

IMPACT FACTOR: 7.86

ISSN0976-8165

THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

14 Years of Open Access

Vol. 14 Issue-I February 2023

Bi-monthly Peer-Reviewed e-Journal

DR. VISHWANATH BITE
Editor-In-Chief

DR. MADHURI BITE
Managing Editor

www.the-criterion.com

AboutUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

ContactUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

EditorialBoard: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Fanning the Embers of Slavery: Human Trafficking in *Tamara* and *Pain in the Neck*

Adaobi Olivia Ihueze

Ph D Scholar,

Department of English Language and Literature,

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

&

Ebele Peace Okpala

Ph D Scholar,

Department of English Language and Literature,

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Article History: Submitted-18/12/2022, Revised-30/01/2023, Accepted-04/02/2023, Published-28/02/2023.

Abstract:

Human trafficking is a worldwide epidemic that involves people being exploited and victimized. It is a worldwide social issue that affects people of all ages, races, nationalities, and genders. Because they depicted the realities of trafficked people from diverse angles, the study looks at Ifeoma Odinye's *Pain in the Neck* and Ikechukwu Asika's *Tamara*. It also looks into the writers' effectiveness in exposing the awful ill and its consequences on our society's underdevelopment. These novels were evaluated to determine that ignorance, poverty, unemployment, and parental negligence are all factors that contribute to the problem of human trafficking. The study uses sociological theory to examine society, social institutions, and power systems to promote egalitarian social change. It reveals that human trafficking is a well-organized enterprise with victims who are either male or female, impoverished or wealthy, and who are not only recruited as domestic workers but also exploited for the traffickers' financial advantage. It concludes that human trafficking is an affront to man's freedom and dignity and must be obliterated.

Keywords: Human trafficking, exploitation, slavery, uncaring parents, traffickers.

Introduction

More than a century after slavery was abolished, the market for human beings is still alive as evidenced by violent abductions or the sale of family members, as well as voluntary involvement in tasks that empower people and provide viable alternatives. Slavery has a long history. It dates back to prehistoric hunting societies and has remained a universal institution

throughout human history. Slavery and the slave trade were outlawed in 1883 by William Wilberforce (Wolfe, 2009) but many people are unaware that modern-day slavery, often known as human trafficking, still exists. This indicates that the slave trade has not ended in practice, but has merely been renamed as human trafficking, or that it has ended and been reborn under a different name. Human trafficking is defined by Marjan Wijer and Lin lap - Chew as “all activities involved in the recruitment and transportation of persons within and across national borders for work or services using violence, abuse of authority or dominant position, debt bondage, deception or other forms of coercion” (46). While Universal Declaration of Human Rights also defined human trafficking as

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, using threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. (2)

In other words, human trafficking is the process of enslaving and exploiting individuals by coercing them into a situation from which they have no way out. According to the aforementioned description, it is without a doubt a violation of men's, women's, and children's fundamental human rights against freedom, as they are constantly purchased, sold, transported, and held captive against their will in slave-like conditions.

Even though human trafficking is a global concern, the majority of countries participating are in the developing world. With rising globalization, the unlawful and against their will movement of individuals is not geographically restricted to any single geographical region but affects almost every country across the world. It can occur at any level that is inside a locality, state, country or across boundaries that is at an international level. Human trafficking is defined not by the distance travelled but by the level of violence inflicted on the victims, hence it is conceivable for someone to be trafficked in their neighbourhood without their relatives being aware of it. It has also been established that these trafficked individuals are employed not only as sex slaves, but also as agricultural and textile labourers, domestic workers, beggars, surrogate mothers, organ donors, and adoption agencies.

As the extent and scope of human trafficking grow, this study tends to show that, despite the growing power of this worldwide threat, prosecution and conviction rates are not increasing in proportion to the desire to commit these crimes. To critique society and its systems, this study uses sociological theory.

Theoretical Framework

The sociological theory examines societal problems. It's the perspective that a person or a researcher chooses to look at the world through. The theory was developed to examine the social environment in society as it affects man in areas such as politics, religion, economics, and other aspects of life, as well as an element of reality. It is a set of concepts that seeks to explain social phenomena and provides an explanation for human society. Human trafficking is examined in the context of this research project from the perspective of a social problem that affects a large number of people. It's a collection of current-day societal issues that many people are attempting to address. This suggests that the problem affects not just the individual, but also the others around him, who are members of his society, and that it must be tackled aggressively.

