

Research in Social Change

DESTITUTION AND PROSTITUTION IN NIGERIAN URBAN AREAS: EVIDENCE FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The impact of the problems of destitution and prostitution on the moral fabric of society cannot be overemphasized and thus calls for the attention of the relevant stakeholders (the government, civil society, and professionals) in restoring moral values and decency to our societies. This study is centered on the psychological, social, and economic impact that the activities of the destitute and prostitutes have both on the individual and the society at large. The study found that many individuals resort to begging on the streets because they are either physically challenged, lack basic necessities for decent living, have many dependents, or are the breadwinners of their families while at the same time receive little or no support from family and friends. While the above was the case for the destitute, others engaged in prostitution due to peer pressure, financial pressure from family and friends, greed, and marital issues, etc. It was also found that the problems of destitution and prostitution tend to be more prevalent in urban areas due to the increasing levels of economic activities in the cities, which therefore leads to more patronage. To avert the negative effects of the problems of destitution and prostitution in society and to completely wean those involved away from it, the study recommends the coordination of efforts by the government, psychologists, and social workers to help train and equip the victims with the skills necessary to assist them in forgoing their old lifestyle completely.

Keywords

destitution • prostitution • urban • Nigeria • society

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1. Introduction

The problem of destitution and prostitution in Nigeria's urban areas has continued to impact society mentally, physically, socially, economically, and psychologically, especially due to the continuous geometrical increase in the country's population and given the fact that these activities tend to be carried out mostly in densely populated areas of the cities. Many scholars have projected that in the nearest future, given the current economic condition in Nigeria and the increasing population of the destitute and prostitutes, this disconcerting trend will soon reach a height where it cannot be controlled. According to the United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF 2003) report, each year about a million young people across the globe are forced into prostitution, thus increasing the overall number of young people engaged in prostitution globally to the tune of about

ten million. In many African countries, including Nigeria, where engaging in prostitution is a social and cultural taboo, the huge number of people now engaged in the trade in plain sight now poses a serious social concern (Ogunkan and Fawole 2010). More so, Yusuf (2013) argues that the number of young females engaged in prostitution and the attendant social vices it creates is on the rise. This is worrisome, given how the presence of these people (beggars and prostitutes) constitute a conspicuous menace on our streets and deface the aesthetic beauty of towns that successive governments have been trying to uphold and maintain. While the destitute/beggars usually occupy the heart of the ever-busy towns like markets, school premises, churches, and banks, where people can easily notice and patronize them, prostitutes, on the other hand, are subtler in their approaches. They are mostly seen at night around major hotels, brothels

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and roads where they try to solicit clients and patronage. Their activities not only impact the health and safety of the individual involved in this business, but also that of the people who patronize them. This in turn constitutes a health risk and a nuisance to the environment and thus also debases the moral fabric of society at large.

Generally, destitution is a state of severe poverty in which the person concerned depends on the goodwill of others for survival as well as charity from the public and welfare packages, either from the government or non-governmental agencies. The destitute are people who are extremely poor and lacking the means of meeting their needs; examples include beggars, the disabled without support from family, and accident victims and/or victims of natural disasters such as drought-triggered famine. Destitution in the contemporary British context refers to the homeless (i.e. people who sleep on the streets, have no work or possessions, are without family or friends to turn to, or have few material goods with no social assets). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, destitution includes the state of being destitute of resources; want for life's necessities, lacking/deprived of the power to do something, the action of deserting or forsaking, which suggests social marginalization, thus making destitution an individual human experience. In the past, the population of the destitute were elderly people, but the recent increase in Fulani herders' migration/terrorist attacks, especially in rural areas, have included youths and the children among the number of people in search of a means of survival and livelihood. As Jelili (2009) posits, in eradicating extreme poverty and hunger in Nigeria, which is in line with the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG), it is proper to first address the rising incidences of begging in the cities, which is now a problem. As a matter of fact, street begging not only constitutes a nuisance to the physical and social environment in many cities in Nigeria, but also a reliance on this activity as a means of livelihood in the long run is a waste of human resources and constitutes a burden on the already overstretched low-income earners that make up the mainstream of the entire work force. Moreover, the poverty rate in Nigeria has increased tremendously as a result of the inactions of those elected into the leadership positions of Nigeria, such that people are ready to commit all kinds of scandalous crimes, including prostitution, to survive. The government established the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), aimed at eradicating poverty at the grass roots level, but unfortunately, there are still a substantial number of able-bodied people who depend on begging from others to earn a living. Thus, NAPEP failed due to poor management of the fund. Despite the efforts of the different tiers of government to alleviate poverty and sometimes destitution, the problem still continues unsolved.

