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Comprehensive Analysis of Family-Based Childcare Options for Orphaned Children

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the challenges faced by orphans in Nigeria, specifically focusing on their psychological development and overall welfare. In 2003, there were an estimated 7 million orphans in the country, a number projected to rise to 8.2 million by 2010. This increase underscores the significant challenges posed by factors such as HIV/AIDS, conflict, and poverty. Globally, the orphan crisis is alarming, with predictions suggesting that by 2020, as many as 200 million children worldwide could be without parental care. The study emphasizes the importance of offering childcare options within family settings rather than relying solely on institutional care, which can have profound effects on the psychosocial development of children. Traditional orphanages, serving as residential centers, grapple with issues like overcrowding, discrimination, and instances of abuse, often leaving thousands of children disconnected from their families. This underscores the necessity to revamp childcare systems and explore new models entirely. The article advocates for a family-centric approach, which includes adoption, community-based upbringing, and initiatives to strengthen existing families. This alternative promises a more supportive environment for orphaned children to thrive mentally and socially. From an economic standpoint, family-oriented childcare is not only more humane but also economically prudent, offering lower costs compared to institutionalized care. Hence, there's a pressing need to redirect focus towards these alternatives.

Keywords: Orphans, Foster family, psychosocial welfare, Institution care, and Abandoned and child welfare.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is one of several African nations that holds a higher population of the orphans, largely because of the diseases, conflicts, and poverty among the people [1]. The number of orphans in the country was counted 7 million in the year 2003, and would increase to 8.2 million by 2010 according to the estimation of the National AIDS Coordinating Agency [2]. Of grave concern are global statistics according to which the number of children who are currently unable to receive parental care is predicted to be approaching 200 million by 2020 that sums up to 2.8 % of the global population [3]. This essay focuses on the issues that orphans encounter, specifically psychosocial development aspects, and therefore proves that the introduction of family-based child care placement could be the best replacement of institutional care. The term "orphan" is explained by UNICEF and UNAIDS in the following manner: a child or a young person as well as the underage who is either of the parents died [4]. Orphanages today, often called children's homes, have a long history of being living facilities with a purpose of ensuring homeless children are supported by their biological parents who have no other means to raise them. To be specific, disable orphanages and the detrimental effect of parental death on child socio-psychological well-being reveal inaccuracies of the models of childcare, hence, the question of reconsideration arises here and now. Psychosocial development, which is one of the most significant spheres of the child's growth, involves feelings, group behaviour and self-identification. The nature of bonds promoted by the primary caretakers tremendously affect the social-emotional facet of a kid that in a later stage influence different segments of their lifetime. Positive beginning stages of life tends to correspond with a building block for later development because a person can learn how to control his own emotions, have understandings of others' feelings, an interact with his friends in a proper

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way. Self-concept, which is based on psychosocial development, defines how a person perceives themselves in aspect of thinking, imagining, or viewing their feeling. Kids with high self-esteem manifest an open-mindedness as well as trust in their ability and skill to solve problems and to participate in group activities. It is, however, the tendencies of reserved and insecure people to lack confidence, shy away from expressing their opinions, and they fear criticism. Self-esteem, too, being another factor here, is understanding and acceptance of oneself. High self-esteem which is equivalent to confidence, liking oneself and being optimistic – these things are a result of high self-esteem, whereas low self-esteem is not followed by a great deal of confidence and a need to be like anyone else [12-14].

Life satisfaction, being dependent on not only the objective of things but also the generalized feelings derived from them, it may relate to one's attachment to family, friends, school, or self [13]. The social support, which assumes the acknowledgement, the respect, the love and the care of other individuals, is indispensable in the stress reduction and overcoming of the personal difficulties people may experience through life [14].

The Challenges Faced by the Orphanages in the Identity Acknowledgement

Institutionalization has a severe effect on the lives of children; it is a great challenge to orphanages to provide an environment that would help psychosocial well-being and development of every kid under their supervision. These challenges include:

Over crowdedness: Legally or illegally run orphanages generally live with miscellaneous crowds and emphasize the ridicule of understaffing and poorly trained as the results. This is why we don't have enough personnel to take care of them and it affects children's well-being.

Bias in Treatment: The mistreatment and unequal treatment of children, as well as disparities in privileges based on various factors such as birth status, can foster a sense of being unloved among children who have lost their parents. Additionally, children with disabilities may receive less attention from their peers or caregivers in situations where they do not actually require assistance, exacerbating feelings of neglect or exclusion.