Human trafficking is a crime committed against a person when the victim's rights are violated through compulsion and exploitation. Survivors are coerced, duped, or deceived into modern-day slavery. They have certain demands that are unique to their position if they can escape a cloaked abduction and secret servitude. Survivors may have suffered severe trauma, lacked linguistic skills in their destination country, and struggled with basic functions after being trafficked. Individuals who have been trafficked can be of any gender and come from any city, religion, race, or country in the world. However, many people believe that human trafficking victims are solely females, as most writers have done in their writing, including Adepoju in one of his writings. He claims that,

The victims of human trafficking are mostly women. This is a result of political, economic and development processes that may leave some women socially and economically dependent on men. If that support from men becomes limited or withdrawn, women become dangerously susceptible to abuse. (112)

Bruckert also shares this viewpoint, believing that only women and girls are always victims of human trafficking since they are easily lured or kidnapped from their native countries and pushed into the sex industry. Men and boys, as well as young girls and women, are victims of human trafficking because they are used as mercenaries, suicide bombers, factory workers, and other manly activities. Shelly Louise asserts the following to back up her claim: "Traffickers prey on the vulnerable individuals without parents or with ailing parents, single mothers seeking ways to support their children, the desperately poor, and refugees from conflicts are common victims" (95).

Ikechukwu Asika and Ifeoma Odinye have taken on the roles of artists writing novels for the benefit of society by demonstrating a deep interest in the social issues that plague their area, one of which is human trafficking. Their focus is on the causes and consequences of the problem for individuals, families, the government, and society as a whole. They made the matter known to everyone for it to receive proper attention, resulting in a beneficial change. This was depicted in their respective works *Tamara* and *Pain in the Neck*.

Brief Synopsis of the Novels

Pain in the Neck addresses social themes such as the poor economy, which has resulted in widespread poverty and misery, joblessness, and the popular belief that things will improve once people travel overseas, only to leave some unsatisfied and disappointed. The bulk of trafficked people is thought to be those looking for a better life. They are those who wish to flee a country where they will face hunger, malnutrition, and painful memories. However, to obtain a meaningful source of income outside of their home nation because none is available in their home country, they become victims of human trafficking like Chika, Chinedu and Nonso.

Tamara, on the other hand, is the narrative of a young beautiful girl whose only wish is to be loved and appreciated. Tamara's father provides everything for the family as long as it is something money can purchase, but he never makes himself available or allows his two children to interact, even with their mother, his wife. This set off a chain reaction of tragedies, as Tamara's mother died of heart failure as a result of negligence, and her only brother Kizito, who was very close to their mother, fled the house for an unknown destination, leaving Tamara at the mercy of a loveless, uncaring father. Seniorita, a woman she met later, provided her compassion, care, and, most importantly, a listening ear and a shoulder to weep on. With the promise of a better life, Seniorita successfully persuaded Tamara to travel outside the country with her, unknown to Tamara that she has been trafficked as a sex slave.

Human Trafficking in *Tamara* and *Pain in the Neck*

The novels show that human trafficking is a business run by a group of people rather than a single person. It's a gang business that can't be fully operated under sole proprietorship due to its complexity. These individuals have agents who take over from them at all times. The persons with whom the victims travel are not the same as those who will be handling them abroad. Adanna describes how the ordeal began. Thus,

The next morning auntie White told me that there was a problem with the factory that I was supposed to work for, they did not need me again. That was how I came to live in Auntie Ngozi's house. Auntie White was with me and some other girls until auntie Ngozi returned from her trip. She told me to assist Madam Louis until she could get a better job for us. (Odinye, 181)

She also recounted her experiences, the first time she tried running away. She was caught brought back to Madam Louis which shows that they had a strong network and their people are practically everywhere.

Furthermore, it is clear from the discussion of the novels that human trafficking is a type of crime that cannot be handled by a single person, and Sally Stoecker writes that human trafficking is a major branch of organized crime structured by a group of three or more people who have been together for a long time and are acting in concert to commit one or more serious crimes. Ibrahim Ibrahim Lame and Femi Odekunle also point out that human traffickers, particularly those operating on an international scale, have legal protection and thus are difficult to track down. According to them, traffickers are supported by people who are well-placed and respected in society, and who frequently cover-up and order the release of their boys and members even after they have been identified and apprehended. Because of the nature of this business, no single person can successfully manage the crime; it must be done by a team. When Senorita told Tamara that her responsibility in the business is to recruit young girls from Nigeria while her other colleagues cover other parts of Africa, she acknowledged that human trafficking is a gang operation.

