

Factors Influencing Sexual Behaviours Among Children Living on Streets with Particular Focus on Harare Central Business District



Social Science

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ABSTRACT

Children Living On Streets (CLONS), the world over, tend to indulge in various despicable anti-social behaviours. That they live on the streets, like lunatics, if not worse than wild animals, is not so much of their own-making, but rather, a result of a multiplicity of factors, a focus that is outside the realm of this study. One of such behaviour is sex, not only between boys and girls, but also among boys as well as among girls. This study concerned itself with determining factors that influence CLONS in Zimbabwe to delight in promiscuity at such tender age, but focusing only on Harare Central Business (HBD). The study mainly used the Qualitative Research Methodological Approach, but also used the Qualitative Paradigm whenever it was seen to be the most appropriate in effectively illustrating issues. Data was collected mainly through the use of guided interview schedules, for majority of research participants representing CLONS were considered incapable of answering questionnaires since most of them were illiterate. Questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents with close contact with CLONS, such as social workers and police. The study unearthed compelling evidence that showed that CLONS wallow in promiscuity largely because of substance abuse, peer pressure, street sub-culture, stigma and discrimination. The study recommends that: 1) Abandoning, or wilful neglect of children should be illegal and liable to imprisonment with hard labour; 2) Living on the streets should be illegalised and liable to imprisonment with hard labour; 3) Giving any form of gift to CLONS should be illegal and liable to imprisonment with hard labour; 4) Giving any form of gift to CLONS should be illegal and liable to imprisonment with hard labour; 5) Government should establish at least one special Centre in each of the 10 Provinces where the CLONS would be resettled as boarders and receive holistic education – academic, physical, moral and manual; 5) Any CLONS who deserts from such Centres should be liable to imprisonment with hard labour; 6) Government should make concerted effort and have adequate Social Workers to provide counselling services to these young social misfits; and, lastly, 7) Multiplicity of Organisations, which only after Decolonisation, are now so enthusiastically and clamorously clamouring for children's rights, but were quite mute during the Colonial Epoch, should demonstrate their sincerity by pouring in money and support the Zimbabwe Government in not only establishing such Centres, but also have them made more attractive and well staffed.

Introduction

Children Living On The Streets (CLONS), the world over and of whatever colour or pigmentation, tend to indulge in various despicable anti-social behaviours. That such children live on the streets, like lunatics, if not worse than wild animals, is not so much of their own-making, but rather, a result of a multiplicity of factors, a focus that is outside the realm of this study. One of the most disturbing behaviours of the CLONS is sex, not only between boys and girls, but also among boys as well as among girls, who engage in lesbianism. This study concerned itself with determining factors that influence CLONS in Zimbabwe to delight in promiscuity at such a tender age, but focusing only on Harare Central Business District (HBCD). The study mainly used the Qualitative Research Methodological Approach, but also resorted to Qualitative Paradigm whenever it was seen to be the most appropriate methodological approach in effectively illustrating issue under discussion. Data was collected mainly through the use of guided interview schedules, for majority of research participants representing CLONS were considered incapable of answering questionnaires since most of them were illiterate. Questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents with close contact with CLONS, such as Social Workers, Harare Municipal Police and the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). The study unearthed massive compelling evidence that showed that CLONS in HBCD wallow in promiscuity largely because of substance abuse, peer pressure, street sub-culture, stigma and discrimination.

Literature Review

In a study on what Rugaranganda(2008), Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Zimbabwe, calls "Harare street boys", in which he cites numerous long testimonies of primary research participants in Shona, which though quite interesting to read for those who speak Shona, is Greek to non-Shona speakers. He observes that CLONS in Harare in general, regularly use coca

cola or opaque beer, as aphrodisiacs. However, Rugaranganda appears to have limited his observations to traditional aphrodisiacs, for he is silent about the use of modern aphrodisiacs by CLONS. This omission is critical, for these unfortunate and misguided children tend to have easier access to modern aphrodisiacs than traditional ones. Consequently, it is cogent to argue that Rugaranganda's study grossly understates the degree to which CLONS in Harare use aphrodisiacs. How can such social misfits, totally bankrupt of unhu (decorum) be given such stuff by any reasonable and respectable elder? Only a pimp or a scum would do that, for Our Lord Jesus Christ (Mathew 19: 14) said: "Let the children come to me and do not stop them because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these."

