

**DEPICTION OF HARD LABOUR AND VIOLENCE  
AGAINST A CHILD IN SELECTED YORUBA  
NOVELS**

By

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**Abstract**

This paper examines the recurring issue of hard labour and violence against a child in the Nigerian society drawing evidences from the Yoruba novelists' perspectives and societal experiences. Although there are existing studies on various forms of violence in the society even against children, yet there is still need for a research on how various forms of violence against children have been depicted in Yorùbá novels, causes of these violence and preventive measures suggested by the novelists, to eradicate or reduce to minimal level in the society. This is the focus of this paper. Six Yorùbá Novels were purposively selected that depict one form of violence or another against a child, relating to the current happenings in the Nigerian society. Attachment theory was used to validate the findings of this research. Three major forms of violence against a child were identified: physical, sexual, and psychological violence. This

violence was then reflected in forms of beating a child, child hard labour, prevention from education, child hawking during school hours, emotional manipulation, and rape. The research discovers that the main perpetrators of child violence are mostly adults who have attached themselves to the child as sole provider or caregiver. In conclusion, the paper, as suggested by the novelists, submits that there is an urgent need for continuous counseling of children, parents and the society at large on the issue of violence against children about the provision of the Nigerian child Act of 2003 for the protection of each child. There is also a need of a grave punishment for pedophiles beyond prison sentencing but should be incarcerated immediately.

**Keywords:** Child, violence, mirror image, Attachment theory, Yoruba Novels

## **Introduction**

A child according to the Nigerian constitution is anyone below the age of 18. This implies that age 0 to 17 is considered a minor or child in the Nigerian society. This set of people is believed to be under the care of a parent or caregivers. Violence is defined as a way of inflicting harm or danger to a person that can cause injury, death, underdevelopment or deprivation (WHO). Hence, child violence is defined as a process of intentionally causing harm, danger or even death to a child which may lead to physical, social, psychological or sexual assault.

The concept of violence is not just pertaining to children alone; it can be among the adults as well. However, the

focus of this paper is on violence where the child is a victim and adult or older persons are the perpetrators of the assaults. The Nigerian society is on daily bases, growing with high rates of violence of all forms against children. This inhumane act has been captured by Nigerian literary writers in their works including Yoruba Novels. The forms, consequences and preventive measures are likewise discussed. The six purposively selected novels are *Kádàrá àti Ègbón Rẹ* by *J.F Odúnjo* and *A.B Oládipúpò*, *Iyán Ogún Odún* by *Olífúnmilólá Akinodé*, *Odún Á yako?* by *Nikè Adésànyà*, *Iná Ayé*, *Sisi Olóbì*, and *Şé Dandan ni?* by *Fadékẹmi Adágbádá*.

### **The Yoruba Worldview and Concept of Violence against Child**

Procreation is a feature of all living creatures in general including human beings. Thus, it is believed that the purpose of the creation of both sexes by the creator is for reproduction. The two universally accepted holy books (Bible and Quran). This is established in Genesis 1: 28, the Creator commands the man and woman he created to be fruitful and multiply. And Quran 18: 46 supports the same claim that "children are the adornment of life". In essence, children became an important entity of any union either legal or traditional between a man and a woman. Albeit, it will be an overgeneralisation to say that children is highly valued by all human culture.

From the African point of view, children are highly valued. Africans believed that the purpose of marriage is to reproduce children. They are of the view that the main reason, if not justification, for polygamy and other forms

of marriage which may be considered more or less strange from the perspective of other cultures are children (Tangwa, 2002). Conversely, childlessness remains one of the main causes of divorce in Africa, as a childless marriage is considered equivalent to no marriage at all. Tangwa reiterates further that, the idea of an illegitimate child or bastard is not applicable in traditional Africa because of the high value they place on children. He gave a vivid instance of his illustration from a Cameroon practice;

In Cameroon, it is very common for the parents of a girl who is approaching her thirties as a childless spinster to urge her to try and get a child by all means “before it becomes too late” if after words she finds a husband, her parents are usually only too happy to keep her premarital child, who often in any case, bears the father’s name.

In the same vein, Yorùbá society as a part of Africa, holds children in great value. A child is very essential in a Yorùbá family. This is evident in the names they give to their children such as *Ọmọboríowó* (child is beyond money), *Ọmọgoróólá* (child is above wealth); *Ọmọlayọ* (child equals joy), *Ọmọladùn* (child equals pleasure); *Ọmoniyì* (child equals honour), *Ọmọlẹ̀yẹ* (child equals dignity), etc. This shows that a child is valued more than any materialistic possession, be it money, jewelries, or wealth. They believe that the child is a source of joy, happiness, dignity and recognition to the family. In like manner, the Yorùbá have established their views about the child in their oral genres, specifically we shall

examined it from some Ifá verses, proverbs, aphorism, and Ẹkún iyàwó.

Yorùbá society sees children as replacement or better put successor after them. This they say;

*ọmọ ẹni ní ń ṣelédè lẹyìn ẹni/ ọmọ ẹni níí wolé deni.*

*one's child is his representative in his absence.*

This means that, it is one's child that looks after the house when one is dead. They tend to compare this to when a plant or tree falls and another of its kind spring up, *bógèdè bá kú, a fọmọ rẹ rọpò*. When a plantain's tree dies another young one springs up. This reveals the high esteem in which this society takes children. This can also be affirmed in the prayer they pray for a new wife on her journey to her husband's house.