Another example is when Senorita was trying to persuade Tamara not to flee by explaining that the human trafficking business is a syndicate, a type of networking that is also heavily funded. This comment suggested that they have accomplices practically everywhere in the world who take over from one another at any given time, as she gave over to Princess, the branch's general supervisor, upon their arrival in Italy. Human trafficking victims are exploited to the point that they are expected to labour like monsters and machines to make up for every kobo spent on their importation. They are being physically and mentally abused in addition to being held captive and denied their freedom. Tamara, for instance, hoped to be free in two years and was determined to impress her boss. She slept with fifteen to twenty men daily, whereas Aisha, Jackie, and others carried more than twenty men daily. To stay in shape and avoid breaking down, they took hard substances such as cocaine, nicotine, cigarettes, and alcohol.

However, there is a risk that these ladies face with their clients regularly; for example, a fight erupted between Roland and Jackie during lovemaking, and Roland stabbed her to death, and nothing was done, and he got away with it. Since they understood that reporting the incident to the police would jeopardize their business, Princess arranged for her burial and concealed her remains. She was buried in an unceremonious and humiliating manner. She was buried on the outskirts of the compound without a burial or notification to her parents, who believe their daughter is still alive because of the money Tamara provided them, thus they assumed it was still their daughter's doing. This is the same thing that happens to real-life victims. Among the hurdles, they must overcome is the threat of severe infections and sickness. The majority of the victims had sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other illnesses. Tamara lost two kidneys as a result of her lifestyle and was fortunate enough to have Carlos give one to her, but she now has cancer and not only expects but longs for death.

In terms of transportation, the traffickers were also highly astute. When everything is covered, they use the airport, but when things aren't, they use the boats and take shortcuts to escape suspicion and save money. Senorita trafficked Tamara and four other girls, whom she introduced as distant relatives, to Morocco first, then to Italy through an unlicensed illegal boat to save money, as they were told. The truth is that they are frightened of being caught, which is why they have gone on such a lengthy and laborious journey. It can't be to save money because the victims are forced to work and pay back every dollar spent on them. As Senorita confirms in the novel, Princess sponsored your illegal immigration into the new country, so she must reap all of her rightful benefits, even if they're dead, and she's willing to sell their bodies to cover the costs. The fact that human traffickers continue to use illegal methods to transport their victims demonstrates that both the government and immigration authorities are failing to do their jobs correctly. There should be no loopholes and every corner should be well-guided. Seas, railroad stations, and even deserts should all be thoroughly covered and inspected.

In addition, many aspects of the two novels show the causes or what contributes to modern-day slavery, also known as human trafficking. Unemployment is one of the characteristics that make people willing victims of human trafficking. Chinedu, a character in *Pain in the Neck*, is a young man who promised to drink money like water because of his family's hardships. His father worked as a labourer and only brought money home once in a while. His mother died as a result of his father's inability to collect funds in time. He went on to say that his father was compelled to use him as collateral to borrow money because of his

mother's health. The narrator says, "The day Chinedu's mother died, his father wanted to use him as collateral to one of his friends, a businessman who was living at Onitsha to raise money for his wife's surgery" (Odinye, 147).

Many families have suffered grief as a result of a lack of work opportunities for individuals. People have had to sort for different employment to put food on their tables as a result of this. Jobs are being saved for those in government officials' good graces, and these jobs are no longer awarded based on qualifications, but rather based on connections. Even though Chinedu's father was a labourer who worked tirelessly to care for his family in *Pain in the Neck*, he was nevertheless pushed to the point of attempting to use his son as a form of collateral for money.

Adanna became a victim of human trafficking as a result of her hunt for a better job opportunity. She had to go through a lot once she left home to survive. Auntie White was the last person she met in her previous job, a salon. Nonso, in the narrative, also became a victim as a result of his difficult life in Nigeria. The young man sold his father's property, bought his plane ticket, and flew to China in search of greener pastures, but he forgot that the grass is not greener on the other side of the fence. He expected his life to change, only to become entangled in a web of disillusionment and poverty. Since his parents died, he was the oldest of his five siblings and was in charge of looking after them. Nonso's life did not go as planned. According to the narrator, "He struggled to feed himself and had no job that would fetch him money" (Odinye, 116). He resorted to frequent concealment in fear of being deported when his three-month visa expired without him being able to find a good job. This situation had made him worried about the sibling who had been left behind in the quest for quick cash. The continual pursuit of wealth, rising poverty, and excessive consumerism have resulted in frequent movement/migration.

