**SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE GIRL-CHILD:**

**A STUDY OF ALICE WALKER’S THE *COLOUR PURPLE***

**AND**

**AMMA DARKO’S *FACELESS***

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**ABSTRACT**

Sexual abuse is a dominant theme covered by literature of different genres. It is found in Novel, Drama, and Poetry. However, many of the literary works in these genres show that the term ‘sexual abuse’ is examined as a menace where women of different ages are victims. But there is no conscious effort to demarcate the age distribution of these female victims of sexual abuse. Using two different novels, *Faceless* by Amma Darko and *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker, this study demonstrates that many victims of sexual abuse are under-aged girls who were exposed to the cruelty of sexual abuse due to parental irresponsibility, family abandonment and social neglect. Furthermore, the study proves that when girls suffer sexual abuse, it leads them to embrace various vices in the society like prostitution, hard drugs, and pornography. However, the study maintains that girl-child sexual abuse is not an impossible or intractable challenge in the society. The activities of MUTE, a non-governmental organization in *Faceless* that rescued Fofo shows that abandoned female children can be rescued and given a new life. The recovery of Celie who eventually becomes a responsible woman also shows that victims of sexual abuse can become normal persons again and well-integrated into the society. The study concludes by insisting that the government and society should do more to eradicate places like Sodom and Gomorrah in *Faceless*which enables children to indulge in different vices.

**Key words: Sexual Abuse, Rape, Girl-child, sexual equality.**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**1.1 Background to the study**

Sex occupies a very important patch in human relationships across the world. It is one of the global phenomena that constitute a universal language. This means that sex has the same understanding although different perspectives across the world. Culturally, sex has different interpretations in terms of its function and possibilities. In some cultures, sex is only permitted among married couples, in which case it is a taboo for unmarried people to indulge in sexual activities. In other cultures, sex is basically viewed as a demonstration of intimacy and love, in which case, people in a love relationship are permitted to have sex as long as there is consent from both parties. In some other cultures, sex is strictly viewed as an activity for procreation in which case people only indulge in the act for the purpose of having babies. Some religions have strict notions about sex where they insist that it should only take place in a marriage relationship. Over the years, the understanding of sex has continued to change with the times. As the years roll by, new notions, new perspectives and new ideas about sex emerge. In the 20th and 21st centuries, same sex intimate relationships have been rampant especially in the West. These days, it is not uncommon to see two women or two men introduce themselves as couples. In fact, countries like the US, Canada, Germany, France and other countries have legalised same sex marriage.

The very act of sexual intercourse has continued to dominate human relationships and interactions. In modern times, many people view sex as an activity for exchange. Many ladies use their bodies for exchange of one material item or another for example money, jobs, and different favours. Also, many men commodify the female body seeing women as objects of sexual gratification. Sex has its place in literature to the extent that it constitutes a theoretical paradigm in it. There is the theory of sex and sexuality which preoccupies itself with different dimensions, roles and effectiveness of sex in human relations. In contemporary times, some men force some women into sexual activity especially young, under aged girls. This is called sexual abuse. Sometimes, the abuse may not culminate in sex. When it happens this way, it is referred to as sexual harassment. But when such harassment extends to unwanted and forced sexual activity, it is called sexual abuse. According to Esther Deblinger et al “current definitions of child sexual abuse typically include sexual victimization by adults and/or peers” (2). This means that a child can suffer sexual abuse when that child is victimized by an older person or by friends and age mates.

The issue of sexual abuse has maintained its place in all the different genres of literature where writers expose its despicable identity. However, sexual abuse is more recreated in the prose genre especially the novel. Different writers across the world dedicate their themes to highlight how sexual abuse can either destroy the individual identity or inflict a permanent psychological scar on them. Buchi Emecheta in her novel *Slave Girl* pursues the same theme to show that a young girl can be sold into slavery and subsequently forced into marriage due to her helplessness as a young lady. Ngozi Adichie in her novel *Half of a Yellow Son* also demonstrates how soldiers raped girls freely during the Nigeria/Biafra war. In his novel *The Last Duty* Isidore Okpewho demonstrates how a helpless woman is used as an object of sexual gratification by a man who initially pretended to be helping her and her son. In the same vein, Toni Morison in her novel *Beloved* shows how a lady is first exposed to slavery and consequently sexually harassed and raped while in slavery. Also, Richard Wright in his novel *Native Son* recounts how a black man rapes and murders his girlfriend. In all of the examples above, the writers in one way or another address the issue of sexual abuse or rape. Although these issues as presented in the novels do not form the central themes, there is a sense in which they can be interpreted as constituting part of the writer’s creative and ideological concerns.