### **The concept of Violence against A child**

The concept of violence against a child which can also be referred to as 'child abuse' according to Dorothy (2008) could be traced to post world war II experiences of the 1940s. Scholars try to define child abuse from their various fields of studies, which include psychology, education, social workers, health education, law enforcement and psychiatrics. Chase (1976), a psychologist, defines child abuse as the deliberate and willful injury on a child by a guardian, either by hitting, beating, slamming against the wall, burning with cigarettes, scalding with hot water, locking in a dungeon, torturing, sexual abuse and even killing. This involves active and hostile aggressive treatment, lack of care and

interest. It is believed by some scholars that the child forms a story of emotional attachment to his parents and others who contribute to his/her physical and psychological comfort. However, once this comfort has been removed from the child, then it means the child has been abused as asserted by attachment theory. Ajuwon and Ojie (2014) who are educators also define child abuse as synonymous with negative, excessive, or over usage of something, in this sense the child. They further explain the Yoruba means of abusing children by establishing the fact that a child to some extent in cultural perspective is a bonafide property of the parents, and if this view holds, it literarily means the parent can do anything to their property either positively or negatively without anyone questioning them for it.

According to Kalu (1996) an educator also sees, violence against a child as an act of omission or commission that denies a child of basic rights to healthy development physically and socially. Violence against a child is also defined as physical or psychological maltreatment of a child by his/her parents is it fosters parents, guardians, relatives or other adults. From an educator point of view, Alekseeva (2007), as cited in Dryden (2009), also stated that adults are responsible for any form of child abuse that children encounter;

Children make up the segment of society that is the most defenseless, vulnerable, and completely dependent on adults. It is the fault of adults when children end up in areas of natural disasters and catastrophes or zones of military combat operation and become the hostages and victims of physical, sexual, and emotional violence

The International Labour Organisation (1999) looks at the different social malady of violence as it has taken different forms, from child slavery, forced labour, child trafficking, debt bondage, prostitution, child battering, and other forms hazardous and exploitative work. When the fundamental human right of a child is tampered with, it can also be seen as violence against a child.

World Health Organisation (1999) postulates that child abuse or maltreatment as constituting all forms of physical or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. From the foregoing definitions of violence against a child, we can rightly submit that children are mostly abused by people who are basically their caregiver and who the children totally rely on. Joyce (2009) also gave a vivid and elucidating definition of child abuse, as;

Any inflicting of serious physical injury upon a child by persons other than accidental happening, suffering harm by reason of neglect, sexual abuse, and malnutrition, exposure to physical, mental, spiritual. Psychological and emotional torture which could be prevented is child abuse.

Notably, as most of the definitions above indicated, children are mostly abused physically, sexually or psychologically by their parents or caregivers. There is also a consensus that child abuse is not an accidental act but an intentional one. There are overlapping in the

different forms of child abuse cited above by scholars and organisations. They could however be summarized into the following types; sexual violence, psychological violence, social violence, and child labour. It has been discovered that there is always an issue of child abuse on daily news reported in Nigeria.

Child sexual harassment and child trafficking is the most common of them. The situation has reached an alarming state that needs an immediate intervention as stated by the chairman of Nigerians in Diaspora, Abike Dabiri-Erewa, that over 7,000 women and children are involved in trafficking to Libya only (2025 Report). This is not including to other part of the world like the America and Europe. It is not only in the media that the issue of abuse has been recognised but Yoruba literary artists being the watchmen of the society, have also observed these various forms of violence against children in their works.

Adunmo (2012) identifies the societal class below poverty line as those among whom child abuse is more common than any other. He debunks the popular assertion that people who abuse their children are probably suffering from mental disorders. He opines that children abusers suffering mental illness are as few as just 10% of total abusers. To him, violence or abuse against child is a result of a complex combination of personal, social and cultural factors, which he tried to group under four categories; intergenerational transmissions of violence; social stress; social isolation and low involvement in community development; and unequal family structure.

Oyèdèjì (1999) applauds of Adunmo's (2012) claim that child abuse may be as a result of response to the economic stress in the family, desire to satisfy or boost one's ego, lack of knowledge on effective method of child control, transferred aggression, bad cultural practices, sheer hatred and jealousy, anxiety and response to various societal forces. He also stated that child abuse as evident in Yorùbá literary works, have created implications on the society at large and bad effect on the victims.

Having gone through some of the previous works on violence against children in the Yorùbá society, Nigeria and the world as a whole, the momentum gathered will help in this paper to channel our work towards a meaningful direction, to be able to identify and discuss meaningful different types of the abuses in the selected novels.

### **Attachment Theory**

One of the theories useful in explaining certain aspects of child abuse is the attachment theory. Through attachment theory tries to explain the importance and significance of a well-bound attachment between a caregiver (parents or guidance) and a child. The theory emphasises deep and enduring emotional bounds that connect one person to another across time and space. It is a psychological, evolutionary and ethnological theory concerning the relationships between human beings which were formulated by a psychiatrist and psychologist John Bowlby in 1963. The core principle of the theory is that a young child needs to develop a relationship with at

least one primary caregiver for social and emotional development to live normally. The attachment theory further explains that if a child lacks the necessarily required attachment from his/her caregivers, his/her subsequent development will be endangered.

