

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN FICTION. A STUDY OF
CHIKA UNIGWE'S *ON BLACK SISTERS' STREET* AND IFEANYI AJAEGBO'S
*SARAH HOUSE***

BY

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to God Almighty, who gave me strength, wisdom, knowledge and understanding throughout my academic years in school.

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ABSTRACT

Human trafficking is a global phenomenon, and in most cases, women are core victims of trafficking for sexual purposes. The push and pull factors are what contribute to the growth of trafficking, in which traffickers use the pull factors to lure vulnerable women and girls into this global capitalist flesh trade. This study will be using Chika Unigwe's On Black Sisters' Street and Ifeanyi Ajaegbo's Sarah House as case study to examine how women are being subjected to all forms of exploitation and oppression in the world of trafficking. The theoretical approach to this study is Marxist Feminism which reveals how powerful individuals (traffickers) gain wealth through the business of buying and selling of women for sexual purposes, thereby exploiting and robbing them of their self-worth and dignity as humans in a classed society.

Keywords: Human trafficking, Migration and Prostitution

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Human trafficking is a global phenomenon in which one's fundamental human rights are being encroached upon. According to the International Labour Organization (2012), nearly 21 million people across the world were forced into labour. Out of these 21 million victims, 11.7 million came from the Asia-Pacific region, 3.7 million from Africa, and 1.8 million from Latin America (International Labour Organization, 2012). The demand for prostitutes contributed to young women being trafficked and forced into prostitution. This incessant need for victims causes traffickers to harbour and transfer victims across states and countries (Lutya & Lanier, 2012). The huge gain traffickers will receive causes them to keep control of their victims by any means necessary, which includes scaring and forcing them to stay (Jakobi, 2012).

Trafficking in human beings is not a uniform phenomenon. Its scope and extent varies in different cultural and political contexts. Trafficking in persons is a hidden criminal activity and the number of victims that come into the limelight is only a fraction of the actual number that suffers under the ambit of human trafficking (Touzenis, 2010). Human traffickers target those people in society who are poor, isolated and weak. The majority of victims of human trafficking are women and children who end up being used as sex objects. Human traffickers use different creative and ruthless ploys to trick the victims to fall into their trap by winning their confidence (Trafficking in Persons Report, 2008).

Traffickers often use force, fraud, or coercion to control women. Labour trafficking holds much in common with sex trafficking, but one of its key difference concerns the

citizenship of such labourers. Labour trafficking victims identified in the United States are 67% undocumented workers and 28% documented workers (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011). Based on that information, approximately 95% of labour trafficking victims in the United States are foreign. Anecdotally, it seems that many individuals have confused human trafficking and human smuggling as the same issue that primarily affects foreign labourers. It is not uncommon to see explicit statements that human trafficking is unrelated to smuggling or transportation across borders in the educational literature of anti-human trafficking organizations (Polaris Project, 2012). Human trafficking is a crime against a person while human smuggling is considered a crime unto a country by crossing borders illegally (Polaris Project, 2010).

Violence against women has occurred for many years, which has led them to be primary targets of victimization and human trafficking (Walklate, 2014). Victims are continuously used over and over again until the traffickers no longer want them due to old age and over-abuse (Macy & Graham, 23). Unfortunately, due to the length of victimization, the victims may have a tendency to victimize other individuals because that is all they know (Lanier & Henry, 2010). This is a way of enforcing the power that was stolen from them.

Estimated economic figures from 2005 show that, 91 per cent of Nigerians live under two dollars per day (Kara 2011). On the other hand, research shows that approximately “40,000 to 50,000 Nigerian women have become victims of trafficking [sexual exploitation, forced labour, the removal of organs or servitude] over the past 15 years [1990-2005]”, yet specific figures on Nigerian women forced into sex trafficking are unobtainable given the complex organizational infrastructure, migration routes and transit stays used to traffic victims (Carling 2006).

Traditionally, our concept of human trafficking is women trapped in the sex industry (Rao & Presenti 2012). However, human trafficking is so much more; it consists of both men and women, working in both legitimate and illicit markets. People engage in trafficking for different reasons such as labour work, child soldiers, prostitution and organ donors. Africa as a continent has a long history of being involved with human trafficking. The real exploitation of the victim starts at the destination, where they are at the sole mercy of the traffickers. Due to their illegal status in a foreign land and physical isolation, they can do very little to prevent their exploitation in the hands of traffickers. The involvement of organised criminal groups in trafficking provides the necessary support for the increasing influence of this crime.

Therefore, this research is poised to explore the issue of women trafficking in Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sister's Street* and Ifeanyi Ajaegbo's *Sarah House* against the backdrop of social injustices meted out to women.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Human trafficking is a worldwide problem that includes almost every country in the world. It is complex in nature and has been generally discovered that trafficking is essentially a gender phenomenon in which women and children are mostly affected than men. Women trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation can have health needs that are the same or similar to those of sex workers (Zimmerman, Hossain & Watts, 2011; Zimmerman et al., 2003).

Prostitution which serves as the exclusive purpose of trafficking in women has an untenable definition, as not all victims are prostitutes nor have all prostitutes been trafficked. At the same time, women who are victims of trafficking are seen as immoral and undeserving of legal protection. The tension between the fact that women from the developing world who cross borders are predominantly victims of traffickers in need of protection and that they are

also sexually transgressive is never resolved through trafficking legislation or international initiatives (Kapur, 2008). This study therefore seeks to address the oppression and exploitation of women in a capitalist society as this continues to be an overarching oppressor of women. This study will go about the research through the conceptual model of Marxist feminist approach in order to interrogate the issue of class where the upper class (pimps or traffickers) dominates or control the lower class (victims) as portrayed in the texts selected for analysis.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to examine women trafficking in contemporary African fiction in the books titled *On Black Sister's Street* by Chika Unigwe's and *Sarah House* by Ifeanyi Ajaegbo's. In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives are set:

- (a) To explain how women are seen as major victims of trafficking as presented in the selected texts;
- (b) To identify and describe how women are being subjected to exploitation in a classed society as presented in the selected texts
- (c) To show the factors contributing to the growth of human trafficking of females as presented in the selected texts

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the objectives of this research work, certain questions need to be asked, which include the following;

- (a) Who are the victims of human trafficking?
- (b) How does a classed society contribute to the exploitation of women?
- (c) What are the effects of trafficking on the victims?

- (d) Does the law enforcement agent help in curtailing trafficking or act as accomplices as observed from the selected texts?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it purposely establishes trafficking as a purpose of commercial sexual exploitation in African fiction and the impact of trafficking on women. It also brings to light, issues that are re-occurring and are integral to the society as it re-emphasizes the recognition of the right values in women trafficking.

Furthermore, this study will help to draw attention to the plight of women in the world of trafficking.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is limited to the two (2) selected books, viz Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sister's Street* and Ifeanyi Ajaegbo's *Sarah House* where research will be carried out based on women trafficking in contemporary African fiction in the selected novels. The study covers trafficking as a purpose of commercial sexual exploitation in African fiction and the impact of human trafficking on women.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to examine women trafficking in contemporary African fiction as presented in Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sister's Street* and Ifeanyi Ajaegbo's *Sarah House*. This research work will adopt a textual analysis of both texts to unravel the oppression, victimization and exploitation of women in the world of trafficking.

Hence, this research work will hinge on Marxist Feminist theory as it explains how the bourgeoisie (Traffickers or pimps) controls and victimize the proletariat (women) in a capitalist society as observed in the selected texts.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Marxist theory has been used as a leading tenet for women's liberation since the late nineteenth century. The development of Marxist theory on women goes to August Bebel (1879) and Fredrique Engels (1884). According to Marx in Marxist concept, the individual is influenced by the way the society is structured, which in all modern societies is known as a class structure; that is, people's opportunities, wants and interests are to be shaped by the mode of production that make up the society they inhabit (Tong 97). Marxist Feminism theory sees contemporary gender inequality as a result of capitalist mode of production.

1.9 OPERATIONAL OF TERMS

Gender: This is the state of being male or female (typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones) or socially-constructed roles of relationship between men and women.

Woman: This is a female human being. The term woman is usually reserved for an adult, with the term girl being the usual term for a female child or adolescent.

Human Trafficking: This is a trade of human for the purpose of force labour, sexual slavery or commercial sexual exploitation for the traffickers or others.

Feminism: A social theory or political movement arguing that legal and social restrictions on females must be removed in order to bring about equality of both sexes in all aspects of public and private life.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Human trafficking is a kind of modern slavery and the victims are mainly women and girls. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel, *Trafficked* (2008) portrays how materialism has led traffickers into criminal acts that impede the progress of other individuals. Abidemi Sanusi's *Eyo* (2009) portrays not only the traffickers' quest for wealth but also how poverty, laziness, lack of parental care and cultural practices like devaluation of women and girls in some African societies make women vulnerable to trafficking.

Literature is a representation of life and the mirror of the society; the representation of the traffickers' actions in literature is therefore to evoke and reinvigorate its confrontation from people all over the world. The trafficked girls represented in both novels are deprived, violated and sexually abused in Africa before they choose to travel abroad to achieve their dreams in life. Therefore, in order to have lives of their own, not the life controlled by the men in their lives characterized by sex abuse, lack of parental care and poverty, they choose going into prostitution rather than dying in hardship when they are told that they can make huge sums of money in Europe. In this study, the authors of *Trafficked* and *Eyo* present the everyday activities and experiences of these trafficked girls presented in the novels as a satire, criticizing the ills in the society with the hope of effecting a change. Traffickers are the upper-class citizens while these young girls that are lured into this kind of modern slavery are the lower-class citizens.