The issue of sexual abuse has overtime dominated many literary works around the world. It is a concern for many writers because many young girls have had their lives destroyed after they were sexual abused. Rape is the immediate, closest relation to sexual abuse because it provides a concise understanding of what is involved in sexual abuse. According to Paris Goodyear-Brown, “activities that fall under the umbrella of child abuse include touching or fondling of genitals, oral acts involving genitalia, penetration, sexual exploitation of the child for material gain (prostitution, child pornography) voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposure to sexually explicit talk or materials” (7). For the purpose of this study, sexual abuse is understood as the forceful initiation of sexual intercourse with somebody without the consent of the person involved. Either of the genders, male or female, could be a victim of sexual abuse but this study is more concerned with sexual abuse against the girl child. The term ‘girl child’ is used in this study to designate a young, under-aged female human being in any part of the world. Given the explication of the important terms in this study, sexual abuse and girl child, the focus of this study is established thus – to investigate and explain how the girl child inevitably falls victim of sexual abuse using the two texts *The Colour Purple* and *Faceless*. Incidentally, the novels are written by two women who obviously empathize with the girl child both in the texts and in real life. Since the study is gender based and argues in favour of the girl child, it will make use of the Feminist Theory, a theory with a focus to argue and defend the rights of women in the society irrespective of their ages.

**1.2 Statement of the problem**

Literature whether as creative writing or as a critical source material, is replete with many instances where sexual abuse is recreated and demonstrated. In many of those works, women are generally taken into consideration without any age demarcations. The writers and critics always make a conscious effort to showcase how women generally fell prey to marauding and licentious men who use such women as an object of sexual gratification. This kind of general interpretation of perception of the malady of sexual abuse poses a problem because it presents an unbalanced situation in the society which has also affected how the society reacts to the issues of sexual abuse. However, research has shown that young girls or under aged girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse but unfortunately have specifically received little attention as much as it should. It is this kind of disregard or unbalanced attention to the plight of under aged girls that has necessitated this research. Every day, more and more under aged girls as daughters, nieces, neighbours, caregivers and other categories fall victim of sexual abuse. Unfortunately, victims of sexual abuse always keep quiet and unwilling to talk or reveal the incident. According to Margaret-Ellen Pipe et al “a major problem of relying on children’s statements in forensic investigations is that many sexually abused children remain silent about abuse, they deny that abuse ever occurred, or they produce a series of disclosures followed by recantations of these disclosures” (12). Using the two texts The *Colour Purple* and *Faceless*, the study clearly shows how family relatives and the society are complicit in perpetuating sexual abuse. In most cases, under aged girls as victims of sexual abuse are threatened with death and harm to maintain silence. In such situations, they keep quiet and continue to suffer the humiliation of the abuse and also suffer in silence. Although there exit many literary works with emphasis on sexual abuse and rape against women, the seeming silence or lack of attention towards the plight of under aged girls suffering the menace justifies this study. It is that gap in knowledge that this study seeks to feel and consequently project.

**1.3 Aim and Objectives**

The immediate objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To demonstrate that sexual abuse of the girl child exists in the two novels
2. To show how sexual abuse destroys the identity of the girl child
3. To show how society and individuals are complicit in the sexual abuse of the girl child
4. To show that the menace of sexual abuse can be adequately checkmated

**1.4 Significance of the study**

This study is significant in many ways but the main focus will be on the girl child. Majorly, it is significant because it brings the attention of literary critics and writers to an aspect of sexual abuse hitherto ignored or not adequately addressed. It is also significant because it addresses the trauma suffered by under aged girls who become victims of sexual abuse. When these under aged girls suffer such traumas after sexual abuse, it affects them in their adult lives either as mothers, housewives of just as unattached adult female. The negative effect is enormous. Sometimes the experience of sexual abuse can make a man hate men or decide to find sexual fulfilment in same sex relationship. This is the case of Seth who couldn’t imagine herself loving a man after she was roundly sexual abused by Alphonso. As an adult female, she finds sexual fulfilment in a fellow lady and falls in love with her. This study highlights and establishes these realities in the novels and in the society at large. The significance is therefore foregrounded by these concerns.