Prostitution as the earliest profession in the world can be traced to the year 2400 BC in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Rome, Greece, and pre-Columbian Peru; and there is evidence from prehistoric times suggesting the existence of sexual liberalism and prostitution before sex became monetized. In the nineteenth century and during the Middle Ages, legal brothels were an important source of revenue tax in Europe; hence prostitution was tolerated as a necessary evil. However, prostitution in African society can be traced to the period of the Stone Age, where slave masters used their female slaves as sex toys and sex workers. Apart from this, the female slaves were also reckoned social outcasts, and it was hard for women with dignity to be involved in it (Yusuf 2013).

In other words, with the advancement in information and communication technologies in the twenty-first century, prostitution has taken a new turn with social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Wechat, etc., thereby introducing and making electronic sex a viable option for some young people. Sexual liberalism and commercial sex work/online sex have increased with the innovation of online dating platforms where people could choose and view from the array of numerous nude pictures and pornographic videos just by paying. According to Weitzer (2009), what motivates men to pay for sex includes the desire to have sex with someone having a certain physical appearance (age, race, and body type); the desire to have sex without any emotional commitment; the thrill of having sex with a prostitute; and dissatisfaction with or lack of a sexual partner. This includes a desire for a sex pattern that the partner cannot guarantee. Weitzer (2013) is of the view that prostitution is a form of gender oppression, which can possibly be termed a deviant behavior. Nonetheless, Harcourt and Donovan (2005) identified several forms of sex work using worksites, sexual practices, and major strategies of soliciting for clients as a yardstick. These include:

- i. Escort workers:** They reach their clients by means of telephone through the hotel staff who serve as their agents or middlemen; because of the low customer base and their exclusive home service to clients, they are relatively expensive.
- ii. Club, bar, and dance hall workers:** They frequent club houses, dancing halls, and bars to solicit for customers.
- iii. Beer girls:** They are girls employed in bars and pubs to sell and promote their goods, who also engage in commercial sex with clients in order to supplement their pay.
- iv. Opportunistic girls:** This class of women may refute the prostitute toga, because they indulge in sex with wealthy clients once in a while for favours.
- v. Femmes libres:** They consist of single or divorced women who exchange sexual services for gifts, which, in the long run they may convert to cash.

vi. Beach boys, bumsters and gigolos: They are contracted by 'sugar mummies' to undertake different social events which may include sex, and they are mostly young men and boys.

vii. Survival sex: This type of prostitution is common in given circumstances in which hunger and war are prevalent. Here, sex is exchanged for food and security as a currency rather than physical money.

viii. Part-timers: They are women who have other means of livelihood other than prostitution, but venture into sexual relationships with high-ranking individuals in society for financial gain.

ix. The student class is prominent in institutions of higher learning; they exchange sex for grades with their clients, who are mostly lecturers and consist of a network of men who belong to the middle and upper class in society.

x. Independent call girls make judicious use of social media in soliciting for clients and veil themselves from the curious eyes of the public.

xi. Street walkers/Night walkers are found at odd hours and in highbrow areas and streets. They charge more than the typical brothel employee.

xii. Brothel employees charge 'moderate' prices, and brothel employees endure 'moderate exploitation,' since part of their income will be given to the owners of the brothel (Weitzer 2012).

xiii. Doorway workers stay in brothels and are prominently displayed by the doorway to entice passersby to enter the houses of prostitution (Weitzer 2012).

