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**ASPECTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND ITS EFFECT ON  
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN T.U UBESIE'S NOVEL:**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper uncovers one aspect of Ubesie's literacy of style in his art of characterization. He uses his Chief character to portray perennial theme of child abuse in the Nigerian society. The write-up is to expose the causes, and effect of such abuse of the emotional, physical and cognitive develop of the child, as well as its effect on the society: as a structural feature in U.T Ubesies Novel, "Mmiri Oku e ji egbu mbe". The author encourages the use of literary piece as a tool of pedagogy, mirror of the society and a leader's digest for National re-orientation and transformation.*

**Key words:** Concept of child abuse, structure.

## **Concept of Child Abuse**

A child could be physically or emotionally abused when his or her parents or guardian fails to give the necessary protection or provide his or her basic needs such as food, love.

clothing, shelter, attention and quality education. Atobatele (1999) in Ishola (2009), defined child abuse as unjust corrupt practice and a pervasion carried out against a child who is not up to the age of adulthood. According to Denga and Denga (2007) Child abuse can be defined as infliction of serious physical injury upon a child by persons other than accidental happening, suffering harm by reason of neglect, sexual abuse, malnutrition, exposure to physical, mental, spiritual, psychological and emotional torture which could be prevented. It is also human action or inaction that is harmful to children.

Many researches by organizations like (UNICEF 1986). (UNCR) all in (Obama, 2009) means of shaping behaviour Child abandonment and neglect, child marriage, children Beating and battering children: The use of corporal punishment beating or batter enumerates some of the forms of child abuse as follows: trallicking, sex exploitation of the child, e. t.c.

The art of characterization by Ubesie in *Mmiri Oku* .. portrays Enyi, the chief character The structure of child abuse in *Mmiri Oku* As a victim of circumstance of "child abuse" enyi di naani afo anomgbe ya na nwunye nna bidoro biwe ..site n'ubochi mbu enyi society asa whole. Biara ebea, nwunye nwanne nna Yaahu kporo ya asi. Anyi is only four years old when he came to live with Nneka the uncle's wife. This shows that he is only a child. He lacks love and care from this woman who instead of protecting exposes him to danger which did not have negative influence only on himself but on the It is pertinent to point out the cause of the present predicament of this chief character projected by Ubesie. Enyi's parents died while he was very young. Their death occasioned by a conflict between Mr. Okafo's family and his parents (Uzodimma an Chinyere), Okafo plans to poison Uzodimma's family consequent upon some cantankerous relationship between his wife and Uzodimma's wife, Uzodimma murders Okafo. He is tried for murder, found guilty and hanged. Chinyere has stomach problems out of which she dies. This is how Enyi became orphaned, Ubesie has in his literary style highlighted the cause of the abuse of the child "Enyi" which is in accordance with the causes of child abuse highlighted by some researchers.

This includes parental death. According to Moshhod (2009). The death of one or both parents can lead to the abuse of the child, especially when such children are sent to relations who are compelled by cultural practice to grant them shelter. The writer of the picaresque shows the types of abuse which the chief character subjected to ranging from physical, mental or emotional

injury, neglect, malreuaa hunger, attack on his reputation. This agrees with the dimensions of child abuse as stipulated by (CRC) convention on the right of a child in Nawani (2009) Nneka sichaa ihe oriri, o kunye nke Umu ya iche, kunyere enyi nke ya iche.

Ojiaruruala na-ata Enyi ahuhu Ubochi Soro ya, o tinyere ya nnukwu nri, ma ofe O ga ekunyere ya agaghi ezuru ya Okpoko nri abuo. Ubochi o choro ikunyere Yaofe, nri oga- etinyere ya agaghi eju Yaafo. Nke ozo, Enyiatabeghi anu e Jisie ofe di ka umu Nneka si at Nneka, Enyi's foster mother maltreats him by depriving him of adequate food and education. See (p. 15), "Ummu Nncka gawara akwukwo, o fodu, Enyi n' ulo". In another occasion Enyi is wrongly accused ofstealing fish. Nncka makes a mockery decoration on Enyi with charcoal, white chalk, shells of snail and empty cans. She gathers children who start singing and mocking him.

### **"Enyi, onye ohi azu Enyi, onye ohi azu"**

This is an extreme form of emotional injury that can be inflicted on a child. Enyi finds a way to avenge this by implicating Nneka' daughter who she only called inside and flooged. This also makes Nncka to hate Enyi since he shows no concern over his cousin's feelings.

Thirdly, Nncka finally sees an opportunity to deal with Enyi. They had gone to Bature river to catch fish and was seen on their way coming home. The type ofassault and beating received by Enyi drove him out of home.

Mgbe o mechara ike ya, I lee Enyi anya n'alu, o di ka cbe achikwu dere i he n'ala.. nke a mere Enyi ji sin'ebe alu gbapu, si kama ya ga anoro ndu na-ele onwu yan'anya, ka ya zowa onwe ye ma ya buru na a azotaghi ya.