The most common method used by traffickers to attract their victims is deception based on ignorance. They frequently promise their victims lucrative career prospects overseas or the opportunity to study on a scholarship. The majority of human trafficking victims are unaware that they are being trafficked and that they would face immense suffering and slavery-like conditions when they arrive in their destination nations. When Adanna was telling her narrative about how she became a victim of human trafficking, she said, "She told me that she was a businesswoman. "She offered to take me to China to work as a salesgirl or marketer for her friend who had factories that make female clothes" (Odinye, 180). When traffickers are unable to obtain the sufficient number of people they require for their business, they devise a method that they believe will assist them in gathering youths. One strategy they

use is to be polite to their targets. They grow friendly with them and gradually gain access to their hearts. They make them feel as if they are their friends, and some even give them, gifts. During Adanna's account of her experiences to her cellmates, she said, "Auntie White was very passionate and concerned about me, she used to give me gifts of cloths, money, perfumes. . . in fact, she cared so much about me"(Odinye, 180). Their dishonesty reaches a pinnacle when they say they'll be around for a while. They make it appear so real to the victims that they begin to consider them as their saviours rather than the traitors they are. According to Adanna,

. . . Auntie gave me an international passport that had my picture on it, but with a different name. I became confused; she told me that the name, Shelly Mbah was given to match her friend's surname. She lied that I was her friend's sister before the visa was issued. I did not suspect anything, so I agreed and boarded the airplane with her. I trusted her because she was nice to me. (Odinye, 181)

As a result of the money spent on their behalf to get visas, passports, and plane tickets, they will be forced to work hard upon their arrival to recover every kobo invested on their behalf. To ensure that they receive their money back, their tickets will be confiscated from them to prevent them from fleeing. As Adanna already stated: "Madam Louis told me that she gave Auntie White the money she used for my travelling expenses. She said I must pay back by working for her in the restaurant" (Odinye, 181). The victims are enslaved and forced to do whatever they desire for money.

In Tamara's case, poverty was the catalyst for Jackie's journey, as she was promised a better position abroad. Her father worked as a night guard in the neighbourhood, while her mother worked as a nanny at a motherless children's home. She dropped out of school because she couldn't stand watching her family struggle any longer. Unfortunately for her, when she arrived, she discovered she was being sold as a sex slave. Despite her disappointment, she accepted her fate and continued to send money home to her family regularly. It's the usual scenario of human trafficking victims being misled about the nature of the labour they'll be doing when they arrive in their destination country. The rules, circumstances, and dangers connected to this enterprise are not explained to these victims. In Tamara's situation, Senorita persuaded her that she would be able to continue her studies from where she had left off, as well as get additional perks, which she also discussed with her father in her letter: "she told me that I would have the chance to finish my education abroad, I would escape that lonely house, mix with real people, pick a new identity, start a new life, make my own money and decision and find a nice man who would love me" (Asika, 102).

She was duped and misled, much to her astonishment and chagrin, as everything she was told was lies. When a white man knocked on her door, requesting sex, she realized the reality of the new identity she had been given. She approached Senorita, who admitted to lying to her but said that she was merely performing her job. She eventually embraced her new persona after realizing she had little choice but to accept her fate or risk being framed, assassinated, or imprisoned.

The authors made it clear that not everyone who finds themselves in a risky situation gets duped. Some were forced into it, while others later chose it on their own. Nonso, a male character in *Pain in the Neck*, was forced to work with Madam Louis to survive after selling all of his parents' property to travel to China and make money. We also witness Chika, who was sent to China to study but ended up wandering the streets late at night after Ngozi took her passport over her boyfriend, Chinedu. Chika bemoans the situation: “Ma, you will not understand. I am a student turned prostitute. I just turned seventeen but my story is horrible” (Odiye, 176). She was simply a victim of circumstance who fell victim to a cruel fate.

Absence of sufficient parental care and attention is another crucial element that supports human trafficking, which is one of the main reasons for Tamara's demise. It is one of the issues that our society is now dealing with. It could be due to an overabundance of work, marital problems, or ignorance. As it pushed Tamara into a premarital sexual relationship, which resulted in an unplanned pregnancy and termination, these issues could lead to a chain of problems and expose a child to all sorts of juvenile delinquency. She, too, became a victim of human trafficking as a result of her search for love in the wrong places. Because the world we live in is dangerous, individuals, particularly youngsters, must be directed, cared for, and loved by their families and those around them to positively shape their lives. When children share affection with their parents while playing, it has cultural, spiritual, and psychological values on them, and when there is a deficiency, there is typically an imbalance, regardless of the child's education or intellectual aptitude.