Feminist criticism is a distinctive approach to literature inaugurated in the late 1960's which has reached out in so many directions. It is a movement that disapproves of the

limitations imposed on women and promotes equality of the male and female genders in all aspects of life. But Pratt Annis points out in *The New Female Criticism* (1975) that it would be better to turn one's attention from attack to defense, from examples of distorted images of women to examples of healthier representation (877). Stevens and Stewart in their *A Critical Guide to Literary Criticism and Research* (1987) posit that some female critics have used criticism to call for change in the society (77) and Heilbrun, in support of this, stresses that *Reinventing Womanhood* (1979) makes literary criticism a part of her effort to promote the struggle for female selfhood (p. 202).

With regard to this study, Adimora-Ezeigbo and Abidemi Sanusi present the trauma suffered by these young girls lured into trafficking as they are turned into sex slaves and prostitutes to make money for the traffickers. They also represent child abuse, lack of parental care, poverty, and peer pressure as the pressing factors that lead to girl trafficking. These authors highlight poor education and poverty as the reasons for women trafficking in African countries. They also portray the male characters in the novel trying to take advantage of the young trafficked girls' pitiful situation. This is seen through the actions of the journalists who aim to expose the personalities of the trafficked girls to boost their professions. The security man at the rehabilitation centre also tries to rape Nneoma; one of the trafficked girls in *Trafficked* whom he is supposed to protect. It is also portrayed in the actions of Sam in *Eyo* who assaults a young girl of ten years sexually and also get paid by his numerous friends to sleep with Eyo. The actions of the male characters in both texts add to the trauma of the girls. The oneness of spirit of the trafficked girls that is juxtaposed with the trauma of the girls and the vulnerability of young girls in the hands of greedy and immoral lecturers as presented by Ezeigbo vividly bring out the victimization and marginalization of women. The emphasis of Ezeigbo and Sanusi as female writers on the marginalization of

women, is to call on all women to preserve their womanhood and stand out and fight against all practices in the society that are against women and girls.

Abidemi Sanusi as a former human rights worker sheds light on the horrors of trafficking on a girl child. Eyo a young girl of ten is being smuggled to the United Kingdom by her father's friend (Femi) to experience a life she never anticipated for. She becomes a sex object that is being passed from one trafficker to another. In *Trafficked*, Eziegbo presents us with frequent strikes as one of the social occurrences which pushes young girls into the quest for greener pasture outside Africa as these strikes keep young girls out of school for a long time, thereby giving them ample time to explore anywhere they want to. Trafficked victims are taken to shrines where they are forced to take oaths before their departure to Europe. The trafficked girls are given concoctions and the traffickers use juju to threaten them if they try to escape without paying all the money (debt bondage) the traffickers demand from them. The girls are told that if they disobey their owners, they would go insane or meet their death due to the oath they have taken. This instil fears in the victims, thereby preventing them from running away or giving evidence for the arrest and prosecution of the traffickers even in their misery.

These traffickers have the security agents in their pockets as they bribe the police in Europe with huge amounts of money to silence any of their victims that try to escape or have the courage to bring them to justice. This is why in *Eyo*, Eyo is left with no option than to accept the traumatic ordeal she is passing through in the hands of Johnny (a violent trafficker). Even when she meets with Father Stephen and Sister Mary who were on the mission of rescuing girls from the streets, she is reluctant in accepting their help as she thought them to be working hand in hand with those in the trafficking network.

Nadaswaran (2014) in her 'Transcendence' calls these assertive female characters, characters who are no longer at the periphery, but female characters that the feminist authors place in central depictions to articulate as well as assert their individual selves (171). In *Trafficked*, Nneoma and Efe are also such assertive female characters. The author's presentation of these kinds of female characters is to foster other women's assertion. *Trafficked* explores how nongovernmental organizations, parastatals and the society in general can fight this form of disguised modern slavery by offering good counselling and rehabilitation to the victims. Oasis, the rehabilitation centre in the novel is owned by women and Akachi Ezeigbo uses this to urge all women both old and young to stand out and contribute to the fight against trafficking in order to preserve the dignity of the female child. *Trafficked* ends well as the protagonist gets admitted into the university to get her degree, this is not a guarantee that all trafficking victims may escape the danger inherent in the trade. Though, the protagonist, Nneoma, is reconnected to her fiancé from whom she is runs away from and Efe, her friend, gets married to a man that loves her and they live happily after. However, what happened to the other deported victims at Oasis is not mentioned.

Abidemi Sanusi's *Eyo* also reveals how Eyo with the help of Nike a human right lawyer was able to escape the world of trafficking as she re-discovers herself and came back to Nigeria. Nike who was determined to bring the perpetrators of this horrendous crime to book couldn't accomplish anything as she discovers that the underground network of this trade is deeply rooted, hence, making it difficult to uproot. Both texts serves an eye-opener to young girls who have illusory dreams of becoming millionaires and aspire to travel out of the country with little or no qualification and no legal documents. It makes young girls to re-think and strive to survive in their home countries than travel to Europe to face the hazards which accompany the trade. The interpretations of the activities in the novels and experiences of trafficked girls in this research work not only describe human trafficking as a crime against

humanity and a violation of human rights but also the need for the society to fight against this kind of modern slavery.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 MARXIST FEMINIST THEORY

One theory that helps to better understand women trafficking is Marxist Feminism. Marxist Feminism is a theory of sociology that follows the beliefs of Karl Marx. Marx believed that groups within a social system are constantly in conflict with one another over power. These conflicts are solved through society reorganizing and redistributing goods, labour and power. Marxist Feminism theory is a kind of feminist theory which believes that the root cause of woman's oppression is capitalism (Rosemarie Tong, 96). It means that class division is the main cause of women's oppression rather than sexism. Meanwhile, in the book entitled *Feminist thought*, Tong (1998) argues that Marxist Feminism theory believe that the oppression over women is actually a product of politic, social, and economic constructs existing in the society (96). It can be concluded that the only way to end the oppression of women is to overthrow the capitalist system. The aim of Marxist Feminism theory is to bring about a classless society, based on the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

Gender oppression is class oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression which is maintained because it serves the interests of capitalist (upper class). Marxist Feminism theory has extended traditional Marxist analysis by looking at domestic labour as well as wage work in order to support their position, (Tong 140). Marxist feminists tried to use a class analysis rather than a gender analysis to explain women's oppression

(Tong 106). It means that money is a driving force to gain power. It is the root cause of women's oppression. In this case, the one that do the oppression over women is not only from men but also from women. The bourgeoisie women are capable of oppressing both proletarian men and women.

Marxist feminist theory also supports the notion that the bodies of sex workers are commodities because as sex workers, women's bodies are for sale (Tong, 1998). The commodification of the body of the sex worker is also oppressive because the capitalist system forces women to make money through the sale of their bodies. Within Marxist feminist discourse, capitalist hegemonic dominance is the root oppressor of women and, in this case, the catalyst for sex work and prostitution.

The continuous change in society's structures leads to birth of new systems such as capitalism. The system of capitalism creates two groups, the proletariat or those who sell their labour in order to make a living and the bourgeoisie, those that own the means of production. The bourgeoisie are constantly exploiting the proletariat by keeping them dependent on them for wages that are low in comparison to the profits they gain from their work. The proletariat continues to work in depraving conditions with the hopes of getting a better job rather than being idle and starve. This same system (capitalism) of oppression and maximizing profits also serves as a means of degrading women and exploiting them in all forms. Women are restricted due to childbearing, they are forced to take time off of work to take care of the children and engage in other duties, while men do not have the same obligation of care giving and still profit from having the children (preferably sons) to join in the labour process and pass their wealth to.

Men are able to create this oppressive relationship with women not only because of the system of capitalism but because men in society tend to hold the power and ability to set

cultural standards, and through socialization made to be superior. Therefore when it comes to issues like women trafficking and prostitution women are once again oppressed and controlled by men to help them gain capital. Capitalism is an economic system that promotes human greed and labels money and power as an important tool in the society; this drives people into being desperate in achieving status in d society, even if it means to violate the rights of others. Men buys women in the same way they purchase commodities, to be owned and used anyhow they deem fit. For those that may receive money for their work, it is nothing in contrast to the profits traffickers and pimps are making in the business of trafficking or the damage it causes to the victims health, mentally, emotionally, and physically. This abuse and constant control creates a false consciousness for the women, making them believe they have no self worth. They are mentally drained, ashamed, scared and lack the self-identity needed to defy their trafficker and escape victimization. This critique is important because it explains the connection between capitalism and exploitation. Capitalism exploits labourers generally, the same way these women (proletariat) are being exploited by traffickers or pimps (bourgeoisie) in the world of trafficking.

Marxist feminism posits women's oppression on the economic dependence on men in a male- centric society (Valeria Bryson, 1992) and argues that capitalism continues to be an overarching oppressor of women. As long as capitalism exists, women will always live in a patriarchal state and economically depend on men in a society structured around social class. Marxist feminist theory categorizes sex workers with other wage earners because all work within a capitalist society is exploitative.

2.3 OVERVIEW OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING LITERATURE

At the international level, contemporary discussions and activism around human trafficking emerged in the 1980s (Doezema, 2010). However, it was not until the mid-1990s that human trafficking entered the public lexicon and anti-trafficking identified activities and related research began to take off (Agustin, 2007). Since that time, a large body of literature on human trafficking has been produced.

