phenomenon does not exclude virtually all global contemporary societies, thus making child prostitution an issue of great concern in contemporary South African debate. Studies have also shown that the severe economic climate of the cities usually gives birth to unemployment, poverty, want and neediness; and these factors predispose urban dwellers, particularly the adolescent girls, into prostitution as an alternative means of survival (Sumon and Khan, 2020; Jonas, 2019; Jones, 2019; Olofinbiyi *et al.*, 2019). In a nut shell, addressing the conditions that impoverish and put to slavery the life of urban dwellers will reduce the influx of children into prostitution and other forms of deviant behaviour, as well as spread of various sexually transmitted diseases in South African communities.

Nonetheless, the aim of this paper is not only to highlight the intriguing causal factors for child prostitution but also to usher a scientifically based argument towards establishing a causal link between resuccumbing factors and child prostitution in South Africa. It is, thus, established that the attendant challenges and resuccumbing factors of child prostitution include drug addiction, poverty and unemployment; all of which have been observed to generate several vices that predispose children into prostitution in South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative methodological approach was employed for collecting data for the study. Flexibility involved in the use of the technique allowed the researchers to answer each of the research questions

in the most effective manner. A survey design was adopted where questionnaires were employed as a primary method of collecting data. This section underlines the various strategies that were undertaken in generating and analyzing the quantitative data.

Sampling Techniques

The study utilized a simple random sampling for the selection of a sample size of forty-six (46) respondents (between the age-limit 8 and 20) who were exploited into prostitution; and who are now under behavioural modification in four of the selected Gauteng NGO shelters. The researchers chose this age-group because those respondents within this age-bracket are the mostly targeted and exploited for sexual purposes; and most clients prefer more or less such prostitutes who are in this age-group. A significant justification for selecting only 46 out of a total population of 80 youths and children in the NGO shelters was because, the remaining 34 residents in the NGO shelters were of age-bracket, which was significantly above the childhood age-range. Hence, they could not be selected for the study, considering the scope of the study, which was focused solely on children. The simple random sampling was utilized to recruit respondents from a population of eighty (80) youths and children, who were rescued from prostitution, and who were already in Gauteng NGO shelters. Data were collected from 4 Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs) with which each organization had a number of children and youths in their shelters. The recruitment process at each NGO centre was executed by collecting the names of all the children at the designated centres and putting all the names inside the hat; after which they were thoroughly mixed until the respondents were randomly selected. Thus, a sample size of 46 was generated. The researchers chose to use simple random sampling because random selection mechanisms are independent means of selection that are free from human judgment and other biases that can inadvertently undermine the independence of each selection (Iqbal, Moeen, Ali, and Iqbal, 2020).

Data Collection Method

Questionnaires were employed as an instrument of gathering data from children who were prostitutes, and who were already residing in the four NGO shelters, which rescued them from prostitution. The researchers decided to use this instrument of data gathering as it enabled them overcome pitfalls such as disclosure of sensitive personal information and experiences

regarding their prostitution life. During the continuance of data collection, it was observed that some children and youths had difficulty in expressing their personal life experiences. Rather, they preferred to write their responses down in such a way to maintain some degree of anonymity.

The principal investigator employed one female assistant (fieldworker) in gathering the data. The reason for using a female assistant was that female child prostitutes might have a problem in divulging their personal information and painful experience to a male researcher; while they may, on the other hand, be at ease to talk or answer the questionnaire if they see a female researcher involved in this study. The research assistant was trained on the procedures required for data collection and administration of questionnaires. She was also briefed on the overview of ethical considerations needed to take into consideration when gathering the data from the respondents.

The questionnaires were administered to all respondents in exactly the same way to minimize the role and influence of the principal investigator and his assistant; and to enhance a more objective comparison of the results. The questionnaires were distributed and collected personally by the researchers from the respondents after which they were filled out ensuring a maximum return of the questionnaires. While the researcher and his fieldworker were gathering data, it all happened that some respondents could not write nor read due to various reasons such as school drop-out and kidnapping cases, as well as incapacity or lack of privilege to attend schools at tender ages of their existence. In a situation like this, the principal investigator and his assistant were compelled to read out the questionnaire to them in their preferable languages without changing or altering the use of words.