According to Wakdok (2010), with the increase in crimes, kidnapping, and ritualism in Nigeria, prostitution is now more and more dangerous. More so, prostitution/sex work has several disadvantages associated with it which appear as consensual: risk of physical and sexual violence (e.g. aggression, rape), impact on mental health (e.g. stress associated with the activity, social shame, and stigma); and aspects related to physical health (e.g. sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, effects of substance abuse, etc.) (Ulibarri et al. 2014; Harris, Nilan, and Kirby 2011; Farley, Lynne, and Cotton 2005; Surratt et al. 2004; Dalla, Xia, and Kennedy, 2003).

In past years, people engaged in farming, hunting, and other menial jobs with their households in order to earn a living, but the age of technology and the current situation in Nigeria have changed peoples' mindset. Many young Nigerians are unemployed because of the unfavourable economic atmosphere in Nigeria, which makes people engage in all manner of activities to earn a living. It has been observed that some of the beggars/destitute engage in it because of the high patronage gained in public places, where the destitute and prostitutes usually engage in activities without considering the risks, identity issues, and the consequences. More so, the increasing financial demands on the unemployed females living in the urban areas by family relatives in rural areas have

pushed some of them into sex for money, without considering the consequences. With the recent trend of 'get quick' money, many young people now see years of apprenticeship and/or months of skill acquisition as a waste of time; hence they prefer anything that will give them quick money.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2019) revealed that during the third quarter of 2018, about 26.6% of the labour force were women (aged 16–64 and willing, able, and actively seeking work) who were unemployed; compared with men during the same period, unemployment was just 20.3%. Again, the level of susceptibility of women who are unemployed in the hands of relatives, friends, 'big sister' figures and madams with promises of employment in the cities has further increased. In spite of this, commercial sex depicts inequality in the means of production (money or non-monetary values) between the buyer (male client) and seller (the female prostitute). People engage in prostitution for reasons such as poverty, peer group pressure, sexual abuse, illiteracy, marriage matters, or substance abuse, without due consideration to the risks ranging from physical, sociological, and psychological to emotional risks. Commercial sex workers (CWs)/prostitutes are regarded as the main source of sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis, gonorrhea and HIV/AIDS, which can lead to death or permanent disorder. The results include unwanted pregnancies, abortions, injury to the womb, and gender-based violence; women are victims of violent rape, ritual murders, and other physical and emotional injuries. Nonetheless, the prevalence of youth prostitution has become a very serious social problem for the government and the entire society. For example, in 2018, a cross-sectional survey for assessing the prevalence of HIV among the general population was conducted by the National AIDS Indicator and Impact Survey (NAIIS) in Nigeria. The result of the survey revealed a national rate of HIV of 1.35% (15–49 years), with an estimate of 1.9 million people living with the virus in the country, making it the fourth largest epidemic in the world behind South Africa, India, and Mozambique. The NAIIS indicated that HIV prevalence among females was 1.7%, compared to 0.8% in males. The difference in prevalence by state showed that six states (Abia, Anambra, Akwa Ibom, Benue, Taraba, and Rivers) had a rate of 2% and above; thirteen states (Adamawa, Bayelsa, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Lagos, Ogun, Plateau, Nassarawa, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)) had a rate of between 1.0% and 1.9%, while the remaining seventeen states (Bauchi, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara) had an HIV rate below 1.0%. The zonal variations showed that all states in the northwest had a rate of 0.3% to 0.6%, except Kaduna (0.9%); states like Lagos (1.2%) and Ogun (1.1%) in the southwest had a higher prevalence of the disease than others in the zone. The

north central region had a mixture of low (Kogi 0.9%, Kwara 0.8%, and Niger 0.6%), medium (Nasarawa 1.6%, Plateau 1.3%), and high (Benue 4.3%) rates. Results from the study also revealed that the South-South zone accounted for the highest number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) followed by the north central and the north east regions, which were the lowest, with females constituting a higher number of PLHIV in all zones except in the northwest.