**1.5 Research Questions**

The following questions inform the research:

1. Do sexual abuses of the girl child exist in the two novels?
2. Do sexual abuses destroy the identity of the girl child?
3. Are society and the individual complicit in the sexual abuse of the girl child?
4. Can the menace of sexual abuse in the society be adequately checkmated?

**1.6 Research Methodology**

This study relies on qualitative and descriptive methods of research. It utilizes thematic analysis of the two chosen texts *Faceless* and *The Colour Purple*. The theory of feminism will be used for a critical interpretation of the texts. Feminism argues for the rights of girls and women and also for their fair treatment in the society. The primary source of research will be the identified two texts while the secondary source will be critical materials, the internet, and magazines.In all, the research will be library based.

**1.6 Definition of Terms**

* Sexual Abuse: It includes all activities associated with sex other than for pleasure or for procreation in which case any of the parties is abused or put through physical and psychological pain.
* Rape: It is the forceful and sometimes brutal initiation of sexual act with someone without the person’s consent.
* Girl Child: Any female human being below the age of eighteen years.
* Sexual equality: It is the state where both genders have the same rights in matters of sexual activity
* Negligence: It is the failure or inability to take proper care of something in one’s domain.

**1.7 Theoretical framework**

In order to be able to adequately argue the immediate concerns of and issues surrounding sexual abuse and the girl child, this study makes use of the theory of Feminism. The theory of feminism is concerned with addressing issues of inequality and fairness with regards to the genders, male and female. Feminists argue that many times the rights of women are not protected and consequently, women are always relegated to the background. In fact, feminism argues that most cultures across the world are against women or place women under the control of their male counterpart. Feminism when deployed in literature always identify how women are discriminated against, how they are objectified, oppressed and abused. Feminism is geared towards arguing for the rights of women which appears to have been eroded by the existence of male rights and privileges. Although feminism tries to identify and argue for the rights of women, it does appear that these rights are so many therefore, all of them cannot be catered for at the same time. In literature, when feminism is employed as a theory to interpret a text, it focuses on the sexual relations between and among the characters and how women are subdued or abused in the relationship. Also takes a look at the portrayal of genders, how the relationship between men and women is defined and outlined. Feminism in literature also concerns itself how women in a text are discriminated against in terms of equality, difference and choices. Given all of the explications of feminism above, it justifies its choice as a theoretical framework for the interpretation of Walker’s *The Colour Purple* and Darko’s *Faceless.* Renowned feminists in the 20th century are Betty Friedan, Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler, Elaine Showalter, Carol Gilligan, and Adrienne Rich. These women in different forum and platforms have argued for the rights of women in the society.

In the study of Feminism as a literary theory, there are six categories which help to understand all the numerous facets that exist in it. They are as follows – Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism, Marxist/Socialist Feminism, Postmodern/Poststructuralist Feminism, and Multiracial Feminism. Of all these categories, this study shall adopt the Marxist/Socialist Feminism. This category of feminism empowers the study to examine the power relations in terms of exploitation from the male gender against the female gender. Marxist as a theory concerns itself with how the various classes in the society are structure especially in terms of wealth distribution. Marx identifies two calluses of people in the society, those who have money, the wealthy and control all means of production and those who do not have money, the working class and depend on their labour power for survival. Marxism/Socialism is interested to abolish all structures of social division and class contradiction in the society. In terms of Marxist/Socialist Feminism, the focus is on how to identify the deplorable poor conditions of women in the texts, how they are exploited by their male counterpart due to their low classification and how these conditions can be abrogated to ensure that the women are free from class dominance. In seeking to achieve female equality, Marxist/Socialist Feminism seeks the social, political and economic rights of women.