One feature that distinguishes studies of human trafficking is the extent to which they are or are not grounded in empirical evidence. Critical human trafficking scholars, such as Agustin (2007), Doezema (2010), Kempadoo (2005), Sanghera (2005) and Weitzer (2012), who analyze human trafficking using broad-based perspectives on migration, human rights, race, gender and class, have argued that sensational publications, based on shoddy research, anecdotal information and opinion-based commentary, have gained wide circulation and popularity. This trend can also be found in the human trafficking-related health literature. For example, one of the most egregious examples of sensationalism is a much-cited U.S.-based journal article on the role of nurses in combating human trafficking which begins as follows:

Mimi could feel the blood start to run through her hair and down the side of her face. Her head ached where her customer had grabbed a handful of her hair and pounded her face into the gravel-strewn alley, where they'd gone so no one could see them. Now Mimi wished she hadn't chosen such a private spot. She told herself she'd be more careful next time—if she lived through this time. As she lay on the ground, her assailant kicked her several times in the stomach, then took all the money she'd made that night and ran off. Scared that she'd been badly hurt, Mimi struggled to her feet and made her way toward the street, where another man was waiting for her. In the light of a streetlamp, he could see that she needed medical attention (Sabella, p. 29).

Critical human trafficking scholars have also questioned the statistical estimates as to the scope of trafficking in persons that are in circulation globally.

Kempadoo (2005) points out that the discourse on human trafficking shifts in accordance with the understandings of human trafficking among feminists, researchers, anti-trafficking activists and community workers at any given time. I am cognizant of the fact that how I make sense of my own perspectives is also located within contemporary human trafficking discourse. The five frameworks that currently inform my own and general understandings of human trafficking include migration, prostitution, human rights, transnational organized crime and modern-day slavery.

2.3.1 MIGRATION

The migration framework acknowledges that globally, there are millions of people on the move in search of better lives. The need to move, as precipitated by such push and pull factors as poverty, war, the desire to access greater opportunities in safer and healthier environments and restrictions on legal avenues of migration are some of the conditions that make migrants vulnerable to traffickers (Kapur, 2005; Marshall & Thatun, 2005; Wijers, 1998). However, among those who view human trafficking as a migration issue, there is much debate over strategies to address it.

Hernandez & Rudolph (2011) find that flows of migrants and refugees between a source-host country pair increase the number of trafficked victims between those countries. Looking at data from Germany, Cho (2012) also finds evidence that migration networks increase human trafficking inflows. “These findings suggest that trafficking mafias have a better chance of finding potential victims when, there is a considerable population willing to relocate” (Hernandez & Rudolph, p. 16). Traffickers are driven by profit. They want to exploit victims where the revenues are highest but they also search to minimize the costs and

the risks of trafficking. Finding potential people to traffic among those who want to migrate reduces the costs (Hernandez & Rudolph, 2011).

The hope of improved life quality abroad tempts many people into migration. Victims of human trafficking are mostly migrants who get exploited by traffickers on their way to their destination (Cho, 2012). In a world where migration policies in developed countries are strict and the option to legally migrate is often not available, trafficking and exploitation are natural consequences (Mahmoud & Trebesch, 2010). In short, traffickers take advantage of vulnerable people who are willing to take risks to improve their lives.

Some scholars argue that tight immigration policies play a key role in actually increasing human trafficking since the laws do not stop migration, but drive migration further underground. Andrijasevic states that “governments fail to realize that the strengthening of the borders to Europe and North America actually causes more migrants to use illegal methods to immigrate into developed countries” (Dorfman, p. 17). In rendering migration invisible, increasingly stringent immigration laws create environments where vulnerable persons can be more easily exploited, people are compelled to rely on third parties including smugglers and traffickers as a means to migrate and the profitability of smuggling and trafficking increases (Dorfman, 2011, Kapur, 2005). Kapur (2005) argues that the law and order anti-trafficking framework, which is supported by most nation states and is used as a justification to tighten border controls, is an ineffective mechanism to address the realities of cross-border migration and to combat human trafficking.

The hope of improved life quality abroad tempts many people into migration. Victims of human trafficking are mostly migrants who get exploited by traffickers on their way to their destination (Cho, 2012). In a world where migration policies in developed countries are strict and the option to legally migrate is often not available, trafficking and exploitation are

natural consequences (Mahmoud & Trebesch, 2010). In line with the results from Mahmoud & Trebesch (2010), that traffickers take advantage of shadow migration industries, evidence from the IOM Counter-Trafficking-Module shows that most of the victims were recruited through personal connections or agencies and not in the first run forced into migration (Cho, 2012).

2.3.2 PROSTITUTION

Arguably among all conceptual frameworks, the prostitution framework has been the site of the fiercest human trafficking debates. Radical feminists view prostitution as sexual slavery and thereby call out for the eradication of sex industry. According to Barry (1995), sex in prostitution reduces women to a body and to a sexual function as prostitution is inherently exploitative. Given that no woman can consent to engaging in prostitution, all women in the sex industry are “trafficking victims” (Barry, 1979; Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 2000; Hughes, 2000; Jeffreys, 1997).

In the last two decades, the radical feminist perspective on prostitution has also become highly influential in shaping conceptualizations of human trafficking. They focus principally on the victimization of female sex workers (male and transgender sex workers are excluded in such discussions) and the need to end male demand, often without considering the broader political, social, and economic context in which prostitution and human trafficking operate (Outshoorn, 2005). Conversely, while not denying that human trafficking occurs, sex worker advocates differentiate between human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and sex work. They view commercial sex as labour and focus on the human and labour rights of sex workers.

Weitzer (2007) argues that, both conceptually and empirically, it is inappropriate to fuse prostitution and sex trafficking since “there is no evidence that ‘most’ or even the majority of prostitutes have been trafficked” (p. 455). Gozdziaik and Bump (2008) concur in stating that the “causal link between legal prostitution and sex trafficking has not been empirically established” (p. 44).

2.3.3 HUMAN RIGHTS

This framework draws on international human rights standards and principles and considers human trafficking primarily as a violation of individual human rights. Adherents of this approach have, since the 1990s, argued for state recognition, in countries of origin and destination, of the following individual rights for persons who are trafficked: temporary or permanent rights to remain in a country; assistance that is not conditional upon agreement to cooperate with law enforcement officials; readily available information about the possibilities of getting assistance once individuals return to their home countries; and the right for migrant workers to exercise freedom of association and to join or form trade unions (Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, 2007). Adherents also recommend that all legislation and regulations which allow for the detention of people who have been trafficked be repealed, and that there should be no obstacles to trafficked persons applying for asylum (GAATW, 2007). The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2010) further emphasizes that the human rights framework must be placed at the centre of any efforts to address human trafficking through the use of regional and international human rights mechanisms.

Critics of the human rights framework maintain that it has not resulted in a significant and meaningful reduction of human trafficking (Shamir, 2012), and cite several reasons why this is the case. Some scholars raise concerns about the reliance on regional and international

mechanisms to ensure human rights are upheld. In the context of human trafficking, Waisman (2010) states that, “regional and international schemes to date have failed to develop an enforcement scheme to hold individual states accountable” (p. 418). Also recognizing the difficulties associated with enforcing human rights norms and principles, Obokata (2006) maintains that the human rights framework is not even “being widely promoted or implemented, at the national, regional, or international level” (p. 404). Shamir (2012) goes even farther and states that the human rights approach may in fact be harmful since it creates the illusion that the international community is taking action.

Other scholars critique the framework from a different angle and question the type of human rights being upheld. Kapoor argues that “transnational elites in western countries or west-allied countries do not promote ‘universal’ rights but rather a model firmly entrenched in a western, capitalist, and neoliberal legal tradition” (McGowan, p. 55). Further to this and speaking more broadly, Schick (2006) offers a critique of human rights discourse in that “international liberalism celebrates the advent of human rights whilst failing to confront the deeper structural dilemmas that the international political economic system generates” (p. 321).

One could argue, then, that addressing poverty and gender inequality in sending countries and the demand for cheap migrant labour and the imposition of restrictive immigration policies in countries of destination should be centred as primary state obligations in combating human trafficking (Pati, 2011). However, as Todres (2013) points out, the mere mention of, or even attention to, the rights of trafficking victims does not mean one is taking a human rights approach or adopting a human rights framework. Even those measures aimed at forging a victim-centered approach are frequently rooted in the prevailing rescue narrative and not situated in a human rights framework (p. 151).

2.3.4 MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

This framework draws parallels between present-day human trafficking and the historical transatlantic slave trade with an emphasis on the denial of dignity and human rights and conditions of exploitation. Relying on an international law definition of slavery as “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised” (Perrin, p. 6), ‘new slavery’ or ‘modern-day slaves’ have been portrayed in much the same light as their historical counterparts (Musto, 2009).

Musto (2009) has further pointed out that concerned individuals are asked and encouraged to donate funds to faith-based NGOs, who are fighting slavery through individualistic and charity-based campaigns. As a consequence, according to Musto, international economic policies as well as national immigration policies and prostitution laws that arguably play a role in exacerbating human trafficking go unchallenged and remain intact. Doezema (2010) contests the notion of ‘modern-day slavery’ through an examination of what she identifies as the historical roots of contemporary anti-trafficking discourse as it pertains to prostitution: namely, the ‘white slavery’ narratives of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She, like various historians, questions the extent of the ‘white slave trade’ as there is scant historical evidence to support the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ‘moral panic’ over innocent, young, white girls being coerced into prostitution. Bernstein (2010) concurs that empirical investigations reveal that there is little historical evidence of ‘white slavery’ at the turn of the twentieth century, and draws links between the historical ‘white slavery’ panic and the contemporary moral panic over sex trafficking.