Attachment theory in psychology originates with the seminal work of John Bowlby (1958). In the 1930's John Bowlby worked as a psychiatrist in a child guidance clinic in London, where he treated many emotionally disturbed children. This motivated or instigated his propagation of attachment theory. His experience leads him to consider the importance of the child's relationship with their mother especially in terms of their social, emotional and cognitive development. Bowlby (1958) propped that attachment can be understood within an evolutionary context in that caregiver provides safety and security for a child.

This research adopts the concept of attachment to underscore the fact that most of the time; lack of closeness and due attention to a child can be regarded as an abuse in itself which gives room for other types of violence which make negative impacts on the child. In another word, while the child completely rely upon and trust his/her caregiver for maximum safety, not taken seriously, rather it is betrayed and this finally leads to an emotional effect on the child. Hence, a child can be abused through neglect or lack of attachment from his/her parents/ caregivers. In a subsequent analysis, we shall analyse how the lack of necessary bond between a child and his/her caregiver leads to abuse and finally gave consequence on the growth and wellbeing of the

child. The advantage a person can take on a child because of how the child has attached him/herself to the caregiver or adult can leads to various forms of violence as it shall soon be revealed in the cause of the finding from the selected novels.

## **Depiction of Hard Labour and Violence Against a Child**

### **Child Hard Labour**

Child hard labour is one of the major ways in which a child can be abused. According to child right constitution of Nigeria, every child is expected to be in school at their tender age. Therefore any altering to this right of children is a violation of their rights. Inasmuch as when a child is expected to be in school but found doing other things like working, selling, being used for hard work as a means of self-survival, then his/her right has been infringed on. African novelists have portrayed this form of abuse in the work, for instance, Adésànyà portrayed this in "Ọdún Á Yako?" where, Asíndemádé gave four of her daughters to a friend to take them to town, to be used as house helps and after a while learning a trade. And their father was collecting the money from the girls' slavery.

Àwọn ègbón Róláyò méréń tí wón tí parí èkọ  
alákòòbèrè sáájú rẹ ní wón í kúrò ní ilú  
Ayégbẹgẹ lọ sí ilú òkèèrè. Bàbá wón yònda  
wón fún àwọn ọrẹ ẹ rẹ pèlú àdéhùn pé wón  
yóò wá isẹ kọ léyìn ìgbà díẹ tí wón tí ẹ isẹ  
omọ ọdò." ("Odún Á Yako? Pp.13)

Four of Róláyò's elder one who had finished primary school before her have left Ayégbeḡé village for the city. Their father released them to his friends with the agreement that they will learn a hand work after serving as a maid for some time.

This is a serious violence against children, as their parents see them as a form of business or commodity that they could exchange for money. In the Nigerian society today, parents have turned their child (ren)/ward to a source of financial way out from poverty. The sole responsibility of a parent to provide for the child has been shifted to the children. Children are not just been use as inter-tribal slaves or house helps but it has been an international trade where children are sent has far as Libya as house helps so that they can send the profit from it to their parents at home. In fact, the chairman of Nigerian in Diaspora, Abike Dabiri-Erewa gave a recent report of house children especially girls are stuck in Libya after being maltreated by the agent that took them there and wanted to come back home desperately. She stated that over 7,000 children are women are involved in slavery in Libya alone. This she called 'Modern slavery'.

### **Prevention for Education**

Education is a very important aspect of child development by the parent, and the father especially is meant to be responsible for all the academic need of the child, as the financial head of his family. According to the Nigeria children Act, a section of the Nigeria

fundamental human Act, in subsection seven. It is stated that; "... the child is entitled to receive education. Which will promote his general culture and enable him/her on a basis of equal opportunity..." but as reflected by Yorùbá novelists, parents tend to deny their children especially the female children of this right. Some of these are portrayed in the novels. For instance, in "Şé Dandan ni?" Adágbádá portrayed Adélaní as one of those Yorùbá fathers who refuse to send their children especially the female ones to school, on the ground that they are female, with no profit after all.

Bàbá yín kúkú ti ní ilèèwé girama tí mo fí ó sí kò kan òun, ó ti ní kí o lọ kóşé..." (Pp.44)

Your father had avouched that he is less concern with your enrolment in Grammar School, he said you should go and learn a trade...

In the same vein, it was also reflected in "Ọdún Á Yako? Which described how Asíndemádé refused to send all his female children to pass primary school, claiming that it is a waste of resources.

Mo ti wí fún ọ tẹlẹ pé èmi kọ ni yóò şe àşedànù, tí n ó tọ ọmọbinrin ní ilé-ìwé.

...layé nń kọ? Kòsı lámọ̀ọ̀n şe lẹfọ̀ọ̀ ebólò, yóò rùngbẹ kánhìn nàà ni. Tàbí taa ni o fẹ fí tire ọ? Bóbinrin bá ka mıtiti, ilé idána ọkúnrin kan ni yóò parí i rẹ sí. ("Ọdún Á Yako? Pp.12)

Initially, I have told you that I will not labour in vain, for me to educate a female child.