In Alice Walker’s *The Colour Purple* Celie is a 14-yeal-old young African American lady who is serially raped by her foster father Alphonso and she bears two children from the despicable experience. The two children Olivia and Adam are taken away from her and she suffers huge psychological breakdown. Eventually, she is married off to an abusive, disrespectful man whose name is not immediately given. Under her new marriage, she suffers physical assault, sexual abuse and psychological damage. Eventually, she finds strength in another lady Shug Avery who gives her the courage to find a new life and break away from the bounds of dominance. In using the theory of feminism to interpret this novel, the focus shall be to examine the conditions and circumstances that led to Celie having to submit to an unconscionable man like Alphonso and how these conditions and circumstances could have been avoided. It also examines the American society of that time which allowed or condoned the abuse of young black girls without any consequences. It is instructive to note that Celia eventually asserts her individuality, breaking away from docile acceptance of rape, subjugation and molestation.

In the second novel Amma Darko’s *Faceless,* we are presented with an uncontrolled life in the streets of Accra where a 14-year-old girl Fofo and her sister Baby T become victims of parental neglect which pushes them into prostitution. As under aged prostitutes, both girls are constantly sexually abused which leads to Baby T’s death. Their rights are taken away by men who exploit them and their situations. It is apparent that they go through horrible experiences because they are under aged young girls who had no choice in their situation. It is along these ideas that Feminism finds relevance as an interpretative tool in the two texts.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**2.0 Literature Review**

The issue of sexual abuse has generated a lot of interest in different disciplines including literary studies. Many creative writers of fiction dedicate their themes to instances of sexual abuse towards the girl child. Also, many critical writers interrogate the issue of sexual abuse and x-ray all the growing perspectives about it. While in some works of fiction, sexual abuse is portrayed as a menace perpetrated by morally loose, indecent, licentious men, in some other works of fiction, sexual abuse is presented as a menace caused and enable by the failure of society to adequately protect the girl child. However, there is a consensus in the public that indeed sexual abuse exists. Although women of different ages suffer sexual abuse, the girl child is the most vulnerable, therefore is more predisposed to sexual harm. In many literary works, the girl child is presented as the victim but such presentation of the girl child character is always limited because it also fails to show how the situation could have been avoided. In this way, there seems to be a predictable narrative when it seems all assured that the motive of the writer is to present the girl child as an inevitable victim of sexual abuse.

While recounting the experiences of several young girls who were sexually abused in his book, Frank Grazioano points out that “all of these captives and many like them were brutalized physically, sexually, and emotionally, and all of them resisted rescue or missed opportunities to escape” (13). From Grazioano’s observations, many young girls who are victims of sexual abuse suffer emotional, psychological and physical harm but curiously, some of them inexplicably fail to run away when they have the chance or take up the opportunity to seek help on time. The foregoing seems to be related more to sexual abuse victims who were abducted or held in captivity. In Alice Walker’s *The Colour Purple,* Celia lived more like a sexual captive although she was not in any form of bondage. Given all her sufferings and sexual abuse by Alphonso, she never made any attempt to run away or seek help from a higher authority. It remains to be seen why young girls as sexual captives keep mute or remain in captivity even when there is an opportunity to escape. It is the same situation that Baby T finds herself in Amma Darko’s *Faceless.* Used as a child prostitute in a brothel, she submits to that kind of life although she recognizes that her humanity was debased and insulted. As a free agent of prostitution, she had the opportunity to escape but never made any attempt to do so. Grazioano’s remark here falls short of providing any reason why a sexual abused young girl would choose to remain in captivity. This study finds relevance in such shot falls and gaps in knowledge because it will provide or attempt give a workable explanation why sexual captives do not make attempt to escape or seek help even when they have the opportunity.