Against this background, this study evaluates the psychological, social, and economic impact of destitution and prostitution in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of this research include: (1) to evaluate the psychological impact of destitution and prostitution on individuals and society; (2) to investigate the social impact of destitution and prostitution on individuals and society; (3) to examine the economic impact of destitution and prostitution on individuals and society; (4) to investigate the opportunities that exist for beggars/the destitute and prostitutes who decide to abandon their old way of life to embrace new lifestyle; (5) to recommend ways of minimizing the impacts created by destitution and prostitution.

2. Materials and Method

This study adopts a survey, conceptual, and theoretical approach/methodology to discuss the psychological, social, and economic impact of destitution and prostitution in Nsukka Urban.

The sample was drawn from beggars and destitutes in Nsukka metropolis, and females in Nsukka who engage in prostitution to take care of themselves. Nsukka is a town and local government area in Enugu State, in southeast Nigeria. Towns that share a common boundary with Nsukka are Eha alumona, Edem Ani, Alor-uno, Opi, Orba, Ede-Oballa, Obukpa, and Obimo. Other nearby towns like Enugu Ezike, Obollo-Afor (formerly the centre for palm oil trade), Nimbo, Adani, Uzo-Uwani, and Mkpologwu, now also lay claim to the name Nsukka. This is because they all collectively fall into the political zoning system in Nigeria known as a Senatorial Zone. As of 2006, Nsukka had a population of 309,633, and Nsukka Town is known as the site of the University of Nigeria, the first indigenous Nigerian university, founded by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of Nigeria. Currently the town has a number of Federal Parastatals in the university such as National Space Agency and the Energy Research Centre.

A sample size of forty respondents participated in the study; twenty respondents constitute the sample for beggars and other destitute people, while twenty respondents constitute the sample for prostitutes in the Nsukka metropolis. The study employed the accidental non-probability sampling technique, which requires the researcher to obtain information from any prostitute, beggar, or destitute person available at the time of

research. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the required data/information from primary sources; the rationale being that it is economical to administer and effective in generating responses needed for the study.

3. Discussions

3.1. The Social Psychological Theory of prostitution propounded by Henry Perkins (1977) states that women go into prostitution due to three social and psychological factors: predisposing factor, attracting factor, and precipitating factor. According to the predisposing factor, people go into prostitution due to struggles with parental neglect, parental promiscuity, child abuse, or other traumatic experiences. The attracting factor posits that females go into prostitution because of their desire for an easy life or lots of money. The precipitating factor holds that females go into prostitution because of unemployment, or having friends who are prostitutes or being pressured by a pimp to sell their bodies.

The predisposing factors, according to psychologists, are feelings of unworthiness and loneliness, absence of temperance, and the inability to build stable relationship with others. Sociologists oppose the assumption that prostitutes are abnormal, holding that being abused is not a justification; hence, some females have more of a tendency to become prostitutes than others, not because they are abnormal in any sense, but because they are normal because of the fact that they are able to withhold affection from any of their clients, just as a normal victim of child abuse can withhold affection from her parents. Therefore, the capacity for emotional detachment can predispose a woman towards entering prostitution; and looking at the desperation to make money in the Nigerian society today, one can say that young women go into prostitution because of the attracting factor (prostitution for money).

3.2. Social Exclusion Theory of Poverty: Hills and Stewart (2005) define social exclusion as 'more than the lack of material resources' by re-conceptualizing poverty as a basic characteristic of the entire society that enhances lack of participation. According to Morazes and Pintak (2007), a general consensus exists among those who focus on exclusion while viewing poverty as non-participation in consumption, production, political engagement, and social interaction. Hence, this theory suggests that inequality is central in the social exclusion paradigm, which is not only confined to income inequality, but is also defined in terms of limited opportunities for the poor; a broader conception of the material resources available in society (Hills and Stewart 2005); and health and neighborhood inequality (Nolan and Marx 2009). This implies that the lack of these resources breeds inequality and tends to exclude individuals from social participation.