... not in this world? A leopard will never change his spot. Or whom to do want to take after? If a female child is given all the due education, she will definitely end it up in one man's kitchen.

This denial of education ends up turning these children to street hawking or other unhealthy activities in the society. When a child is denied access to education at a tender age that his/ her brain is till eager to learn about any or everything around, such child will satisfy his curiosity with things really available and polluted in the society. Some of these children make end up as street hawkers or street boys and girls.

### **Hawking during school hour**

Under the child's rights as listed in the fundamental human rights constitution of Nigeria, a child has right and privilege to nine years of primary education which should be free. In essence, no parents should prevent or obstruct this government plan for the child. The moment a parent obliges against this child education right then such a child has been denied of his/her education right. Some parents/caregivers instead of allowing their child/ward to benefit from the government millennium goal of free education to all children in irrespective of race or gender or colour, they use the child also as a means of providing for the family. Some of these children are what are seen on the major roads, corners,

market or streets hawking all manner of things at a very tender age. This atrocity committed by parents is what Yoruba novelists have described or reflected in their works. As portrayed by Adésànyà in "Ọdún Á Yakọ?" Róláyọ was exposed to hawking bread at a very tender age of ten when most of her age mates wake up in the morning and go to school, she instead wakes up to go to the bread factory to collect bread she will hawk for the day. Though, she was forced to make this decision after her father refused to send her to school and she was asked to choose a trade.

Ní àfẹ̀mójúmọ̀, iṣẹ̀ búré̀dì kíkiri ni Róláyọ̀ sọ̀ fún bàbá rẹ̀ pé òun yòò máa ṣe. Róláyọ̀ tí ó fì diẹ̀ lé ní ọmọ ọdún mẹ̀wáá pa orúkọ dà ní àdúgbò, ó di ọ̀dómọ̀dé oníbúré̀dì. Róláyọ̀, ẹ̀ni tí ó fẹ̀ràn láti lọ sí ilé-ìwé, bá ara rẹ̀ ní idí ojà títà lápàndodo lááàrò kùtù ayé rẹ̀." (Ọdún Á Yakọ? Pp. 14)

At dawn, Róláyọ̀ told her father that she will engage in hawking of bread. Róláyọ̀ who is ten years plus change her name in the neighbourhood, she turns a small child who sells bread. Róláyọ̀, who loves to go to school, finds herself in the compulsory selling of bread at her preliminary stage.

This above excerpt reveals that this young girl whom the author has described as a very brilliant student while she was still in primary school would love to further her education but she was denied by her father. Instead, she was turned into a money-making machine to be responsible for her family at a tender age of ten. This

behaviour was warranted because Róláyo's father believed that only a male child needs education. Though, this believe that a girl child should not be educated is gradually fading off among the Yoruba tribes but it is still very prominence and other major tribes in Nigeria. There was a report and plead by an Instagram user on May 18, 2026, requesting for support for some children he is schooling for free that the community wants to give their hands out in marriage to older adults. She pleads for aids so that he can continue to teach them and prevent them from child marriage.

Asides, from child labour, there are many other violence against children in the Nigerian society today such as physical assault, sexual assault and forceful decision on children.

### **Physical Violence.**

Physical violence against a child is an omission or commission of physical assault against a child which can lead to visible damage or hurt the child. This can be seen in form of beating, bullying a child or even causing the death of a child.

This form of physical violence occurs when an adult exercises his/her superiority over a child, not in form of correction of a bad behaviour but to bully the child. This is another common behaviour in the Nigeria society, where adults beat children for unknown reasons. Though, there is an adage that says 'sphere the rod and spoils the child. This means that beating or spanking a child for a wrong doing is accepted in Yoruba culture. There is no disputing fact about this because this is a

way of training up a child to become an acceptable future citizen and ambassador of the society' '*omólúàbí*'. However, this goes out of hand when it is considered as the only means of training a child to the extent of putting bruises on the skin of the child or damaging a part of the body of the child or just beating the child for any behaviour exhibited by the child. This is a form of violence against the child. Some of Yoruba novels have reflected this in their works. For instance, Akinlabi portrayed this form of abuse in "*Iná Ayé*" when Gbónjúbólá Aṣàkún, the main character's uncle's wife beat him, as a transfer of aggression from her husband's abuse on her.

Àfí pòò lójúu Rẹ̀mí, ó kì í mólẹ̀, ó nà án bii-kúkú-bii-yíyè. Bí kò bá ẹ̀ Músílí, kò pé òun kò ní rán an lọ sódò iyáa rẹ̀ lórun. Igbe nílá sọ, gbogbo àwọn ará àdúgbò pé, àwọn obìnrin ní patẹ̀ pópó. Wọn ní sọ kòbákúngbé ọ̀rò sí Gbónjú pé kò sì Ẹ̀aánú ọ̀mọ ọ̀rukàn" (*Iná Ayé*, Pp.5)

And Rẹ̀mí received a slap on his face; she grabbed him and beat him mercilessly. If not for Musilí, she does not mind of sending him to heaven to meet with his mother. And a loud noise breaks out as all the neighbour's gathers, and women were clapping. While lots of abuse and debasing words are cast on Gbonju for not have passions for the orphan.