A sexually abused child is always sad viewing society and humanity with contempt and disdain. She retired or withdraws into herself, excommunicates the world around her, suffer inner pain and refuse to take anyone into confidence. Sometimes the child blames herself and wonders if she was complicit in what happened to her. This idea is echoed by Marjorie McKinnon when she remarks that “a hurting child is sad. Bad things have happened to them and they don’t understand why. Did they do something to cause it? They feel that they must have done something wrong, but was it? They don’t remember doing anything bad” (8). This scenario points to a situation whereby a child thinks that he contributed to the sexual assault on her person. He condition is made worse by an unprotective society that is quick to apportion blames on her. When a sexually abused child withdraws to herself thinking that the fault is all hers, the result is that she could implode and suffer more emotional wreckage. Sometimes, such a child may fail to see any reason to continue to live or lose all the motivation to exist as a human being. Her self-worth so destroyed, her confidence is challenged and her feminine glory is taken away from her. The danger is this kind of interpretation is that it tends towards unnecessary generalization. This is because not all girls feel guilty or succumb to self-blame and accept their fate when they are subjected to sexual abuse. In *The Colour Purple* while Celia accepts her fate under Alphonso and submits to regular sexual abuse, her younger sister Nettie does not accept her fate and succumb to sexual abuse under a nameless Mister. The same scenario plays out in *Faceless.* While Baby T accepts her fate as a sexual too for economic gain, her sister Fofo escapes to the streets to be free from that kind of sexual bondage. This shows that not all sexually abused young girls accept their fate and submit to the pain. Some of them reject the pain, reject the experience and move on with their lives even though the pain can remain with them for a very long time. McKinnon’s observation therefore presents a partial narrative or overview of the sexually abused girl child situation. Although there are many instances which fit into the McKinnon narrative, but it does not affirm a consensus.

Erika Shershun has carried out extensive research on the issue of sexual abuse of the girl child. She buttresses the notion that victims of sexual abuse suffer from lack of self-confidence and sometimes the destruction of inner self-worth. According to her “after suffering this devastating violation and betrayal, feeling safe is understandably challenging. If you experienced childhood sexual abuse, you may have lost or never fully developed a sense of safety” (9). To a good degree, this assertion is true in most cases of sexual abuse around the world and even in their representations in literature. Given its nature, it is difficult, almost impossible for a victim of sexual abuse not to lose a sense of safety. In most cases, they experience trauma which leads them to react involuntarily when they find themselves in a neutral environment with the opposite sex. In *The Colour Purple* Celie suffers this kind of inner devastation and the outcome is that she consistently feels unsafe and insecure anytime she found herself around a man. Her fears were not unfounded because staying on guard and expecting any eventuality helped her to fight off male advances even when such advances were genuine. It is the same scenario in *Faceless* where Fofo suffers inner violation, lost her self-worth and personal confidence after being serially raped by Poison and other street urchins. However, Shershun does not provide any remedy for the serially abused girl who has lost a sense of safety, confidence and inner peace. That kind of confidence and inner peace came to Celie in the form of Shug Avery who gave her confidence and made her to believe in herself once again. Through Celie’s relationship with Shug Avery, she is healed and embraces life once again. Also, after the death of Baby T, Fofo is rescued by Kabria through MUTE, the non-governmental organization where she worked. Through MUTE, Fofo regains her self-worth, self-confidence and see more reasons to live a normal life.

Joanne Smith introduces a new dimension in the sexual abuse discourse by using the term ‘harassment’. It is a bit difficult to distinguish or differentiate between sexual abuse and sexual harassment in the context of this study. While some people believe that sexual harassments do not necessarily end up in sex, sexual abuse definitely ends up in the very act of sexual intercourse. According such people sexual harassment deals with such things as fondling, inappropriate touching of sensitive places, and forceful kissing of a girl child. But some people think that both sexual abuse and sexual harassment are the same thing or they are closely related. This confusion is highlighted in the observation by Smith when she submits thus “I have repeatedly witnessed, and personally experienced, blatant sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination and threats from men” (16). From the above assertion, it is a bit difficult to properly situate sexual harassment or to call it sexual abuse. But from the way Joanne Smith put it, it appears she didn’t really suffer sexual abuse. However, sexual abuse and sexual harassment tend to have the same effect on the victim although with far reaching consequences from the former. In most cases, those who suffer sexual harassment also eventually suffer sexual abuse. The extended occurrence from harassment to abuse is always because the victims fail to speak out. Celie was sexual harassed constantly and subsequently sexual abused. Baby T was harassed sexually and subsequently sexual abused. Both terms go hand in hand. In fact, sexual abuse starts with sexual harassment. But in all cases, they have the same negative, enduring effect on the victim.