3.3. Psychological Impact of Destitution and Prostitution

The impact created by destitution and prostitution are visited on both individuals and society. Research has shown that prostitution is related to the onset of psychopathological symptoms (depression and anxiety), as well as posttraumatic stress disorders, signs of trauma on a sexual level, and addictive pathology related to substance use. More so, the existence of violence at a higher frequency in the context of prostitution, contributes significantly to the seriousness of the psychopathological symptoms. The following psychological impacts are associated with prostitution and destitution:

3.3.1. Depression and suicide: Zhan et al. (2012) found an incidence of depression in about 20% of their sample, making it similar to the findings of Fawole and Dagunduro (2014), who discovered that 21% of the sample of prostitutes they used had depression, and that 29% of the women presented diminished self-esteem. In the case of substance-using prostitutes, the sample collected showed that anxiety and depression are more significant, compared to non-prostitutes who use illegal substances (Surratt et al. 2005). The study by Suresh, Furr and Srikrishnan (2009) showed that severe depressive symptom caused about a 97-times increase on the likelihood of alcohol and drug abuse. They also noted that 30% of the sample reported a suicidal attempt. Moreover, the presence of emotional change has a relationship with increased vulnerability to adopting risky sexual behavior (Zhan et al. 2012). In extreme cases of depression, individuals can resort to suicide, especially when their needs are not being met and their goals are not been actualized. For instance, the thought of an individual being exposed to sexual intercourse with several men of different sizes, on different occasions without proper checks about infection and other health issues can provoke suicidal attempts on individual prostitutes. The destitute person can also experience depression and suicidal thoughts when they consider their present situation and the extent of support they obtain.

3.3.2. Violence: Several studies have associated violence with prostitution, for instance the study by (Surratt et al. 2005) revealed that of the entire sample, 71% consist of prostitutes who have experienced situations of violence. The result of another study that was done surveying prostitutes in South Africa showed that a year before the study, 27% of the women were raped, 19% stabbed, and 44% beaten by their clients, who are the aggressors (Wechsberg, Luseno and Lam 2005). Also, a study by Armstrong (2016) revealed that there are many cases of harassment having to do with verbal and physical violence in the prostitution scene, unleashed by passersby. Prostitution practiced in a public space (street prostitution) is associated with more frequent threats with weapons, tearing of clothes, pulling of hair, punching and slapping, and show greater diversity; while violence for prostitutes in indoor environment tends to manifest itself more

in the form of sexual behaviours (rape, vaginal penetration with fingers, etc.) and presents greater severity (Katsulis et al. 2014; Raphael and Shapiro 2004; Farley et al. 1998). The analysis of 118 cases of violent incidents as reported by prostitutes revealed that 25% had encountered physical and sexual violence, 30% harassment (including stalking), and 25% theft, but only 15 out of the 118 cases were reported to the police (Phipps 2013). In recent years, according to Briere and Jordan (2004) and Wasco (2003), the evaluation of the posttraumatic stress resulting from sexual violence and violence of other forms relating to prostitution, has been a major source of research.

The destitute/beggars are not immune from violence, since they can become victims of violent incidents in the public places they occupy (e.g. sudden fight, stray bullets).