This behaviour of Gbónjúbólá is not to correct Rèmí's bad attitude or train him but she only transfers the aggression from her husband on the boy. Since she could not confront her husband to fight him back, she then avenges it on the poor boy. Proven from the comments of the spectators Gbónjúbólá has beaten the boy beyond acceptable way.

This habit of wrong correction or punishment for an offense done by a child is rampant in the Nigerian society today, there are daily reports of how parents out of anger beat their children or ward to death. A woman chained his son inside a sack in the house for several days without food or water because she was told that he was a witch and the only way to drive out the witchcraft is to starve him to death.

### **Sexual Violence or Rape**

Fayaz, 2019 defines Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) as a form of violence against in which an adult or older adolescent who is in a relationship of accountability, trust or control, uses a child for sexual stimulation (Fayaz, 2019). This implies that when a child is being touched inappropriately or forced to do any sexual act is sexual assault to the child.

In the society, as of date, the high level of child rape is increasing rapidly every day. Various methods are being adopted to lure these children to have forceful sex with them. Especially this days has it is been reported in the daily news, there is a no certain week where there will

not be a report of an older man raping a child or teenager. This is a great atrocity and decadence in our society. Parents are scared of leaving their female children alone at home. These children cannot be lonely send on earn without being raped. This enormity act has also be portrayed by novelists in their works. In "Sisí Olóbi" for instance, Akinlábi reflected how older men can use metaphysical power to force sexual intercourse on a child. This was seen in the incident that transpired between Şaléwá (Fadéké's mother) and Làtí the mechanic man, who used charm to rape her in his workshop.

...gbogbo ibàdí ti kan mí. Mo bú sẹkún  
nínú yàrá mi. Mò n finú sẹpè fún Làtí tó  
fí tipátipá tẹmí lógo. Èmi tí mo ti ní  
àsìkò 'honey moon'ni n ó tó mọ  
ọkùnrin, ìgbà nàà ni mo fẹ kí ọkọ mi  
gbé àgbè ẹmu tí n ru bàlà wá sílé wa  
lòdò bàbá mi pẹlú ẹkúnréré ìṣaná láti  
fihàn pé èmi kí ẹ anímáshun ọmọ.

Emi nàà wá ni mẹkáníkì, tó ti ní ìyàwó  
mẹta sílé tún fí tipátipá bá lòpò nínú  
mòtò jági. (Pp.53-54)

The waist has been aching me. I burst  
into tears in my room. And I with  
wholeheartedly continue cursing Làtí  
who forcefully took away my pride. For  
I have planned to get disvirgin during  
my honeymoon, it is then I want my  
husband to bring strong spurring palm-

wine to my father's house with a full packet of matches to show that I am not a share- out promiscuous child.

It is the same I that a just mechanic, who has three wives in his house now forcefully have sex with inside a lorry.

This man could not find a lady which is of his age range to marry but he preferred to rape a young teenager who in her mind has a bright future. This singular act automatically ended her ambition, and so is the ambition of many children and teenager of today ambition terminated once they are involved in this type of abuse. One can see that the cause of this abuse was as a result of another abuse on the child by her parents, who left her unmonitored because she was exposed to selling even though she was schooling. This is to show that via children hawking or left to live on their own without appropriate monitoring at a young age, they can be exposed to rape especially by unknown persons.

### **Emotional Violence**

Child emotional violence occurs when the psychological aspect of the life of a child is been disparaged. This is making a child feels rejected or denied even where he or she is meant to be welcome and celebrated as the theory of attachment stipulated. This type of abuse can be manifested when a child is been forced to rival a specific character against his/her own detriment. This can be in forceful emulation of character/profession or forceful child marriage.

## **Forceful Emulation of Character**

This mostly happened when parents want to force their wish especially their line of profession on their children. This is common practice in Yoruba society, where parents will want their children to continue family line of the profession when it is the desire of the child. They want their children to emulate their way of life, their religious practices, and habits. They have seen this as a family taboo to any child that discern from it. Some of Yoruba novelists have portrayed these in the pieces to reflect the emotional implication of this on the children.

For instance, In "Kádàrá àti Ègbón Rẹ̀" the authors use the whole storyline of the novels to portray this form of abuse. Kádàrá suffers various forms of abuse just because he refused to emulate his father's family profession of farming to go for husbandry.

Odidì ewúré méjì ní Agbégbè mí pa fún Akóbí ní ojò ipàdé yì láti fí ẹ̀ ẹ̀ fun un nítorí tí iṣẹ̀ àgbẹ̀ tí ó yàn; ẹ̀gbón omi toro ọ̀bẹ̀ ẹ̀ran náà lásán kò kan Kádàrá l'ẹ̀nu rara.

Agbégbè mí kills two complete goats for his first born during the meeting in order to honour him for him to have chosen farming, but a drop from the goat soup did not touch Kadara's mouth.

...Àgbégbè mí pàápàá ná owó ju bí ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ lọ, nítorí pé ó nṣe fọ́rífọ́rí tí Kádàrá tí kò gba àṣẹ sí i l'ẹ̀nu.