Three years later, Tyler, Hagewen and Melander(2011) undertook a study entitled "Risk Factors for Running Away...". They state that, substance abuse influences sexual behaviours of street children. This observation ties with that of Rugaranganda, with the exception that, the former is rather more general about aphrodisiacs used, while the later is more specific. The difference lies in the fact that the more specific, traditional aphrodisiacs are less used by CLONS, for they are not easily accessible, and moreso, in urban areas. It is therefore apposite to argue CONS in HBCD mainly use modern aphrodisiacs, for they are easily accessible than traditional ones.

Methodology

The study mainly used the Qualitative Research Methodological Approach, but also used the Quantitative Paradigm whenever it was seen to be the most appropriate in effectively illustrating issues. Data was collected mainly through the use of guided interview schedules, for majority of research participants representing CLONS were considered incapable of answering questionnaires since most of them are illiterate. Since the primary respondents were largely illiterate, interviews were conducted in

Shona and responses recorded in English. Questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents who had close contact with CLONS, such as social workers, Harare Municipal Police, and Zimbabwe Republic Police. These were written in English, for the secondary respondents were all professionals who are fluent in the Anglo-Saxon Language.

Findings and Discussion

The study unearthed compelling evidence which show that CLONS in HCBA:

- Regularly indulge in promiscuity largely because of substance abuse, peer pressure, street sub-culture, street sub-culture, stigma and discrimination.
- Regularly use aphrodisiacs to enhance their sexual urge and vigour.
- Irregularly use traditional aphrodisiacs, which Ruperanganda (2008) appear to have mainly focused on, for they are not easily accessible.
- Regularly use modern aphrodisiacs, for they are easily accessible.

Society is inescapably responsible for the disgusting life being led by CLONS. Firstly, it is society that has failed to provide love and care to these children that they ended up living worse than wild animals. They never asked to be born. Parents must be made accountable for the actions and behaviour of their off-springs. Second, where parents are unable to discharge their responsibilities, society has an obligation of assisting them to do so. Third, it is society's responsibility to ensure that these social misfits learn to be responsible citizens and try to live like human beings, by taking whatever measures are necessary to bring the message very clear to them that their animal-like behaviour can never be tolerated. Lastly, society should not give a blind eye to the disgusting behaviour of these children, for doing so gives such behaviour a Certificate of Respectability and encourages these children to continue living like animals.

This study recommends that:

- Abandoning, or wilful neglect, of children should be illegalised;
- Living on the streets should be illegalised;
- Giving any form of gift to CLONS should be strongly discouraged;
- Government should establish at least one special Centre in each of the 10 Provinces where the CLONS would be resettled as boarders and receive holistic education – academic, physical, moral and manual;
- Any CLON who deserts from such Centres should be arrested and send back to the Centre;
- Government should make concerted effort and try to have adequate Social Workers to provide counselling services to these young social misfits; and, lastly,
- Multiplicity of organisations, which only after Decolonisation, are now so enthusiastically clamouring for children's rights, but were quite mute during the Colonial Epoch, should demonstrate their sincerity by pouring in money and support the Government of Zimbabwe in not only establishing such Centres, but also having them made more attractive and well staffed.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, certain salient points may be made. It is crystal pellucid that, CLONS in HCBA, and indeed, in other urban areas throughout Zimbabwe, regularly indulge in promiscuity largely because of substance abuse, peer pressure, street sub-culture, stigma and discrimination. That these children live on the streets, like lunatics, if not worse than wild animals, is not so much of their own-making, but rather, a result of society's failure to love and affectionately look after them. None of these social misfits ever asked to be born. Ipso facto, parents must be made accountable for the actions and behaviour of their off-springs. Where parents are unable to discharge their responsibilities, society has an obligation of assisting them to do so. Second, it is society's responsibility to ensure that these social misfits learn to be responsible citizens and try to live like human beings, by taking whatever measures are necessary to bring the message very clear to them that, their animal-like behaviour can never be tolerated. Society should not give a blind eye to the disgusting behaviour of these children, for doing so gives such sociopathic behaviour a Certificate of Respectability and encourages these children to continue living like animals. Government should make concerted effort and have adequate Social Workers to provide counselling services to these young social misfits. And, lastly, multiplicity of organisations, which only after Decolonisation, are now so enthusiastically clamouring for children's rights, but were quite mute during the Colonial Epoch, should demonstrate their sincerity by pouring in money, which they certainly have, for they are spending millions and millions of US Dollars on advocacy, and support the Zimbabwe Government in not only establishing such Centres, but also having them made more attractive and well staffed.

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