3.3.3. Psychological Stress: One of the studies that looked at the psychological impact of prostitution showed that exposure to sexually related violence in the course of sex work has a relationship with psychological stress development (Ulibarri et al. 2014; El-Bassel et al. 1997); this also led to many other negative outcomes in the short, medium, and long term: polarization of affection and sadness, with a high possibility of evolving into sixty-nine depressive disorders (Fawole and Dagunduro 2014; Zhan et al. 2012; Suresh et al. (2009); Gilchrist, Gruer, and Atkinson 2001); posttraumatic stress disorders (Choi et al. 2009; Farley and Barkan, 1998; Farley et al. 1998); anxiety symptoms (Gilchrist et al. 2001; Taylor 2011); and addictive disorders related to substance use (Dalla et al. 2003; Lutnick et al. 2014; Surratt et al. 2004). As a matter of fact, Ulibarri et al. (2014) showed that sex workers who reported their experiences of abuse manifested numerous symptoms of psychological stress.

People who engage in begging also experience psychological stress, especially in those who fake disability in order beg alms from people. They take emotional and psychological risks to work without suspicion.

3.3.4. Impact on Mental Health: Rossler et al. (2010), in their study of the mental health of sex workers in Switzerland, found that posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety were the most frequent and common mental health challenge confronting sex workers, and this could advance to a stage that harms their physical health. Some studies evaluated the presence of psychological changes among sex workers and found that prostitutes have challenges with memory and concentration, unlike non-prostitutes (Farley, Lynne, and Cotton 2005; Gilchrist et al. 2001), as well as challenges with sleeping (incidence of 79%), irritability (64%), anxiety (60%), phobias (26%), panic attacks (24%), compulsions (37%), obsessions (53%), fatigue (82%), and concerns with physical health (35%) (Gilchrist et al. 2001). People who engage in begging also have to strategize on how best to operate in their day-to-day activities.

3.3.5. Drug Abuse and Misuse: Many women who engage in prostitution have been known to abuse drugs even to the point of addiction, and also use alcohol as a coping mechanism and for self-medication. Most of these drugs being abused have adverse health effects on the lungs, kidneys, and heart, which can lead to protracted illness and premature death. In a study of 114 women involved in all types of sex work, Bindel et al. (2012) discovered that 83% of the women had addiction and problematic drug use that posed a number of barriers and prevented improving and stabilizing their lives.

3.4. Social Impact of Destitution and Prostitution

3.4.1. Environmental Influence on Children/Society:

Children, who are raised in an environment where prostitution is carried out will be negatively influenced as they grow up. Environment influences our perceptions, which in turn influences our behaviours. Since the destitute/beggars occupy public places for easy patronage, their activities constitute a nuisance to cities and citizens, whereas the activities of prostitutes violate the morals and values of a society.

3.4.2. Risks and Victimization: Destitution and prostitution have lots of risks associated with them; for example, the destitute/beggars can be victims of accidents and/or death by the roadside that they usually occupy, or become victims of crime, ritualism, and kidnapping, and even rape. Prostitutes can also be victims of accidents, violence, kidnapping, money rituals, or murder. For instance, the *Daily Trust* newspaper of May 18, 2010 reported the story of a 22-year-old female undergraduate who was picked up by a client (an alleged ritualist) the previous night for sex business after their bargain ended at N4,000 for a night. In the process of trying to kill her for ritual purposes, the young woman escaped by jumping to safety from the third floor of the hotel room they lodged in and broke her waist in the process. According to Chatterjee et al. (2006), young adolescent girls who engage in prostitution are at a higher risk of infection and long-term damage, since their immature reproductive tracts are more sensitive. Deaths can also occur from abortions and in extreme cases, womb removals. This limits the chances of conceiving in the future should the victim decide to adopt a new lifestyle and start a family.

3.4.3. Social Shame and Stigmatization/Labeling: The labelling/stigmatization associated with destitution and prostitution is such that family and friends usually do not like to be associated with them. They are looked down at and are called unimaginable and unprintable names. This tends to further erode their already low self-worth and self-esteem. According to Scambler (2007), sex work/prostitution is associated with high levels of social stigma, particularly for women. Stigmatization occurs in all aspects of their life:

from clients, the general public, health care and other service providers, and police (Sanders 2007b). In situations where unwanted pregnancies result from prostitution, the shame of carrying a child can push the individual into a series of abortions. Prostitution also exposes people to the dangers of STIs like gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV/AIDS, which can lead to untimely death. However, sex work/prostitution is problematic and violates women's rights, which undermines the formal economy (Ward and Day 2006).