It took each respondent 25 minutes on average to complete the questionnaire. The English used in the questionnaire was translated into IsiZulu and Sepedi for those respondents whose home language is not English. The research respondents completed the questionnaires anonymously and detailed instructions were given beforehand. Though the respondents were not forced to take part, they did so out of their own free will upon being granted permission to participate by the NGO managers. It was also stressed that there were no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. The questions were completed over a period of four weeks. The data collection technique assisted the researchers in achieving the aim of the study.

Data Analysis

The data for the study were analyzed using SPSS Version 20.0 system, tables and graphs. The adoption of "Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 20.0 (SPSS)" helped ensure accuracy and reliability of the findings that were generated from the collected data because it yields numerical value, which is also a comprehensive system for analyzing data. Since the study solely adopted a quantitative methodological approach, numerical data were generated to discuss the findings of the study. SPSS Version 20.0 helped the researchers produce trends, descriptive statistics and tabulated reports, chats, and plots of distribution. Once the fieldwork had been completed, analysis and interpretation of data began with the following steps:

Step 1: Organising and coding of data on the questionnaires

Step 2: Capturing the data

Step 3: Cleaning the data (correct errors in the coding and capturing of the data).

Step 1: Organising and Coding of Data on the Questionnaires

The questionnaires were organised by first checking whether each questionnaire was correctly completed by the respondents. In total, forty-six questionnaires were used in the study. Secondly, each questionnaire was given a unique number in the space provided on

the questionnaire. Thirdly, the coding was done by transferring the number or numerical value of the response to each question in the block provided on the questionnaire for data entry and capturing.

Step 2: Data Capturing

At this stage, the collected, organized and coded questionnaires were captured into the SPSS Version 20.0 in order to generate descriptive statistics for tabulated reports, chats, and plots of distribution

Step 3: Cleaning the Data

This stage requires a careful cleaning-up of all possible errors that were observed during data coding and entry. Since mistakes are common at this point of data analysis, efforts were put in place to ensure that all available questionnaires were carefully checked. The questionnaires were also thoroughly examined to discover any possibility of missing data. The procedural steps are highly essential as they helped ensure validity and reliability of the research findings.

RESULTS

This section focuses on the rescuing of the respondents from prostitution, what factors contribute to the respondents' resuccumbing to prostitution after having been rescued, who rescued them from prostitution and what have they provided to prevent the resuccumbing after rescuing the respondents.

Table 1: Rescuing of Children from Prostitution

	Have you been rescued from prostitution?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	33	71.7	71.7	71.7
	No	13	28.3	28.3	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	
	If yes, how many times have you been rescued from selling sex?				
Valid	Many times	9	19.6	27.3	27.3
	Once	12	26.1	36.4	63.6
	Twice	6	13.0	18.2	81.8
	3-6 times	6	13.0	18.2	100.0
	Total	33	71.7	100.0	
	Missing System	13	28.3		
	Total	46	100.0		
	If no, is this your first time of being rescued from selling sex?				
	Valid Yes	13	28.3	100.0	100.0
	Missing System	33	71.7		
	Total	46	100.0		

Table 1 indicates the rescuing of the respondents from prostitution. 71.7% (n=33) of the respondents have been rescued from prostitution, and 28.3% (n=13) have not been rescued before, and this is their first time of being rescued. 36.4% (n=12) indicates that they have been rescued once, 27.3% (n=9) indicates they have been rescued many times and 18.2% (n=6) shows they have been rescued twice, 18.2% (n=6) indicates they have been rescued 3-6 times. The researchers are of the view that many respondents are being rescued from prostitution, even though some of them have been rescued more than once. It is evident as shown in Table 1 that respondents do resuccumb to prostitution even after they have been rescued.