Agbégbè mí even overspend beyond normality, for he was trying to make Kadara who did not oblige to his instruction feel regretful.

...Kádàrá kákò sí kòrò yàrá ní gbogbo àkókò tí aseye yì ní. Ọkàn rẹ̀ bàjẹ̀ pé bàbá òun àti gbogbo ẹbí nù íwá yí sí òun nítorí pé òun kò yan isẹ̀ agbẹ̀." (Kádàrá àti Ègbón Rẹ̀, Pp.15)

As the ceremony was going on, Kadara folds himself up in one corner of the room. He was extremely sad that his father and family members could react to him in such way as he did not choose to farm.

### **Forceful Child Marriage**

Forceful marriage is another form of abuse that has reflected in the selected novels. This form of abuse can be portrayed in two ways either the parents forced the child to marry someone he/she does not like or they force the child to early marriage. For instance, in "Ọdún Á Yakò?" Róláyò's father plan to disown her by sending her out of the house if she did not come with someone she wants to marry at a given time, not minding her tender age.

Mo fún ọ ní oşù kan kí o mú ọkan nínú àwọn oníbààrà rẹ̀, bí bẹ̀ẹ̀ kó, ikòkò kò ní gba omi kó tún gba ẹyin èmi ìrẹ̀ nínú ilé

yí. O ó sì kùrò lẹ̀dẹ̀ mi, nítorí irú yín n  
gboyún kánhìn náà ni." (Odún Á Yakọ?  
Pp.58)

I give you just a month to choose one  
out of your customers, if not; we both  
will not find things easy for each other  
in this house. And you shall leave my  
apartment, for people like you gets  
pregnant at the later end.

Child marriage in the Yoruba society is gradually getting  
reduced; however, it is still paramount among some  
tribes as mentioned earlier. There are children ages 9 to  
13 being forced to marry a man old enough to be their  
grand or great grand-father. And it is not as if they will  
be kept till they are old enough before having sexual  
intercourse with them. No, they are molested and  
impregnated at this tender age.

### **Consequences of violence against a child**

The various forms of child abuse listed above have  
developed to various effects or outcome on both the  
child and the society at large. Some of the results of  
abuse on children which reflected in the selected novels  
viewed as social effect, health effect, psychological  
effect or eventually death of a child.

### **Health Effects**

When a child goes through such abuse as physical and  
sexual abuse it mostly results in some health  
complications on the child. This implication the novelists  
has also revealed in the work. For instance, in 'Odún á

Yako?, Adésànyà presented the effect of Aşındemádé's neglected of his female children with diverse disease which was as a result of him sending his children away in slavery. Mòbóníkèè contacted Hiv/Aids in the cause of staying in a foreign land;

Mòbóní ti rù ó kojá síşo. Gbogbo àwọn tó rí i ló mo pé nńkan n şe é. ...èsi àyèwò jádè lẹyìn wákátí díẹ tí wọn gba èjẹ rẹ wọ yàrá àyèwò. Mòbóní ti kó kòkòrò àrùn èèdì.

Moboni, has slim down beyond recognition. Everyone who sees her knows that something is wrong with her. ...the result of her test came out after few hours after taking her blood sample. Moboni has been infected with HIV.

Mòbóníkèè could not keep her feelings and regret as a result of her father's behaviour when she was narrating the cause of her mischief to the doctor who tested her Hiv/Aids positive. She lamented that perhaps her father has not sent them into slavery and also appreciate them as a child not because they are female but as a gift from God, probably she will be not have contacted this disease.

Bàbá bi mi tan mo di alarńkiri. Ìyànjú ló mú mi lọ sílẹ òkèrèrè lọ şatípó bóyá màá rí bátíşé. Mo deńi n sunilé ijó, ilé otí, ilé itura kiri nítorí àtijẹu. Kín ni iwúlò eni tí ó kó kòkòrò àrùn èèdì bíi tẹmi. Àmó o, tí

mo bá tún ilé ayé yìí wá, n ó tún ìpín mi yàn.

My father gave birth to me and I become a wayward. I tried struggled to go oversee to do dirty jobs to prosper in life. I became on sleeping in dance arenas, hotels, bars round just to survive. What is the usefulness of a person infected with HIV like myself. However, if I have the chance of coming back to this world, I will choose a different destiny.

Apart from Móbóníkèé, Moròmoké the eldest son of Aşíndemádé also died of unknown diseases coupled with sexually transmited infection. As reported by those who brought her from the foreign land unconscious it was her shout of angony that they heard, before coming to her rescue, meanwhile her supposed husband has disappered before then;

Àwọn alájoǵbé rẹ sàà sọ wí pé léyìn ariwo tí ó pa kò lè sòrò mó. Ó kàn lájú sílẹ bí òkú àǵuntàn ni. ...dókítà sọ wí pé Ròmoké ni àrùn oríşìíríşìí lára àti pé diẹ nínú àwọn àrùn yìí ni ó kó láti ara ibi ìbálópò.

