

## **CHILD ABUSE: FULL ACTION NOW!**

The greatest national asset of any nation is the young ones. Globally, children are considered the pillar of regeneration and sustainable existence. However, the rate at which children are molested, abused and incarcerated is worrisome especially in Africa. According to the 2014 Nigeria Violence Against Children (VAC) survey by the National Population Commission, UNICEF (2022), six out of ten children in Nigeria experience emotional, physical, or sexual abuse before the age of eighteen, with half experiencing physical violence. Child abuse is simply the abuse of a child. But technically, any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker that can later result to serious physical abuse such as slapping, hitting etc. or emotional, mental, psychological or verbal harm such as the use of harsh and derogatory remarks which affects the personality of the child as well as sexual abuse like rape or using coercion or force as a mode to involve a child in sexual activities or even death.

Incidences of child abuse abound in Nigeria such as child hawkers, pregnant teenagers, child slaves etc. A man recently beat a house help of age thirteen, applies pepper on her private parts because of minor and forgivable mistake. These inhumane people ill-treat children and take undue advantage of their naivety. They not only make these children work under unhealthy conditions but also load them with hard work and heavy burden. Cases of emotional issues such as anxiety and depression among teens have been reported. Also, recently in a college, a boy bullied by one of his class mates was a traumatic memory experience which led to suicide.

Moreover, child abuse can be caused by poverty, which are seen by various antisocial behaviour of parents, while some victims aren't from a poor home or family background but were lured or coerced by peer pressure; owing to the facts that there was poor parental or caregivers and children bonding. Legacy of families of victims of child abuse are usually affected and have led to isolation of the victim among the family members resulting in unfulfilling dreams.

From reading the Holy Scripture, I'm made to understand how the devil used the spirit of deception; so, do the child traffickers or abusers use a kind of deceptive method to lure these young children. This trend ought to be addressed and changes made by relevant institution imminently in order to save our society from decadence.

However, it is worrisome that there seems to be no reprieve in sight for the victims as children's right advocates complain of weak child protection structures in Nigeria. Hence, protection of the Child especially the girl child by enforcement of the child's right act should be encouraged by the government. Strict punishment to offenders and perpetrators of the menace should be done according to the law. Moreover, every parent, guardian and care givers should safeguard and give attention to the welfare and affairs of the children placed under their care.