Enyi now faces the responsibility of feeding/caring for himself. This makes him to become maladjusted and grows wild.

The bad initiation of the chiefcharacter into the world resul ts to paying the society back in its own coin. Drawing from life of Enyi, man's environment affects their actions. Enyi's predicament makes him to unleash terror on the society in diverse ways. He degenerates from pick pocketing to armed robbery; in his adventure he terrorizes Enugu, Ndiaba and Zengu in the North. The major devastations carried out by Enyi and his gangs are

**highlighted below:**

Enyi now has a gang whom he coaches on robbery strategies. With this, Enyi and his gang of robbers are able to employ a lot of military escapist maneuvers and strategies which makes it possible for them to outwit any plans employed by both military and civilians to get hold of them. The first major robbery carried out by Enyi and his gang is in the house of Maazi Anigbogu where they clear his herd in a sweep. Habuuru otu ewu ma o abuo, mara uma mee mkpotu. Maazi Anigbogu na ndi agbata obi ya gbaputara chuwa ndi ohi alu mgbe ha chuuru ha puo, ha kpokorochaa ewu na aturu niile ha huru ebe ahu riwe oso .mgbe Maazi Anigbogu batara, choo ewu Ndi foduru, o hughi ha. Anya mmiri wee ju Ya anya (p. 31)

His gangs are divided into categories which include: those who will go and spy out where they will go and rob. Another group who gets information from the police concerning them and those work is to go and rob. Nduka is a brave policeman who outstanding and seems to be a good instrument to track by his fellowpolicemcn This incident is manipulated by Enyi whose ulterior move Enyi and his gang down. He is implicated by the gang sacked, convicted eit Nduka as a member of huS pang, He uses Okponku who is a robber at Oota implicate Nduka. Okponku had on the previous night stolen into Nduka's house station and reported thatapolice constable is in custodve of some stolen goods,hat is deposited some goods in his ceiling. The following morning, the gang goes to the Nduka faces their music. Neziokwu, nwoke ahu si na c zuru ihe va Bu onye ohin'Onicha, O bu Enyi Kporo yam aka this gang. Another constable, Uzochukwu becomes another victimn and suffers. The Nduka is not the only person that suffers this kind ofhumiliation and |injustice caused Vacuum left by the removal of these two police constables cannot be filled b others. The positive role they are supposed to play in national I transformation has been defeated a bank. They start stealing the things they will need i the robbery such as police vehice Enyi and his gang have now perfected in all forms ofrobbery, and lare now planning to Oruao biara ruo. Obu nri anyasi chi foro Ubochi ahu ka okponkukpakooro ihe ndi ahu Jee zoo ne be Nduka, ruo ntutu, kporo ndi Uwe ojii bia (p. 41) ordinary cars, guns, police uniforms, e.t.c.

Uâi ihe a meggere, Enyi nwetechaa ihu ni'ile o choro maka ya bu ije. Ha zute uoha a.t cburu ya baa n'otu ime obodo, gbanwee ucha ya.

Enyi and his gang succeeded in robbing the bank Zengu. Other essential thing or destroyed during this operation is a minor issue, these includes burning all the vehicle used for the operation.

Ha huru ihe di ka uzo n' ala

Mgbe ha ti kara ya, lee igbe ego ka o juru

Eben'ile. Ha amaghi nke ha ga-elbu uzo buwe;

O buego kirikiri, ka o bu akwukwo egoj Ha

Bidoro n' akwukwo ego, bukata ike gwu ha. Ha children.

Were maban'ugbo ala ha, wee nee nwe nwe oso.

The abuse of children, as portrayed in the novelette, has resulted in massive destruction—a tragic waste of both human resources and infrastructure. This devastation mirrors the ongoing destruction and societal decay in our communities caused by similar forms of neglect and abuse.

It is estimated that there are over 15 million child laborers in Nigeria. These children are involved in jobs such as street hawking, begging, scavenging, washing, and working as domestic servants. Children subjected to such harsh and exploitative conditions are more likely to become hardened deviants in society (see Owoeye & Aromolaran, 2009).

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

In light of these serious issues, several recommendations are necessary to curb the problem of child abuse and child labor:

**Awareness Creation:** The Nigerian government should implement nationwide awareness programs to educate the public on children's rights.

**Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Trade unions, families, and community-based organizations must collaborate to combat child labor and abuse.

**Legal Enforcement:** Although there is a legal framework—the Children's Rights Act—approved by the parliament and signed into law by the president, it must be effectively enforced to protect children's rights.

Looking at the picaresque nature of the novel, it is evident that the author draws inspiration from society. Through creative expression, the author highlights the realities of child abuse, cautioning society on the importance of raising children properly. Failure to do so may result in children growing up to become threats to the very society that neglected them.

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