### Her neigh **Unwanted pregnancy**

Unwanted pregnancy is another vital effect of child abuse, especially sexual abuse. In essence, when a child becomes pregnant at a young age as a result of abuse or unnecessary exposure to sex, as reflected above. The victim meant not want to keep the pregnancy, which will

lead to termination of the pregnancy or after birth abandonment of the child. This effect was revealed by Akinlabí and Adésànyà in their works. in sisí Olóbì, Şaléwá (Fadéké's mother) attempted abortion to terminate the pregnancy she conceived after Làtí raped him. However, this abortion almost claims her life. Even though she did not die but she damages her uterus which made it difficult for a long time for her to conceive again. Apart from, Morórunfóláké, Aşındémádé's second daughter in '*Qdún á Yako?*' also died in the process of abortion in the novel, which is also the result of their father neglecting them to unknown people.

### **Drug Abuse leading to suicide**

In the society of today, most youths are suffering from drug abuse. This most times is as a result of one form of abuse or the other they have been exposed to in their early life and that they are still experiencing at the moment. They then see overuse of a particular drug which can raise their moral to do thing which superseded normal. Over time the intake of such drugs or substance may lead to abnormal behaviour and/or eventually death. The novelists have portrayed examples of such children who as a result of their abusive experience, involved in consuming some substances to put an end to their lives. For instance, Mótáyò's son for Adélaní committed suicide because he could not withstand the abuse from his father again. Though his intention was just to use sleeping pills, to prevent him from hearing his father's verbal abuses but he overused the dose, which causes his death.

## Regrets of one's behaviour

Regrets of one's behaviour is always the aftermath of a perpetrator of abuse. Most abuser at the end of any abusive behaviour always regrets their action. Especially when they began to dance to the music of their actions. The consequences will not only affect the abuser alone but to the whole community in which the abuse has taken place. For instance, in 'Kádàrá àti Ègbón rẹ. The effect of what Àgbègbèmí and Àkòbí did to Kádàrá did not only affected them when Kádàrá becomes successful in his husbandry profession but it also affected the whole of Àgbègbèmí's community. As a matter of fact, if Kádàrá had been allowed to practice his profession in his land, a good number of Àgbègbèmí's indigenes will have benefited from it. Some of the younger ones in the community will have also learn how to rear. It will have brought in a lot of foreigners to their village who have come to purchase his animals. This is the belief that when foreigners come into a community then there will definitely be more development in that community over time. All these where was the town where Kádàrá later settled down enjoyed via his profession.

In the same vein, in *Ọdún á Yako? Aşındemádé*, also regretted his action of neglecting his female children and using them as slave to other people. The novelists through the mouth of the character voiced out his regrets, thus;

Róláyò ọmọ̀ mi. Ó pé kí ó tó yé mi. Ọjà  
ti kún láààrò, mo sì fí ọwa ara mi tú ukí  
alé tóó lẹ. Mo pàdánù ọmọ̀ mètá nínú

àwọn tí Èlédùà fí ta mí lóṛẹ. ẹ wo òdù  
ayòmi tó kún bó ẹ ní ẹyọ lójú ayèè mi.

My child, Rolayo. It was too late before I understand. I used my hands to scatter what I have earlier gathered. I lost three children from the children God gave to me. See, how my full river got waste right in my presence.

This shows that Àşindemádé has indeed seen the consequences of his actions, and there is no remedy to it, three of his children were already dead. However, it is not only Aşindemádé alone that suffers the consequence of his children death but also the whole community of Ayégbeğé. In the sense that Róláyò who was the only living daughter of Aşindemádé after self-strife becomes a successful accountant who becomes a good ambassador of her community in other places. Imagine if all of Róláyò's sisters also have privilege to education but they would have become to the community? This is also a regret on the community at large.

### **Misconception about certain people**

Another vital effect of abusive behaviour is misconception about people. Anyone who has been a victim of any abusive behaviour tends to have some perception about some particular set of people in the society. Especially those in line with the perpetrator of violence. Some children who are abused by their father will naturally have bad impression about men. Such set of people will find it hard to go out with any man and if situation warranted it, they tried to be over defensive.

They generally see all men as misogyny. Adésànyà reflected in 'Odún á Yakò? Róláyò becomes defensive has a result of her experience with her father. Hence, she sees all men as such. In her words, if it is culturally accepted for a woman to marry another woman she will have buy into that.;

Kì í ẹ̀ pé o kò wùmí lókùnrin ẹ̀gbón  
mo ti pinnu lókan mi pé tí kò bá ẹ̀eşe  
látifẹ̀ obìnrin bíi tẹ̀mi, kí n kúkú dúró  
láilóko. (Pp93)

It is not that I do not like you as a man  
but I have made up my mind if it is  
impossible to marry a woman like  
myself, I will rather remain unmarried.

It took a lot of efforts before Bòsípò could convince this notion of Róláyò, that marrying same sex is a criminal offense. He begged her to forgive all that men has done to her and marry him. Though, lesbianism is a criminal offense in Nigeria but there are some people who will try every possible means to travel out of the country to where it is acceptable to bring their wishes to pass. There are several reports of similar cases on the social media today.

### **Homelessness**

Homelessness occurs in abuse when the parent neglects their children or when a child is physically abused. In order to escape these types of abuses, the child will rather prefer to leave such an abusive environment and end up on the streets or other immoral places like

prostitution house, like the case of Mope in Ìyán Ogún ọdún. Some end up in clubhouses and beer parlours, like in the case of Móbóníkèé in Ọdún á Yako?. Kádàrá in 'Kádàrá àti Ọgbón rè' was also homeless as a result of his father and brother's frustration of his life and profession. The boy has to live the home to an unknown destination just because he wanted to be far away from his abusive environment. A good number of homeless children in the society have similar challenges from their parents/caregivers.