2.3.5 GENDER INEQUALITY

Some push factors are especially relevant for female migration. In countries where gender inequality is large, where women are economically vulnerable and do not have the capacity to make decisions, the female migratory pressure, and thus the likelihood of being trafficked, increases (Hernandez & Rudolph, 2011). Without adequate labour opportunities at home, a job abroad seems more attractive. When women are exposed to discrimination in employment combined with household duties, childcare, lack of water and electricity and lack of part-time employment opportunities, they are trapped in low-paying jobs and low-productivity businesses, often in the informal sector (World Bank, 2012).

“An increase in female labour force participation does not always lead to economic empowerment as long as such demand for female labour is based on women’s acceptance of poor payment and exploitative working conditions. Although Stolper-Samuelson-type trade theory predicts that an increase in female labour will eventually lead to higher female wages and working conditions, empirical evidence rarely supports this theoretical prediction as long as there is an abundance of unemployed females available in those developing countries” (Cho, p.5).

When women are paid less they also have less incentive to work and they are more often in and out of the labour force. Danailova-Trainor & Belser (2006) assume that a higher amount of unemployed young women makes it easier for traffickers to recruit women. They find that when female youth employment increases by one percent, the number of trafficking victims increase by the same fraction of the population. Cho (2012) also argues that employment structures affect the vulnerability of migrants and those better employment opportunities for the unskilled workers can reduce trafficking. In the World Development Report on gender equality and development, access to economic opportunities for women is

one of the four priorities suggested in order to reduce gender gaps (World Bank, 2012). That includes relaxing women's time constraints and reducing institutional biases and information problems.

Rao and Presenti (2012) suggest two mechanisms to explain the assumption that gender inequality is seen as a push factor for trafficking. The first mechanism is that if those trafficked are economic migrants, women's decision to migrate would be affected by the expected future income for women, which is influenced by gender inequality. The second mechanism is that gender inequality, hence fewer economic opportunities for women, makes women being valued less and reduces the costs for traffickers (Rao & Presenti, 2012). Both mechanisms are affected by the lack of labour opportunities for women.

Rao and Presenti (2012) find the only gender inequality indicator to be statistically significant was the female-male income ratio which was positively correlated with the incidence of trafficking origin. "It is in societies permissive enough to allow women to travel alone and be potential economic migrants, indeed to have aspirations to economic mobility that we are likely to see trafficking originate" (Rao & Presenti, 2012). Cho (2012) finds no correlation between trafficking and the gender-related indicators; Female unemployment rate, female labour force participation, women's economic and social rights, literacy rate of women 15+ and 15-24 years old. But she argues that factors that are not robust may still affect human trafficking indirectly or when interacting with other factors. Cho (2012) does find that fertility rates and the share of population under 14 have decreasing effects on trafficking outflows and suggests this is due to the fact that more children reduces women's mobility (Cho, 2012).

Together, these five conceptual frameworks have emerged as the most common ways of thinking and speaking about human trafficking in the contemporary period. The five conceptual human trafficking frameworks discussed above are not mutually exclusive. Talja (1999) maintains that there are simultaneously several, more or less conflicting discourses existing in a particular field of knowledge at a certain point in time. What this accomplishes is that cumulatively, they create a dominant discourse about human trafficking and produce fixed subjectivities within the discourse. For example, the familiar subjectivity of the trafficked woman casts her as naïve, duped and passive is found in all five frameworks albeit to different degrees.

CHAPTER THREE

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *BLACK SISTER'S STREET* BY CHIKA UNIGWE

3.1 Chika Unigwe's Biography

Chika Unigwe was born on 12 June 1974 in Enugu, Nigeria; she is the sixth of seven children. She completed her secondary school education at Federal Government Girls' College in Abuja and earned a BA in English at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1995. She got married to a Belgian engineer and moved to Turnhout in Flanders, Belgium's Dutch-speaking region. In 1996, Chika obtained an MA in English from the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL), and then earned a PhD from the University of Leiden. She and her family moved to the Atlanta area in the USA in 2013, where she now resides.

Chika's second and best-known novel, *On Black Sisters' Street* (2009), is set in Nigeria and Belgium and follows the lives of Ama, Sisi, Efe and Joyce, four African women (three Nigerians and one Sudanese) who journey from their countries of origin to the red-light district of the Belgian city of Antwerp, where they work as prostitutes. Unigwe's urge to write about the lives of African sex workers in Antwerp arose from two different experiences. Her initial interest in the topic was sparked by the "cultural shock" she felt in Belgium when seeing young women on display in windows, a highly unfamiliar sight in Nigeria.

Then, she was struck by the words of Caryl Phillips, who, at the end of his essay on the Nigerian women working in Antwerp's red-light district, concluded: "this is not my story to tell. Others in Belgium will have to tell it." This statement, Unigwe confides, "Haunted her for a long time", and, once she felt ready to "take that step" ("Interview"), she rose to the challenge of exploring these womens' lives through fiction. The result was a narrative first published in Dutch as *Fata Morgana* (2006), and later released in its original English version under the title *On Black Sisters' Street*. *On Black Sisters' Street* has received wide critical

acclaim. In 2012, it earned its author the prestigious NLNG (Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas) Prize for Literature.

3.2 Synopsis

On Black Sisters' Street follows four female characters —Sisi, Efe, Ama and Joyce. *On Black Sisters' Street* firmly situates the life narratives of four African women tragic episodes of poverty, war experience, sexual abuse and families, torn apart in their home countries, which made them vulnerable to the call to enter the global human traffic network run by Senghor Dele. On their arrival in Belgium, they soon find out, however, that they have escaped their circumstances for a mirage. The first three women (Efe, Ama and Sisi) all left Nigeria of their own accord to come and work in Antwerp's red light district as prostitutes. Senghor Dele conversation with Chisom in his office shows that she was well aware of the kind of job that awaits her in Belgium before agreeing to his proposal "You be fine gal now. Abi, see your backside, kai! Who talk say na dat Jennifer Lopez get the finest yansh? As for those melons wey you carry for chest, omo, how you no fin' work?" (43). The same applies to Efe and Ama's encounter with Dele who made it obvious with his roving eyes on their bodies and his choice of words that they were going to Europe to sell their bodies, "And it was the way he sized her up, his eyes going from her face to her breasts to her calves under her knee length skirt, that told her what sort of sales she was going to be involved in" (82). They hope to work in Belgium to earn enough money so they can create better lives for themselves and improve the standard of living of their families in Nigeria.

Crucially, the protagonists' stories diverge beyond these broad common features: Sisi, whose real name is Chisom, is a University graduate of Finance and Business Administration. She had the dream of working in a bank but could not secure a job after

several submission of application letters in different organisations as having ‘connection’(22) is what it takes to secure a good job in Nigeria; Efe who lost her mother at a young age was made to shoulder the responsibility of running the home as her father who couldn’t deal with the death of his wife turned into an alcoholic and displayed a nonchalant attitude towards the affairs of his four children(Efe, Rita, Nicholas and Faith). Efe’s desires to enjoy the good things of life drove her into having an affair with a man old enough to be her father (Titus). She got pregnant in the long run and had a son for Titus, a married man who refuses to acknowledge the child. In her bid to provide her son, Lucky Ikponwosa, with the luxuries of life, she became entrapped in the trafficking web of Dele the pimp.

Ama, started experiencing sexual abuse at a tender age of eight by her paedophilia Christian stepfather (Brother Cyril) in Enugu, who portrayed himself as a saint before the eyes of people. During a heated argument, she angrily voiced out her dark secrets to her mother in his presence “Mba. No. I will not shut up. Mama, do you know what he did to me when I was little? He raped me. Night after night. He would come into my room and force me to spread my legs for him.” (147). Hence, this dark revelation prompted Brother Cyril into asking Ama to leave his home since she was not even his biological child. Her helpless mother had no other option than to send her off to her mother’s cousin in Lagos. Ama finds no satisfaction in her “predictable” and “circular” job with Mama Eko who ran a buka in Ikeja. “It was a better life than she had in Enugu, she could not contest that, but its predictability, its circular motion...” (159).

Out of the four main characters, it was only Joyce that was tricked into coming to Belgium under false pretences. The young woman, whose real name is Alek, was originally from the Sudan, where her family were massacred by a *janjaweed* militia. Following the tragedy during which she was also raped by soldiers, she located the refugee camp where she spent several months. She fell in love with a Nigerian soldier, Polycarp. The couple soon

settled in Lagos but the man, pressured by his family into marrying a girl from his own Igbo ethnic group, arranged for Alek to be sent to Belgium, allegedly to work as a nanny.

Indeed, it is revealed early in the narrative that Sisi has been murdered; then, the novel proceeds to recount her story up to her last days in Belgium, while alternatively paying attention to her grief-stricken friends in their shared flat in the *Zwartzusterstraat*. Efe, Ama and Joyce take turns in telling the others how they became prostitutes, thereby introducing another series of flash-backs. Significantly, the moments when the three characters announce (in direct discourse) that they will share their personal stories are in each instance separated from the actual flashbacks (a narration in the third person) by a chapter devoted to Sisi. This technique allows the writer to move one step further away from the conventional linear reading which had already been disrupted by the recounting of the protagonists' past.