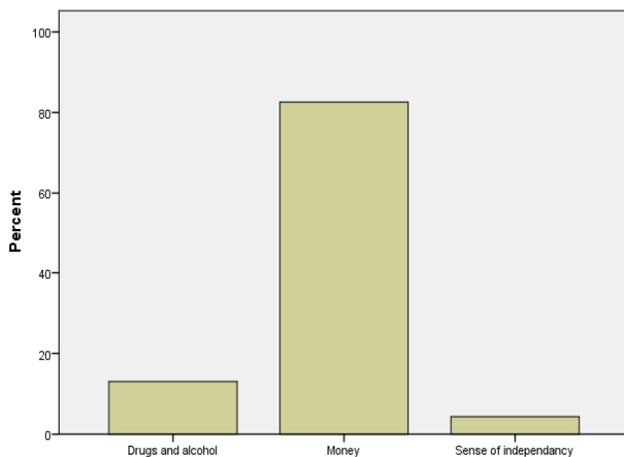


Figure 1: Resuccumbing factors.

Figure 1 reveals that 82.6% (n=33) of the respondents reported that money can make them go back into prostitution even after they have been rescued, 13.0% (n=6) of them are of the opinion that drugs and alcohol can make them resuccumb while 4.3% (n=2) of the respondents reported that sense of independence can make them go back into prostitution.

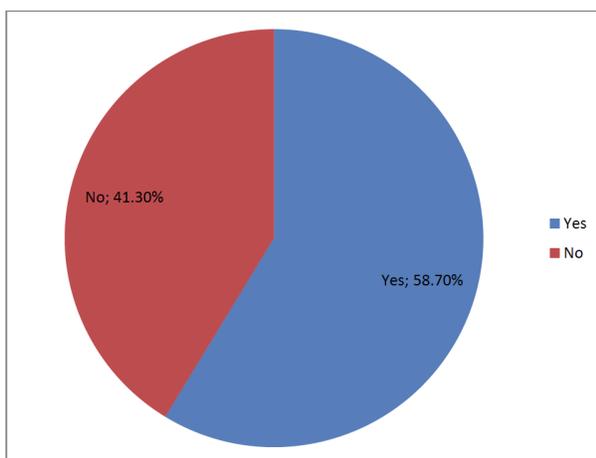


Figure 2: Role of clients in resuccumbing.

Figure 2 reveals that 58.7% (n=27) of the respondents reported that clients do come after them even after they have been rescued from prostitution and 41.3% (n=19) of the respondents reported that clients do not come after them. Given that majority of the respondents expressed that clients do come after them after being rescued, the researchers are of the opinion that children go back into prostitution as a result of restless disturbance from clients who pursue them for sexual gains, even after they have been rescued from the practice.

DISCUSSION

On the Question of “who Rescues these Children from Prostitution”

Most children have been rescued and prevented from going back to prostitution by NGOs, clients, friends and boyfriends. These role players have provided food, shelter, clothing, and legitimate employment as a way of preventing them from resuccumbing to prostitution. They also provide the children drugs and alcohol rehabilitation, trauma counselling as well as protection from their pimps and clients. Despite all these efforts, this study reveals that those children still find their ways back to prostitution. A study conducted by Hesselink-Louw (2001: 255, 272-273) radiates a high sense of similarity with this current study by maintaining that there are important aspects of children’s lives that need to be addressed in order to rehabilitate children who have been in prostitution. These aspects include: alcohol and drug rehabilitation, food, shelter and clothing, counselling (i.e. to address Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Abuse), training in skills such as life skills, communication skills, conflict-resolution skills, anger management and decision-making skills, education (most children need to resume their education and often a considerable period has passed since they last attended school), medical assistance regarding their possible prior exposure to abortions, complications, HIV/AIDS and all sorts of sexually transmitted diseases.

The study also reveals that most of the clients still come after the children even after their rescue from prostitution. In these circumstances, most of the children, when apprehended by the clients, they tell them that they are no longer into prostitution (i.e. they no longer sell sex), others ignore them, some run away, others swear at them at the clients, some get tempted to go with them, others actually go with them because they need money. That is why Hesselink-

Louw (2001: 272-274) maintains that it is very difficult to rehabilitate children who have been sexually exploited. Her research has indeed shown that to get children rescued from prostitution, one needs to provide substitutes for the money they earn from prostitution and their independence (i.e. ability to make their own choices, sustain themselves financially, and choose their food, socialization, eating and sleeping patterns).