### **Death**

The most tragic and extreme consequences of violence against a child is any form of violence that can lead to death of a child. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has estimated that about 155,000 children of ages 15 or younger died every year around the world as a result of abuse (Pinheiro,2006). This implies that larger number of children are assaulted every year even though some may not lead to death but other consequence. There is evidence of fatal violence in the selected novels. In 'Ọdún á Yako?' three of Róláyò's sisters died as a result of their father abusive acts.

In the light of the above-stated consequences of violence against a child, it is glaring that violence against children may venture into a wide range of diverse effects for both children and adolescents. This may end up making some of the survival of violence against a child, a future abuser. Which may be as a result of the notion infuse into them through their experience, especially about some specific set of people in the society.

## **Preventive Measures to Violence against a Child**

To prevent the reoccurrence of various types of abuses against children in the society, the novelists have also been able to proffer realistic and practicable solutions or preventive measures against such abuses. In the light of this, some of the solutions are as follows:

### **Giving of public lecture**

To prevent child abuse at all cause, there should be a regular public lecture on the dangers associated with child abuse especially abuse of female child. Adésànyà gave an example of such solution in *Odún Á Yakọ?* where Róláyò was seen giving a public speech to her community on the rights of a child at her wedding. Here, she established the five points rights of a child to the whole public as entrenched in the constitution. She also advocated for equal treatment of children irrespective of their sex. She finally, enumerated various positions in which women have held and still holding in the society, to state the fact that girl education is very important.

### **Discouragement of Gender Discrimination**

Novelists also are of the opinion that if every misconception about female child can be eradicated in the society, it will limit the level at which children, especially female, are being abused in the society. However, each child should be seen as a gift from heaven, which some people are spiritually struggling to have. In *Odún Á yakọ?* the Doctor Làbáké who counselled Mónbóníkèé established this. She narrated how a child should be cherished by her parents. She gave

a practical example of her vilage to portray an ideal society where the gender of a child is not a barrier to the care of the child.

Bàbá mi kò lè sàì tọ mi ní ilé-ìwé nítorí pé ọmọ tí a kò kọ ni yóò gbé ilé tí a kọ tà, àti pé àwọn òbí mi kò ní sísẹ tàbí àìsẹ ju pé kí wọn gbà f'Òlórún fún ohun tí ó mú wá. ...Àmọ́ ń kò dá bàbá rẹ lẹbí o, nítorí èrò àwọn ènìyàn nípa obìnrin lágbègbè yìi yàtò púpọ sí ti ilú Ìdána. (pp. 40, 45)

My father could not resist sending me to school because a child that is not trained, wilol definately sells ones house, and my parents have no choice than to accept their fate. ... But i do not blame you father, because the view of people in this community about women is different from that of Ìdána city.

Apart from here, it is also established in *Şé dandan ni?* that female children when educated can become or hold any principal positions in the society. This is the advise giving to Adélaní and his friends in the novel, through the novelists herself. The novelist thereby portray that women can hold positions that some cultural beliefs have been reserved exclusively for men alone such as becoming a medical doctor, a lecturer, a lawyer and so on.

**Discarding of some cultural practices or belief system.**

Another cogent solution to violence against a child is that, the society has to cast off some inherited cultural norms that are already outdated in this modern society, some of such include compelling a child to marry at his/her own detriment, like it was seen in the case of Raláyò in *Ọdún Á Yakò?*. Perhaps if Mọrólágbé had not forced Jọké on his son to marry probably she would not have been the tragic victim. The novelists encourage the society to allow their children or wards to make such decision personally. In like manner, Ọdúnjò and Oládípúpò in *Kádàrá àti Ègbón rẹ* advise parents to always support their child/ward chosen profession and they should desist from enforcing a particular family profession on a child as it is common in our society today. The writers use the incident of Kádàrá as a case study to attest that each child has a definite profession he wants to practice and he/she should be given the right to do so with full support.

### **Incarceration and Castration of children rapist or child sexual abusers**

Incarceration and castration of children rapist or child sexual abuser is another solution to curb this immoral and criminal act in the society as it has been made available under the children Rights Acts of 2003 and the enforcement Procedure Rule of 2015. The government should follow due process by ensuring that rapists of the minor are tried in courts immediately. If found guilty, they should be made to bear the full weight of the law not just by being sentenced to prison for few years but also by preventing them from committing such act in future. Though in *Sisi Olóbi*, Látí was sentenced to two

years imprisonment just like the case of the Nigerian Nollywood actor, Olanrewaju Omiyinka (Baba Ijesa) who was sentence to just three years imprisonment and he is back into the society.

In conclusion, this paper submits that the issue of violence against a child is still a recurring case in the Nigerian society and studies on this cannot be overemphasised. There is need for more studies on in-depth research like this on violence against children from other Nigerian literature to serve as continuous advocacy in eradicating this menace away from the Nigerian society, so that a child can really understands his/her rights in the society.

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