3.4.4. Crime and Criminal Activities: Crime, drug abuse, and criminal activities usually permeate environments where prostitutes operate. The profession usually attracts social miscreants, hoodlums, and even armed robbers as clients. This tends to make the areas where the prostitutes operate prone to criminal activities. In the same vein, a state of hopelessness among beggars and the destitute can push them into a life of crime and criminal activities.

3.5. Economic Impact of Destitution and Prostitution

3.5.1. Increased Poverty Level: Poverty has to do with persistently and unchangeably lacking in the basic necessities of life (food, shelter, clean water, clothing, medicine, education, knowledge, electricity) (Nwosu and Orji, 2017; Mba et al. 2019; Orji et al. 2020b). The destitute and beggars depend on charity for survival. They depend on the meagre income of low- and middle-income earners for their sustenance. This places a limitation on their ability to meet basic needs and thus perpetuates the endless circle of poverty in society.

3.5.2. Overpopulation in Urban Areas : The constant and endless influx of the destitute and prostitutes into urban areas due to the availability of so-called 'easy money' constitutes a nuisance and encourages overpopulation. This invariably puts a strain on the available public infrastructure in urban areas. Increasing population without corresponding productivity is detrimental to growth and overall development in the economy (Orji et al. 2020a).

3.5.3. Decline in Social Amenities: The pressure from the excess population impacts the available social amenities negatively and thus leads to a decline in the quality and the sustainability of such social amenities. The end result is a further decline on the already low standard of living. Even when government tries to provide some funding to boost social amenities and human capital development in these overpopulated areas, the impact is usually negligible (Madueme et al. 2021).

3.5.4. Unutilized and Underutilized Labour Force: When people resort to begging in the streets and or go into prostitution, society and the economy are the ultimate losers, the contribution people would have made to make society better if they had learnt avocational skill is absent. This is not healthy for economic growth and sustainability.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The problem of prostitution and destitution in Nigeria has continued to negatively impact society physically, socially, economically, and psychologically, especially with the continuous rise in population in urban areas. The impact can never be overemphasized and thus calls for the attention and action of the government, civil society organizations, and other professionals in tackling the menace and restoring sanity to the moral fabric of society. This study was centered on the assessing the psychological, social, and economic impact that the activities of the destitute and prostitutes have had on both the individual and society. The study found that many resort to begging on the streets because they are either physically challenged, lack the basic necessities for survival, have many family dependents, are the family breadwinners, or have a complete lack of financial support from family and friends. Whereas the above was the case for beggars on the streets or the destitute, many engage in prostitution due to peer pressure, need to acquire an education, broken marriages, poverty, and the quest to meet basic daily life needs. It was also found that these prostitutes are mostly found in and around major towns and cities where there is a market for their products and that prostitutes bear most of the negative impacts of the profession like depression, drug abuse, victimizations, kidnappings, ritual killings, accidents, stigma, and diseases. Given the multidimensional impact of the effects of prostitution and destitution, the study therefore recommends the following: First, the state and other relevant stakeholders should engage the services of professionals (counsellors, clinical psychologists, and social workers) to help rehabilitate the destitute and the prostitutes. This will help give them a new orientation and a new judgment about life. Second, the government, in conjunction with the private sector, should, as a matter of urgency, set up skills acquisition programmes for these rehabilitated people to help them acquire new skills and training, which will help them become independent and more useful to themselves and to society at large. Third, the government needs to set up conditional cash transfer schemes to assist folks in rural areas, especially those affected by natural disasters and other forms of violent attacks. This will help stem their constant influx to the urban areas in search of a means of livelihood and survival. Finally, the government should ensure that the measures put in place to train and empower these prostitutes and the destitute are properly managed and supervised to ensure that the objective, which is to help them become independent, is not defeated.

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