Facilitation of Abuse: Certain orphanages even though they are expected to implement charitable goals, still engage in these practices: for example child labor or child selling to the highest bidder.

Intimidation: For otherwise unprotected children, this can be the source of stigmatizations and of absence of chances to interact with their peers, thus hampering their psychosocial development. Being in the spotlight too will surely lead to the disclosure of their private life or possibly affect their personal identity.

Undue Registration: Corrupt registration and regulation of orphanages primarily in Nigeria result in the inability to monitor numerical changes, thereby granting the opportunity for children to be subjected to the risk of being abandoned unnoticed.

Lack of Amenities: As many orphanages lack basic amenities including regular meals, clean water, medical care, and decent housing, these places that are mostly found in the rural areas bear a noteworthy brunt.

Insufficient Funding: The finance of many Nigerian orphanages is a challenge: and as a result, these institutions find it difficult to be able to provide with the desired nutrition, medical treatment and services which will be healthy for the physical and psychological development of the children.

Lack of Future Ambition: Often, child care institutions lack the resources to provide diverse training courses, educational activities, and hands-on subjects visually. This limitation leads to children in these communities feeling constrained.

Ideally to the family-based programs aiming at rehabilitation of family care for kids should be set forth.

Orphanages, which are tied with multiple constraints, are replaced with family based care options for orphaned youngsters with more comforting surroundings. These alternatives include:

Adoption: Adoption stabilize the environment of the orphan with a permanent family home where they can get up to a healthy development. It creates a bond of trust with the parents who take care of the baby and in this way children are being prevented from being put in foster institutions.

Community-Based Care: Through this method, children who are either in need of care and support are helped while staying in their communities, hence, enabling them to bond with their peers and glue to the family clan. The parents of a child in a tribal community undertake the collective responsibility of child rearing with the endorsed traditional beliefs.

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Family Strengthening: Regular families' strengthening of capabilities is designed to help families themselves to protect and bring up their children and, thus, avoid pointless family separation instances. By offering services to families that fits to their needs and promote healing, a nourishing environment is sustain.

Advantages and Economic Significance of the Appointment to a family-based Practice

Research affirms the family-based alternative approach not only having emotional development but also social wellbeing as the orphaned child's overall improvement. For a child who is adopted or placed into foster care, those who raised him or her in a family - based care arrangement, the overall results of development in terms of cognition, social well - being, and physical growth are better compared to those who are raised as an institution. The family home welfare fosters among children healthier attachments, social support nets, safety and siblings bonding. Institutionalization of the children outside their families does not only impair their upbringing, but it is also accompanied by negative psychological, cognitive and social effects. However, there is a more positive view on the effect of foster care whether it is in related or unrelated families [17]. Also, parallel to conducting this policy, there are other family-based solutions such as adoption which also prevent child abuse including trafficking and so, aligning with international standards for the alternative care of children [18, 19]. From the economic perspective, institutional care becomes less credible and family-based care options more cost-efficient. As a consequence, authorities will be able to reallocate the money to assisting impoverished families and orphaned parents through social protection programs, which will therefore offer prevention against institutionalization. The orphanage challenges in the provision of acceptable care and guidance for the orphaned children counter calls for an out-of-the-box model of a childcare system. Family-based alternatives, such as adoption, family and community networking, and maintenance, as well, imply fruitful strategies for answering the psychosocial and the developmental needs of orphaned children. Investing in the family- focused solution provides a supportive setting for children and, the latter proves to be more economically beneficial.

CONCLUSION

The woes orphans in Nigeria demonstrate the doom of the current child aid models and press for their paradigm shift. It is a fact that there are many potential drawbacks of parental death to psychosocial development, in addition to the obstacles orphanages come across. Thus, it is without a doubt we should see how this population is assisted. Children Homes is the first step to face the amendments of psychosocial and developmental needs of these children. Unlike the adoption of a single older parent, these options provide healthier attachments, social support networks, safety and a sibling relation, contributing to the better development of the physical, cognitive and social results of infants. In addition, this approach aims at saving the state huge sums of cash which would have been spent on repairing the institutional facilities if used. The prosperity and goodness of orphans to be ensured will only be guaranteed if the loving possibilities of a family based alternative will be addressed and vital for their growth and development.

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