Tamara's father believes he is doing the best he can for his family since, according to him, he has never had anyone do exactly what he is doing for them, which is why he thought his son Kizito was being unreasonable and ungrateful when he left the house. He believes that by meeting their financial needs, he has fulfilled his role as a father, but it has instead torn him apart. Tamara confesses in her letter that her incessant yearning for love and compassion had damaged her. When she has something she wants to tell or share with her father, the look on his face usually discourages her from doing so. Tamara's case was unique in that she was only looking for love, care, and attention, not money, which challenges the stereotype that all

trafficked victims are poor. As she informed Senorita, she was overjoyed to be leaving home on her own for the first time.

We also share the misery of a little girl who was also a victim of a loveless family in the novel, *Pain in the Neck*, as she laments her ordeal: Anything can happen in a society full of paedophiles and rapists. For me, life has no meaning and is unjust. Men who did not pity my frail nature had destroyed my youth. This path of abuse began with my father. Tears welled up in Adanna's eyes as she uttered it. Adanna was sexually molested by her father while her mother remained silent until other relatives took advantage of her due to poverty and a lack of family love.

Ikechukwu Asika and Ifeoma Odinye, the writers, believe that a lack of parental care and love is one of the leading causes of human trafficking. They argue that parents should understand that the home and family should not just be a place where principles are instilled, but also a place where people may freely connect and feel accepted. They should do their best to fulfil their parental responsibilities, which include not just providing formal education, clothing, food, and shelter for their children, but also recognizing the need to show love, care, and be available to listen to them and be present when they are needed.

Human trafficking is a major issue with a slew of negative consequences that have contributed significantly to the underdevelopment of our country, Nigeria, as evidenced by the current investigation.

Conclusion

Human trafficking, often known as modern-day slavery, is a serious problem that has contributed significantly to our society's current state of underdevelopment. Unfortunately, this issue hasn't gotten the attention it deserves to put a stop to it. It has been discovered that the government contributes significantly to the growth of human trafficking by ignoring the needs of its citizens by failing to provide employment opportunities and failing to make sufficient efforts in apprehending and prosecuting traffickers, as making laws is not enough; enforcing them is also required. The authors utilized in this work attempt to illustrate what is available in our contemporary society, which is created by the government's and other agencies' casual attitude toward security concerns, as they aid in fanning the embers of slavery.

Human trafficking victims can come from wealthy families but fall prey to greed, lack of parental care, or unstable homes, while others may be victims of poverty or those looking for a better life. The majority of the victims die in the process as a result of depression, hard

drugs, drunkenness, and diseases, or they are used for ritual sacrifice. Human trafficking is a chain of the organized crime perpetrated by a group of people on a local or international scale. It is backed by powerful people in society, which is one of the reasons why it is difficult to catch and prosecute human traffickers. Families play a role in this epidemic of human trafficking in one way or another, since neglecting a child's needs, overworking, and a lack of wealth can all lead to a child's death, as it did for Adanna and Tamara.

Finally, eradicating this modern-day version of slavery will require a concerted effort. A deeper knowledge of the causes that led to human trafficking, such as income inequality, rural poverty, unemployment, poor parental care, gender inequality, and so on, will bring society and government closer to curtailing the criminal industry's growth.

Works Cited:

Adepoju, Aderanti and Arie Van der Wiel. *Seeking Greener Pastures Abroad: A Migration*

Profile of Nigeria. Safari, 2010.

Adepoju, Samuel. "The Role Government in Fighting Corruption in the Nigerian

Contemporary Environment" in *Kotangora Journal of Social Sciences*. Eds.

Abdukarim Waziri. Parafina Books, 1998.

Asika, Ikechukwu. *Tamara*. Kraft, 2013.

Bruckert C and Parent. *Trafficking in Human Beings and Organized Crime*. Royal

Canadian publishing services, 2002.

Lame, Ibrahim and Femi Odekunle. *Fighting Corruption and Organized Crime in Nigeria:*

Challenges for New Millennium. Spectrum, 2001.

Louise, Shelly. *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*. Cambridge University

Press, 2010.

Odinye, Ifeoma, *Pain in the Neck*. Amaka Dreams, 2018.

Stoecker, Sally. *The Rise in Human Trafficking and Roles of Organized Crimes*.

Garland Publishing Inc, 2000.

Uwaoma, Emmanuel. *Educating the Special Target Group*. Issaco Press Limited, 2004.

United Nations on Human Rights. *Human Rights and Human Trafficking*, Fact Sheet No. 36,

New York: 2014.

Wijers Marjan & Linlap- Chew. *Trafficking in Women, Forced Labour, and Slave- like*

Practices in Marriage, Domestic Labour and Prostitution. Utrecht: Foundation against Trafficking in Women.

Wolfe, John. "Wilberforce, William." Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Online Ed.). Oxford Dictionary Press, 22 May 2009. Doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/29386.