3.3. Setting

Setting in novels is in two forms which include physical and social settings. The physical settings refer to the place, geographical location, the room, the house and so on. The settings took place in Nigeria, Sudan and Belgium.

3.4 The time frame and place

The story is about the lives of four different African women, forced to trade their bodies for a better life far away from their own country, in Belgium. The sudden death of one of the women finds the other women in shock, and in the spur of the moment, they find themselves exchanging previously untold secrets and chilling, grim tales of the experiences that culminated in their becoming prostitutes in a foreign land. Each of the women has experiences that are both unique in their grimness and horrifying in nature. Each of these experiences closely mirrors the realities of early 21st century Nigeria. The prevailing societal

vices of the day, as well as a number of the more horrifying atrocities committed by people on a daily basis, and how they affect the lives of four women is the epicentre of the story.

The story is an expository into how lives are shaped by specific experiences. The story is told in the form of a flashback. The effect is an increased depth in the intensity of the experiences shared in the story, and the drawing of the attention of readers to a number of common underlying factors in each experience. The result is a tale that is incredibly accurate in its portrayal of lower-class Nigerian society. Each character is portrayed in all the gory glory of abuses suffered, dashed hopes, false prophecies, and all of the vices that infest human society.

3.5 Geographical Location

The created environment represents the locale of the story or the specific geographical space, in which there is a specific kind of dwelling place and its concomitant attributes. Sisi, Efe and Ama share the same geopolitical space as Nigerians, but Joyce has a different national identity which is being a Sudanese. They all have the bond that makes them one and that is being Africans, though the circumstances regarding their experiences depict the heterogeneous nature of Africa.

3.6 Characterizations

Characterization is a veritable tool or technique that allows us to get in touch with the characters of the novel as the plot unfolds. Characterization is that technique the writer uses to reveal the personality of a character. The major characters in Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* include four of the girls: Sisi, Efe, Joyce and Ama.

Sisi: Sisi, the leading female character, relishing thoughts of new beginnings, the reader realises before long that she has been jobless for many years, even after having graduated

from the University of Lagos. The dead Sisi, however, is the woman whose story is in some ways the most wrenching. Hers is a tale not of incest, rape or genocide but of the accumulated disappointments that can grind even the most determined soul into defeat. In the chapters revealing the events that lead to Sisi's murder, we learn how her father (Godwin), a bright and ambitious village boy, was obliged by his parents to give up his studies and become a lowly clerk in order to help his nine younger siblings through school. "I had bookhead, isi akwukwo. I could have been a doctor. Or an engineer. I could have been a big man," (19) Sisi's father fumes. Education is everything, her parents teach the girl. "Face your books, and the sky will be your limit."(18). They place all their hopes in their only daughter, whose brilliant academic career will surely win her an important job. Together the family members dream, laugh and squabble about the kind of company car and driver Sisi will have the sort of big house she will live in, with a high-walled garden.

Efe- Efe, who at 16 is open to sex which started behind her father's house, In order to support her family, she got into an amorous affair with a man old enough to be her father, by the name Titus. She got pregnant for Titus in the long run, who readily denies the pregnancy. She got to learn the bitter truth when she visited Titus home that she wasn't the first girl who would foolishly fall victim of Titus defilement, "What Efe had not known, for who would tell her, was that she was the sixth woman in so many years to come to Titus with an offspring from an affair" (71). She started working for Dele as a cleaner and in the seven month, he asked if she would love to go abroad (81), she made up her mind to go abroad bearing in mind the kind of job that awaits her but because she is determined to give her beloved son a good life and her three siblings who depended on her she agreed to accept oga Dele's offer.

Ama: Ama is a victim of sexual abuse by a man she regards as a father and who portrays himself to be all righteous, "Brother Cyril under two years of joining the church, he had risen to the rank of an assistant pastor" (130). She eventually reveals her dark secret to her mother

who only made it worse, "... Brother Cyril. Please? Ama's mother was on the floor kneeling, hands stretched out in front of her, palms onwards: the same position she assumed when she prayed and called on her God to forgive her, a poor sinner. There was something deeply shaming in her posture and Ama wanted to drag her up. (148). She is a disgrace to womanhood who serves as an accomplice to her daughter's sexual abuse. Ama got to know she was not even Brother Cyril's biological child. She was asked to leave the house by her stepfather; she had to leave Enugu for Lagos, where she is taken in by an aunt (Mama Eko) who runs a food joint (buka) in Ikeja. Her desperation in escaping the monotonous lifestyle in Mama Eko's buka and living a life of luxuries made her yield to Oga Dele's offer of going to Belgium to work as a prostitute.

Joyce: Joyce whose real name is Alek is a Sudanese. She was gang-raped as a child by the Janjaweed soldiers in Sudan and witnessed the massacre of her family. While at the refugee camp, she met a Nigerian soldier, Polycarp. They both fell in love and started a relationship, when Polycarp got redeployed to Lagos he asked her to join him and they both moved to Nigeria. But their relationship did not last as Polycarp's family especially his mother, wanted him to marry an Igbo girl and not a stranger from a foreign land. Alek was tricked into prostitution by Polycarp who told her she would be working as a nanny in Belgium with the help of Dele, only for her to get there to enter the world of prostitution. Polycarp, in a bid to ease his conscience at having jilted her, continues to pay off her debt to Dele.

3.7 Technique of the writer

On Black Sisters' Street depicts the life stories of four African women. In the women stories, element of bildung roman is evident, features of travel writing in Sisi's jaunts about Antwerp disguised as a tourist, and magical realism in Sisi's flight from her body to visit her

parents (294) and curse Dele's family after her death. *On Black Sisters' Street* integrates and interweaves these generic traditions in a composite form.

On Black Sisters' Street inherently connects the issue of storytelling to constructions of black womanhood. The narrative technique of the novel is the third person omniscient technique as the narrator seems to be all-knowing.

3.8 Human Trafficking in *On Black Sisters' Street*

In Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sister's Street*, several issues were identified which include the Trafficking of Women/ Prostitution, Sexual Objectification of trafficked women and Exploitation. These issues are often intertwined in the novel.

3.8.1 Trafficking of Women and Prostitution in *On Black Sisters' Street*

According to Merriam Webster dictionary, trafficking is the act of buying or selling usually illegal goods. An illegal trade of trafficking of women as goods is explicitly depicted in the text. The four protagonists (Sisi, Efe, Joyce, and Ama) in the text are victims of trafficking as they are being trafficked from Nigeria to Belgium. Unigwe uses the character of Dele and Madam as key agents of human trafficking. They engage in the illicit trade of transporting young girls to Europe to work as sex slaves under the guise of aiding their economic struggle, 'If you wan' comot from dis our nonsense country, come see me make we talk' (32). Unigwe uses the character of Sisi to project how a capitalist society serves as a tool of making young women fall prey into the hands of traffickers who promise them a life of luxury. Such is the case of Sisi (alias Chisom) who couldn't get a good job after graduating

from the university; she was so frustrated with her situation that she had to submit applications for jobs she was hardly qualified for:

An air hostess with Triax Airlines (must be an excellent swimmer; Chisom had never learned to swim), an administrative assistant with Air France (excellent French required; Chisom knew as much French as she did Yoruba, which was not much, if anything at all. (23)

Even at that, she couldn't even get an interview from any of these organisations. These led her into accepting Senghor Dele's offer as she sees it as the only way of helping her family financially that heavily depends on her in having a comfortable life:

So when she got the offer that she did she was determined to get back on life; to grab it by the ankles and scoff in its face. There was no way she was going to turn it down. Not even for Peter. (23)

The high monetary return from selling women and children makes this trade attractive as there is an increased demand for commercial sex workers. These traffickers live a life of affluence due to the huge profits they gain in the business of trafficking, as this is seen in the character of Dele (pimp):

He always wore rich lace suits and left her huge tips. The other regulars knew him as he would sometimes offer to pay for their food and drinks, shouting across the table... 'Mama, I dey declare today! For everybody. Even you! Eat! Drink! Senghor Dele is paying'. (161-162)

Most of these young women are being transported to Europe to work as prostitutes, where their female body is being subjected to subjugation and exploitation. This is a modern

day form of slavery where a woman is transported to a new environment where she does not know anybody and so becomes an object of sex. Prostitution serves as a strong thread that ties these women (Ama, Efe, Joyce and Sisi) together in the world of trafficking. Sisi out of desperation to have a better life and support her family, went into prostitution, this also applies to Efe who was abandoned by her sugar daddy with a child to care for and has the responsibilities of her siblings to shoulder had to accept the offer of Dele (81) to travel abroad to work as prostitute.

She would be Dele and Sons Limited's export. L.I. would get a better life. Go to good schools, become a big shot and look after her when she was old and tired. L.I. was a worthy investment to encourage her to accept Dele's offer. And even though leaving him would be the hardest thing she would ever do she would endure it for his sake. (82)

Traffickers send so many young women to Europe and have deeply rooted connections; this makes it very easy for them to transport girls successfully without encountering any problem. This tends to boost their confidence in this illicit trade as Dele boastfully displays this to Sisi; 'I dey get girls everywhere. Italy. Spain. I fit get you inside Belgium. Antwerp. I get plenty connections there. Plenty, plenty!' (34). The high demand for women and young girls in the destination countries drives the trade in human trafficking. The police force also have bad eggs among them who serves as accomplices to this heinous crime of trafficking women, as Ama attests to this "Ama laughs. 'Madam has the police in her pocket. You heard her. We tell the police and then fucking what?' (290). When these women gets to their place of destination, their passports are collected by the pimps or madam, thereby withholding any sense of identity from these helpless women in a strange land; This is what madam does to the four women in the text 'Ah, hand over your passport. From now until your debt is paid I am in charge of it' (119).