On the Question of “which Factors Contribute to Children’s Resuccumbing to Prostitution after being Rescued”

There are three factors that contribute to children’s resuccumbing to prostitution after being rescued. These factors are: money, drugs and alcohol addictions and sense of independence. The study found that many children resuccumb to prostitution for lack of money, as some of them come from an impoverished background, where they have been family’s bread winners, saddled with the responsibility of taking care of their families. A reasonable number of the children from the study acknowledged scarcity of employment as a resuccumbing factor into prostitution, irrespective of the fact that the NGOs that rescued them seldom look for employment for them. As a result, they had no choice but to revert to the streets where they make money. It was also reported that the children receive more than R5000 monthly on the streets and that money helps them maintain their families back at home. Majority of the respondents reported that drugs and alcohol dependency drove them back to prostitution even after they have been rescued. They declared that being under the influence of drug and alcohol makes them high in such a way that they forget their agonies, sufferings, worries and stress and that, they find comfort in drugs and alcohol consumption. They alluded that drugs make them forget their suffering and pains; after which they have to go back to the streets to prostitute so that they can support their livelihood. Sense of dependence was also shared by most participants, as most of them stressed that they resuccumbed because they do not wish to be controlled by anyone. Finally, the study reveals that most of the children have been rescued from prostitution more than once. It is evident that many of these children are resuccumbing to prostitution after being rescued; and their resuccumbing factors are precipitated by money, drugs and alcohol addiction and a sense of independence.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the world, there is evidence that children usually enter prostitution either by being abducted or lured by promises of certain existential needs of life such as, employment, good shelter, educational opportunities and money. Non-fulfilment or deficit of any of these needs may engender severe poverty and wretchedness such that may truncate the educational opportunities of children at any stage of their lives. Consequently, the affected children may be left with no other alternatives but to choose prostitution as the only probable means of sustaining their livelihood. Drawing from this study, it was uncovered that some of these children eventually became victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse as well as neglect. In such situation, children that are lucky enough to escape remain traumatized for the rest of their lives. However, not all child prostitutes are able to escape the prostitution industry because of the pressure of life.

The children who are sexually exploited might have the tendency to face long-term physical health problems caused by sexual abuse. This may include internal injury and reproductive problems for female children. Children and youths who are in prostitution face profound psychological damage, which may cause them to develop a severe personality trait and loss of trust and confidence. Psychosocial or Psychological trauma is a huge danger for children in prostitution and can result in depression, anti-social behaviour, anxiety, dissociation, autism and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Being affected by the foregoing features, children and youths who are sexually exploited may engage in other forms of problem behaviour such as self-mutilation, exhibitionism, voyeurism and may be prone to suicidal tendencies (See Green, 2018).

Despite the degree at which children and youths are subject to physical health crises and psychological harm, caused as a result of exposure to prostitution, they still resuccumb to prostitution after having been rescued from the practice. It was also discovered that most of the children that participated in the survey had been rescued from prostitution more than once in their individual lifetime. The study found evidence to establish that children’s resuccumbing to prostitution is being precipitated by factors such as money, drugs and alcohol, as well as a sense of independence.

To mitigate the trends among the affected children, viable alternative job opportunities through educational

and vocational training should be made available to all identified victims of sexual exploitation. There must be a compulsory educational system needed to be tightened up and used as a tool of re-orientating children about the perils of sexual abuse and child exploitation. Further empirical research should be undertaken to better understand the sexual extortion of children and improve the services required to deal with their welfares. Such research should focus on more effective and culturally sensitive measures to prevent sexual exploitation of children. The need to motivate children and youths to move away from prostitution is highly contestable. The efficacy of counselling techniques in rehabilitating sexually exploited children is a way forward.

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(02\)08355-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)08355-1)

Received on 23-04-2020

Accepted on 22-05-2020

Published on 10-06-2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2020.09.18>

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