In order to have these young women under absolute control, they instil fears in them by threatening them and deal with anyone who tries escaping without paying all the money (debt bondage) the traffickers demand from them. Fear and deception are used by the madam and pimp to keep their girls passive, the fear of being arrested and deported as an illegal immigrant serves also as a form of keeping these young women under control, as their passports are being taken away from them.

Now until you have paid up every single kobo’, she pointed the cigarette at Sisi, ‘every single cent of what you owe us, you will not have your passport back...Every month you go to the Western Union and transfer the money to Dele. Any month you do not pay...’ She let the threat hang, unspoken, yet menacing, her left hand plucking at a tuft of hair under her chin. (183).

Unigwe also reveals how brutal and heartless these pimps and Madams can be to these women (victims), especially if any of them attempts escaping; such person is brutally killed. This is depicted in the character of Sisi who was killed by Segun under the instruction of Madam (293) because she attempts leaving the business of working as prostitute for madam. Unigwe depicts human trafficking and prostitution as unethical and forced businesses that people have manipulated to make it useful for their future lives. Thus in this sense, Sisi, Ama, Efe and Joyce can be labelled as victimised characters who are forced by circumstances to seek freedom through prostitution in which the novel appears to condemn the circumstances (classed society) that necessitate prostitution, rather than the individuals concerned.

The characters of Dele and Madam as key agents of human trafficking portrays the oppression and absolute control of the bourgeoisie (traffickers) over the proletariat (women) who are victims of economic pressure in Nigeria.

3.8.2 Sexual Objectification of Trafficked women

Objectification can be referred to as a way of treating a person like an object without showing any form of regard to their personality. Orabueze (2004) in her article “ The law and slave trade: An evaluation of sex slavery in Chika Unigwe’s *On Black Sisters’ Street*, narrows her own analysis to objectification in terms of sex-slavery whereby the woman is subjected to all forms of sexual abuse. She describes it as “an organized transnational criminal business empire in Africa, particularly Nigeria” (44). She also comments that “the narrator portrays that the worse type of slavery is trafficking in very young girls” (p.55).

The four trafficked women in *On Black Sisters’ Street* were being objectified through their body, they were seen by men as sex objects to satisfy their sexual desires. Unigwe reveals how women are sampled, auctioned as commodities, bought and sold with no respect for their body, ‘They often talk about it: the standing and waiting to be noticed by the men strolling by, wondering which ones are likely to tip well, and which not. From their glass windows they watch the lives outside, especially the men’s’ (178)

The stereotype of women as sexual object is strongly cultivated in the novel, ‘Those who know where they are and why they are there walk with an arrogant swagger and a critical twinkle in their eyes. They move from one window to another and having made up their minds go in to close a sale’ (178) thereby projecting the woman as a commodity. Unigwe

uses her protagonists to reiterate how women are being deprived, exploited and objectified in the world of trafficking.

Traffickers see women as goods which they buy and sell to gain more wealth, these powerful individuals(bourgeoisie) sees this illicit trade as a normal legal business without considering the fact that these women are human beings who deserve self worth,

Villa Tinto. The queen of all brothels. Even has its own police Station. It just opened a few months ago...I hear the girls who work inside have panic buttons beside their beds, to press when a customer gets out of hand. They have Jacuzzis. Sauna. That kind of thing. Too costly for us...This is where the ministers get their girls from! The girls here are top class. (204)

Women who are forced into the business of prostitution and those who willingly go into prostitution are being treated as sex slaves, while enriching their traffickers, these women are subjected to the worst forms of dehumanization, exploitation and sexual violence. The female body is reduced to nothing but a commodity, attraction to men and sexual tool men derive pleasure from.

Sisi learned the rates pretty quickly. She had always had head for figures. Fifty euros for a P&S, a blow job. A bit more if a French kiss was required. Twice the price for half an hour of everything: P&S, French-kissing and full penetration. With a condom. Without a condom, the client paid thirty euros extra. Sisi did not like to do *without*, but thirty euros was not something she found easy to turn down. (237)

The above excerpt clearly shows how these women see themselves as sex tool, ‘when business was good. Sisi did an average of fifteen men’ (260) who can be used by men the way they deem fit. They see their body as an asset in making money and fulfilling their dream, ‘just money counted out, and girls were lucky a tip thrown in. And on such nights...all the dreams filling her head. The dreams expanding to make sure nothing else came’ (238). The society (classed) has not only patterned the victims (women) as sexual objects but some of these women have also viewed themselves as such.

3.8.2 Exploitation (Economic)

Unigwe unashamedly expresses the abject poverty and exploitation faced by the average Nigerian attempting to make a meagre living, juxtaposing this reality with that of Dele’s (the trafficker’s) ‘good’ intentions of providing ‘goods’ for the supply and demand within entrenching economic liberalizations. “While people are busy killing each other in senseless riots he is busy banning the importation of everything. Toothpaste, chloroquine... We thought we were suffering under Abacha. This is worse!” (40).

On Black Sisters’ Street raises poignant questions about Africa place in the twenty-first century global world. The thirst or quest for economic freedom and power make these women to fall prey into the hands of traffickers, in which the three characters namely; Sisi, Ama and Efe are willing to sell their bodies to alleviate their financial status. The harsh economic situation in most Africa countries makes the proletariats (women) to be faced with hardship and struggle which makes them to be exploited by the bourgeoisies (traffickers). This was the kind of situation Sisi (Chisom) found herself during her meeting with Dele (pimp); she had to accept his offer because she did not want to continue living a life of hardship and discomfort.

Instead, images flashed in front of her like pictures from a TV show: the sitting room with the pap-coloured walls. A shared toilet with a cistern that never contained water; anyone wishing to use the latrine had to fetch a bucket of water from the tap in the middle of the compound. A kitchen that did not belong to her family alone...she did not want to be sucked into that life' (43)

Unigwe uses Sisi's narrative to embody the collective narratives of women who have been subjugated by hierarchies of local and international political and economical exploitation. The character of Efe was also used to depict Nigeria as a society that does not favour the lower class due to constant exploitation by the powerful individuals in the society, 'People knew the risks and people took them because the destination was worth it. What was it the song said? *Nigeria jaga jaga. Everytin' scatter scatter*. Nobody wanted to stay back unless they had pots of money to survive the country' (82) Also, Sisi's representation in the text can be used as a reticulated of the narrative representations of other Nigerian female characters like Ama, Efe and Joyce. The push and pull factors contributes to the growth of trafficking as Unigwe uses the story of Sisi to reassert the tragedy of a neo-colonial Nigerian state, where the leaders are inconsiderate to the plight of the masses and how the powerful individuals (bourgeoisie) exploits the struggling ones (proletariat) economically.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *SARAH HOUSE* BY IFEANYI AJAEGBO

4.1 IFEANYI AJAEGBO'S BIOGRAPHY

Ifeanyi Ajaegbo is a writer and culture development expert. He is the executive director of the center for integrated youth development, an NGO working in the Niger Delta. He lives and work in Port-Harcourt in Nigeria. His writing has won awards and fellowships, including the 2005 African Regional prize for the commonwealth short story competition. *Sarah House* is his first novel published in 2013. According to him in his interview with Jackie May for The Times he opines 'A major part of my work as a development consultant involves rehabilitating and counselling victims of human trafficking and sexual slavery. Exposed to their harrowing tales, which often the world never hears, I started searching for a more effective way of introducing the problem of human trafficking and sexual slavery into popular discourse without relegating it to just developmental or academic literature'

4.2 Synopsis

Sarah House is a compelling story that explores the grim themes of sex slavery, human trafficking, and the darkness in the heart of man. *Sarah House*, by Ifeanyi Ajaegbo, brings to light what happens in the veiled and shrouded parts of Nigeria where young rural girls are lured by false promises of jobs and a better life to the big cities. Upon arrival reality unfolds and shock makes a journey through their minds when they are forced to become prostitutes.

From the village of Opobo to Port Harcourt, Nita is trafficked by her so-called lover (Slim) who lures her under the guise of giving her a life of glamour in the city. The first chapter of the novel awakens us to the realisation of Nita in a new world which seem strange

to her; it appears she was drugged by Slim in order to make her oblivious of the exact place she was being trafficked to, “I woke up terrified. The realisation that the world as I knew it had changed came slowly, as the veil of sleep fell from my eyes in dissolving layers”. Nita got to find out during a confused state of interaction with the other girls that were in the same room as hers, that Slim lures naïve girls like her from rural areas, under the pretence of loving them, “Slim does not love you. He said the same thing to me, Matti told me in a flat emotionless voice. He said the same thing to Tega. And to Dumi. And to Mary. To Ibis. To Ibiwari”. At the same time promising them a better life in the city only for them to wake up into the world of trafficking, Nita, the protagonist in the novel happens to be another victim of Slim’s deceit:

The Slim by the river had talked about a new life unlike what I was used to in the village. A life of glamour that could be mine if I worked hard. Only he did not tell me then the sort of work I had to do, the kind from which Tega and the other girls returned every morning weary and, often, bruised and battered. Slim had promised made possible by good education, and the freedom to be and do whatever I wanted if I worked hard...I followed him because I was ready to escape the confines of the small village beside the river that flowed to the Atlantic. His words had created the life I believed in, the life I wanted and not this hell (31).

Nita is faced with harsh realities that are more than she had bargained for, and realised that a lot of crimes are happening in the creeps of the darkness. Ifeanyi Ajaegbo gives a vivid image of what really goes on behind some black gates, behind some closed doors and just after the sun has gone down and the evening takes over.

Young girls are forced into becoming prostitutes and strippers at night clubs. When Nita refuses, she is drugged and raped in order for her to get accustomed to ‘strangers’ (61-

62). She is later sold by Slim and Fatty to a new owner (Madam) who own Sarah House, a place where girls are being housed and distributed to men to satisfy their sexual needs and perverse nature, Madam also run an orphanage home in Sarah House which she uses as a source of organ trafficking, “Mofe had mentioned some influential people were involved in the illegal export of harvested human body parts...what those containers held, and how they connected everyone from Chief and madam to the children in the orphanage became clearer’ (256).

The police is involved in this heinous crime (41), the politicians are the linchpins (113) thereby making the pimps and madams fearless of facing the law. Nita with her beauty steals the heart of Chief, a powerful politician and businessman who instantly declares that he wants Nita to be his and his alone, (100). Madam is pleased because it means more business and money to her. For the first time in her entire life Nita boards a plane, she was visiting Abuja for the first time to meet Chief (221). She enjoyed her stay at Abuja in the company of Chief who spoilt her silly with lots of luxuries, though the joy was short-lived as she got back to Sarah House, only to discover that Tega was dead (252). This sad news makes her forget all the bliss she had encountered in Abuja. Nita remembers the detective (Mofe) she once met, she made an important call that could put her in danger and at the same time bring justice to this forsaken place called Sarah House. With the help of Stone, Nita was able to escape from Sarah House, leaving behind the nightmare the place represents.

4.3 Setting

Setting is both the time and geographic location within a narrative or within a work of fiction. The settings of *Sarah House* took place in Opobo village, Port Harcourt and Abuja (Nigeria). The created environment represents the locale of the story or the specific geographical space, in which there is a specific kind of dwelling place and its concomitant

attributes. Nita, Tega and Matti share the same geopolitical space as Nigerians in *Sarah House*.

4.4 Human Trafficking in *Sarah House*

In Ifeanyi Ajaegbo's *Sarah house*, several issues were identified which include the Trafficking of Women/ Prostitution, Sexual Objectification of trafficked women and Exploitation. These issues are often intertwined in the novel.

4.4.1 Trafficking of Women and Prostitution in *Sarah House*

Human trafficking has become a significant humanitarian issue of our time. In the novel, the protagonist (Nita) and other women (Matti, Tega, Mary, Ibis, Ibiwari and Dumi) are trafficked from rural areas to the city. Nita is faced with the shocking reality of what this new world subjects women to:

I watched in stunned silence as they also undressed and slipped into different articles of clothing that revealed more than what they concealed. Fatty watched all this from across the room with surprisingly little interest. He wore a satisfied smirk that came from the fact that they were doing what he had ordered them to do; get ready for work. The girls looked lifeless and defeated. They moved like wooden puppets (17).

Ajaegbo uses the character of Slim, Fatty and Madam as agents of human trafficking. Slim serves as a key agent in trafficking these young ladies by acting as true lover who tells them of good opportunities that is filled with luxuries in the city, "Slim had promised opportunities made possible by good education, and freedom to be and do whatever I wanted

if I worked hard...I followed him because his words had created the life I believed in, the life I wanted and not this hell. (31). The high monetary return from selling women and children makes this trade attractive as there is an increased demand for commercial sex workers. These traffickers enrich their pockets with this heinous trade, “You will need the strength from the food to handle the *mugus*. To make money for us, eh?” (18). ‘Their wealth comes from our degradation and subjection to the most humiliating acts known to man. Often times come with lot of pain. Most times you are lucky and you meet a gentle *mugu* who does not have weird sexual tastes’ (42).

Trafficked women experience all forms of abuses in the hands of traffickers and clients they sleep with, “Tega walked into the room first, her steps unsteady on wobbly legs. She looked tired and about to drop to the floor...Matti came in after Tega. She looked as tired. Beneath her left eye, a huge bruise nestled in the folded flesh” (18-19). This is what victims experience in the world of trafficking where they work as prostitutes since trafficking for sexual purposes is the most common form of trafficking with women and children. The victims are made to carry out their sexual duties without any form of objection, they have no say over their bodies, ‘It is the life of prostitutes. The life of slaves. You do what they ask you to do’ (39) any victim who tries to prove stubborn is seriously death with by these traffickers, ‘A lot of bad things happen to those they call trouble-makers. You can die.’ (40). Ajaegbo uses this to reveal how brutal and heartless these pimps and Madams can be to these women (victims), In order to prepare victims for the rough job ahead, they are being forced to watch pornographic films or even take part in them, ‘I had seen pornographic movies in what now seemed like my other life. I had never seen them made. I did not even know they made them in Nigeria...revolting’ (147).

The characterisation of Slim, Fatty and Madam (bourgeoisies) project how a capitalist society serves as a tool to oppress and exploit women (victims) who are

desperately looking for a better and meaningful life due to economic pressure, ‘When the men finish with us, they do not pay us. They pay them. Even when the men make a mistake and pay us, Slim or Fatty or any of the others will be at hand to take the money from us’ (41). This form of business is where men and women pays for sex and the traffickers accounts gets fatter. This world of trafficking is made up heartless individual who could buy and pay for anything, including human life, and a variety of pleasures that bordered on the perverse and evil.

Prostitution is represented as a manifestation of subjugation and oppression of the female body; it serves as a strong thread that ties (Nita, Tega, Miko and other girls) together in the world of trafficking. Victims are moved from one place to another to ensure that they do not know where they are kept (42). Sometimes they are resold to other pimps, brothel owners and strip-joint owners, such was the case of Tega and Nita who were later sold to Madam (owner of Sarah House). Nita (protagonist) sees the world of trafficking as a place for the damned. A place where few survived. And those who survived were never the same again (106).

Nita became Madam’s chattel in which she has no option than to do her bidding without raising an eyebrow, ‘I have been living this new life long enough to know that such questions were not tolerated and would only earn me a lot of trouble. Monster like Slim and Fatty, with their small guns shoved into the waistband of their trousers, were not far away...there were so many ways one could die’ (108). This instil fears in the minds of victims who knows that objecting or proving adamant to their madams or pimps would only cause their eventual end in an inhumane way. So they readily accept their fate and choose to do whatever they are being told to do even if they wish not to. Such is the inevitability of being a victim of trafficking; such person is stripped off the right to make decisions. Traffickers have deeply rooted connections and this makes it very easy for them to transport

girls successfully without encountering any problem, 'Madam had a lot of influential and highly placed friends, businessmen and politicians' (113) and law agents also work hand in hand with these traffickers, 'Madam also had lot of militia friends who made sure that anyone who ran away from Sarah House never lived long enough to tell the story' (116). Any attempt to escape this world of trafficking leads to death as this was the fate of Tega, '...the body of a girl abandoned by unknown persons after she had been brutally sexually assaulted and murdered. I did not have to hear any more to know that the body was Tega's' (252).

Ajaegbo reveals how those in the seat of power (bourgeoisie) are accomplices of this heinous crime and this poses a great difficulties in uprooting these dehumanizing trade in our society, '...businessmen and politicians. These people often had the need to indulge in the sort of pleasure the public must not know about or the country would be awash with scandals. So they came here to Sarah House' (113), 'Chief was in full attendance, drinking...five of his friends came with him, people whose names I had heard over the radio and whose faces I had seen on television' (185).

Majority of these madams who serve as traffickers have once been commercial sex workers, who now employ younger women to work for them. Such is the case of Madam (owner of Sarah House) who was once a victim of trafficking; she was trafficked from Benin City by her uncle who was a procurer under the guise of going to Italy to stay with him and work to provide a better life for herself and her family. Little did she know that the better life was a life of slavery and sexual servitude (181-182). After working for years as a prostitute, she was arrested and deported back to Nigeria. Her beauty was able to captivate the heart of Chief (influential personality) who took her as a mistress and gave her a house which she named Sarah House (in memory of a girl she met in Italy who was murdered). A house that

houses young ladies and distribute them to men to satisfy their sexual needs and perverse nature, also a place where an orphanage home co-exist, where young children are brutally killed, their organ removed and trafficked.

Victims live in perpetual fear of their pimps or madams; they cannot summon the boldness to report these crimes to law enforcement agents because they are aware that most of these law enforcement agents works for their pimps or madam so going to them to escape from the grip of traffickers will only result in disastrous outcome for them. This is why when Nita was approached by Mofe a woman who works with the Special Crimes Division of the Nigerian Police; she refused to speak to her about anything, 'I don't talk to the police. I don't even know who both of you are. I don't know Fatty. I don't know Slim. I don't know Madam. I want to go now'(194). This heinous crime is deeply rooted as it is somewhat difficult to trap these traffickers due to their connections:

Mofe told me about gangs of thugs and cult member who trafficked in women and children. Well-organised criminal gangs that were so entrenched they had bought their way into the police and other law-enforcement agencies using their connections with politicians and big-time business people. The activities of these gangs supplied the commodities for the sex-and-organ-transplant market in Nigeria and abroad...whose members doubled as pimps who supplied everything from prostitutes and escorts to illegal organs harvested from unwilling victims... she had tracked one of the most dangerous gangs of all, the one lead by Slim and Fatty (245).

Ajaegbo uses the characters of Slim, Fatty and Madam as key agents of human trafficking to portray the oppression and absolute control of the bourgeoisie (traffickers) over the proletariat (women) who are victims of economic pressure in Nigeria.

4.4.2 Sexual Objectification of Trafficked women

Sexual objectification is the act of treating a person as a mere object of sexual desire. The woman is objectified through her body, she is made to believe she is an object, a sex tool to be used by the man, a property which can be bought and sold by men and women in the business of sex trafficking. This is clearly depicted with the character of madam when Nita and Tega were being sold to her, ‘Her dark, bright eyes moved from my face to my body, lingering on my barely covered breasts ...I felt like an animal being looked over before a buyer made an offer’ (89) Madam’s comment further confirms that victims are seen as commodities, ‘Good products’ (89). The female body is reduced to nothing but a commodity, attraction to men and sexual tool men derive pleasure from. The statement Chief made to Nita during his first encounter clearly portray how women are viewed by these powerful individuals in the society: ‘You are here to satisfy me. You are here to give me pleasure, to be the object of my pleasure. You are here to make me feel young again. You see, I am not what I used to be. Not as young as you are (97).

Ifeanyi Ajaegbo in *Sarah House* narrows his analysis to objectification in terms of sex-slavery whereby the woman is subjected to all forms of sexual abuse. He describes it as “an organized transnational criminal business empire. This is a modern day form of slavery where a woman is transported to a new environment where she does not know anybody and so becomes an object of sex; the worse type of slavery is trafficking where women are used as an object. The physical state of the ladies after going to use their bodies shows the degradation of trafficking:

Sele’s body was a mass of bruises and burns. Some of the injuries were minor. The other were open wounds oozing a clear white fluid mixed with blood. A thin film of sweat coated her brow. (103).

Sele went through the pain of beating and bruises in the hand of Lothar, the horse, a German who sees women as mere sex object to satisfy his perverse nature, and he is allowed by Madam to use these women as porn stars in his pornographic movies in *Sarah House*:

...Lothar who used belts, whips and other bizarre things in bed. Madam allowed Lothar to make pornographic movies in *Sarah House* with some of the girls as stars. Miko told us after Sele's ordeal that Lothar did not often know where the make-believe world of his movies ended and the real world began. The stars in the movies were made to do things no one would discuss in front of decent people. In most case, *Lothar* expected the ladies to step out from his movies into his bed in real life (105).

This act of objectification and degradation of the women bodies is not only limited to men alone as women also indulge in such acts to their fellow women. A typical example is the character of madam, a lesbian, 'Madam used whips and belts. She did not burn and tear at her partners. Yet she was no better than Lothar. Pain was pain regardless who inflicted it, when it was inflicted and how'(105). Ajaegbo reveals how women are sampled, auctioned as commodities, bought and sold with no respect for their body, 'Madam had paid Slim and Fatty for us. She owned us now and could tell us to do whatever she wanted. She had bought us the way other people bought useful items at the market' (105). Women who are forced into the business of prostitution and those who willingly go into prostitution are being treated as sex objects, while enriching their traffickers (bourgeoisie), these women (victims) are subjected to the worst forms of dehumanization, exploitation, objectification and sexual violence:

I couldn't get the images of the girls dancing from one table to another and the men touching every part of their body with naira notes out of my mind. I could not forget the hands of so many men touching their breasts

and other parts. It was more than I could accept as ‘work’. In the privacy of a room with one man, forced to do the inevitable, was one thing. To be fondled and caressed in public by more than fifty men. That was a nightmare’ (150).

Though some of these women have chosen to see themselves as object of sex and this is because the society (classed) has patterned the victims (women) as such, ‘From the moment Stella breezed into the room to announce that we were dancing at the Golden Cave, a frenzy of excitement had taken hold of Miko and Sele. They busied themselves selecting clothes...their excitement increased my irritation’ (150-151). Victims who are trafficked for commercial sex purposes are automatically treated and seen as sex objects to be bought, sold, owned and used by the powerful individual (bourgeoisie) in the society.

4.4.3 Exploitation (Economic)

Sarah House raises poignant questions about Africa place in the twenty-first century global world. The thirst or quest for economic freedom and glamour make these women to fall prey into the hands of traffickers. Ajaegbo unashamedly expresses the abject poverty and exploitation faced by the average Nigerians attempting to live a better life, juxtaposing this reality with that of Slim’s (the trafficker) ‘good’ intentions of providing ‘goods’ for the supply and demand within entrenching economic liberalizations:

He painted pictures of a new beginning in his tales of the city, tales of good schools after which people got well-paying jobs. He talked about black people like us who got jobs from oil companies. This was a marvel because in the village the oil companies only came to take what was beneath our soil, destroying our farms and fishing waters in the process and no one did anything about that. These were the tales that fired my

imagination, that had my spirit soaring among the stars of possibilities

(38).

The harsh economic situation in rural areas makes the proletariats (women) to be faced with hardship and struggle which makes them to be exploited by the bourgeoisies (traffickers). This was the kind of situation Nita found herself while she was in a relationship with Slim; she had to accept his offer of going to the city because she did not want to continue living a life of hardship and discomfort in Opobo village. The characters of Nita and other girls in the text is used to depict Nigeria as a society that does not favour the lower class due to constant exploitation by the powerful individuals in the society as the push and pull factors continue to contribute to the growth of internal trafficking (rural to urban) in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

The research work examined human trafficking in contemporary African fiction using Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* and Ifeanyi Ajaegbo's *Sarah House*.

The two novels: *Sarah house* and *On Black Sisters' Street* dwells on the twenty first century Nigeria. It depicts the twenty first century Nigeria, Sudan, and Belgium. We saw from the analysis that the twenty first century Nigeria is much of a developing country in which her political system has failed its citizens; thus, it is hellish and hostile to progress, making its young women who are supposed to work for its greatness desert it to seek greener pastures abroad, thereby making them victims of traffickers. Both novels shares the common interest of the experiences of African women in diaspora, giving us vivid details of a world of trafficking which is full of harrow stories.

Ifeanyi Ajaegbo in *Sarah House* reveals how young ladies are being trafficked from rural areas to the city which is known as internal trafficking, while Unigwe in *On Black Sisters' Street* pictures how women are being trafficked from Nigeria to Belgium (external trafficking) under the guise of getting better lives for themselves and families. There is also the issue of voluntary migration in Unigwe's novel while there is involuntary migration in Ajaegbo's novel. According to Omotoso "the force, fear and desire for survival explain the apparent ease with which the female characters succumb to sexual abuse" (200). The relationship between poverty and promiscuity contributes considerably to the moral atmosphere of the novels under study. The writing technique of both authors differs as Ajaegbo's *Sarah House* is written in a first person narrative while Unigwe's *On Black*

Sisters' Street is written in a third person narrative; Ajaegbo was able to reveal the inhumane trafficking of human organs, which has to do with the harvesting of young children organs in an Orphanage home under the name Sarah House. He uses this to expose us to the vicious dehumanizing social phenomenon of trafficking. Both authors were able to reveal shocking revelations on the happenings of this deeply rooted illegal organisation and portray how women are being used for sexual purposes as this happens to be the most common form of human trafficking. Ajaegbo and Unigwe also portray how death awaits anyone who tries to escape the world of trafficking, as this is seen in the case of Sisi in *On Black Sisters' Street* and Tega in *Sarah House* who met their ultimately deaths in the hands of their traffickers just because they couldn't continue with such life and attempt escaping from it. Though, there is always an exception as in the case of Nita, the protagonist in Ajaegbo's *Sarah House*.

The research work shows the role a capitalist society plays in the domination, oppression and exploitation of women by reinforcing and justifying traffickers (bourgeoisie) as superiors in their roles and actions over their victims (proletariat).

5.2 Conclusion

The trafficking of women has been studied in both novels respectively through the veil of Marxist feminism. This research work has been able to bring to fore, factors that contribute to the growth of trafficking in women; as women are the major victims of this heinous crime thereby calling our awareness to a crime that is still prevalent in our society. The desire for a life of comfort and luxuries in an economic system which gives no room for such subjects these women to fall prey into the hands of those that exploits them in all forms. The women in the novels, who are understudy, reveal the experiences in various dimensions of oppression, exploitation and victimization from the powerful individuals in an African society.

5.3 Recommendation

This research work will serve as an eye opener to women in Africa society to be careful of deceits from families, friends and lovers who promise them a better life or opportunities abroad or in the city as these people may actually be agents of human trafficking. The judicial system should be independent and the rule of law should take its due course as no one is above the law. Traffickers who are arrested should be dealt with and made to face the full wrath of the law by serving a life time imprisonment to reflect the harm they have caused victims in their sex trade. Young African women should not see themselves as one who can only survive through the sales of their bodies, in other words they should not allow themselves to be treated as sex objects in their quest for survival as there are other moral and legal means of surviving rather than subjecting themselves to all manner of exploitation in the hands of traffickers (Voluntary migrants). Hence, this study examined the trafficking of women, by revealing how it is being played out and proposes what can be done to counter its negative consequences in our African society.

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