Karen Terry and Jennifer Tallon are of the view that the reason why sexual abuse of the girl child remains and continues to happen in the society is because many victims keep quiet and because they keep quiet, no one knows what has happened therefore the incident is underreported. Also, another reason why sexual abuse is under reported is that families of victims are minded to protect the girl child from abuse, stigma, and other social perceptions about the victim. According to Terry and Tallon “child sexual abuse is significantly under reported. When victims do report that they were abused, they often do so years after the abuse occurred” (21). This view buttresses Graziano’s stand earlier quoted in this study. But there is a new dimension in this case, which is the reporting aspect. Apart from the victim failing to voice out her experiences, the victim’s family also, even when they are aware, prefer to conceal the incident in order to protect the image of the victim. Because these incidents are not known or exposed, the press does not know about it and since the press cannot report when they know, the incident of sexual abuse remains under reported. However, this is not the case with Fofo’s experience. The intervention of Kabria and her non-governmental organization MUTE exposed to the world what the young girl was going through. For Fofo, it was better and preferred that the society gets to know her plight since it will lead to her freedom. The scenario is different from Celie and Nattie’s experience. They kept their experiences to themselves, therefore it was not reported by the press. Perhaps, Celie and Nattie were aware that black girls were normally subjected to sexual abuse and the white dominated press would hardly report it. So, it shows that reporting sexual abuse depends on many variables. The study will examine the cases of sexual abuse in the texts and thoroughly engage the issues to uncover reasons for their partial reportage. Overall, there is a consensus from the few writers and their works that sexual abuse destroys the girl child. But the effects of these abuses, the circumstances, the reactions, and many other variables are not explicitly outlined as represented in many literary works. Fofo, Baby T, Celie, Nattie all character victims of sexual abuse in the two texts represent many young female children across the world who have been sexual abused, assaulted and harassed. The choice of the two texts is strategic. While *The Colour Purple* represents the West, *Faceless* represents Africa. The different experiences of the characters show the different tensions and circumstances that can take place in the regional or geographical setting of the novels. This study shall attempt to lay bare, suing the two texts, the circumstances that give rise to sexual abuse in the society.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**3.0 Textual analysis**

**3.1 Sexual Abuse in *Faceless***

Amma Darko’s novel *Faceless* narrates the story of sexual exploitation as a result of parental irresponsibility, social recklessness and family neglect. Set in Ghana, the novel hopelessness of the situation in the novel is captured with a Biblical allusion which makes references to Sodom and Gomorrah. The two cities in the Bible are noted for immorality, sexual abuse, drugs, apostasy and all manner of vices. In the same way, the two cities in the novel represent street life of drugs, sex, pornography, drugs and all kinds of vices. The issue of sexual abuse of the girl child inevitably stares the audience or reader in the face when Fofo finds herself on the streets especially in the Agbogbloshie market in Ghana where she is subjected to sexual molestation and abuse. Her circumstances throw more light on the general circumstances faces by many young girls who inadvertently walk into situations where they are preyed on sexually. It also shows that many young girls get raped out of no mistake of theirs but rather, the society throw us situations that exposes them to rape and sexual abuse. In many ways, the critical interpretation of *Faceless* implicates parents and society for the sexual abuse and rape of the girl child. The overview of this conclusion is universal although in the novel, Ghana, a West African country is used as an entry point. But the message in the novel is clear. Young girls become victims of sexual abuse due to several factors which are not necessarily their fault. Before examining the different instances of sexual abuse and the circumstances that gave rise to them in the novel, a critical plot analysis is necessary.

**3.2 Plot Analysis**

At the beginning of the novel, we are introduced to a fourteen-year-old girl Fofo who lives in an open market known as Agbogbloshie. She works in the market by washing vegetables and other food items. At night, she sleeps on a cardboard and in the day time, she defecates in the open.

She chose to spend the night on the old cardboard laid out in front

of the provision store at the Agbogbloshie market place because it

was a Sunday. It had nothing to do with Sunday being a church going day.

The reason was simply that if she hadn’t, she would have stood the risk of

losing her newly acquired job of washing carrots at the vegetable wholesale

market. Fofo would have spent the night from Sunday to Monday dawn with

her friends across the road at the squatters’ enclave known as ‘Sodom and

Gomorrah. (1)

While sleeping in the open market, she dreams of being loved with a roof over her head and a decent toilet. These are things that she never experienced due to her life on the streets.

Fofo was smiling because she was having a dream that was far removed from the realities of the life she lived. It was a dream as in the group of thoughts and images experienced during sleep. And in her dreams, she was living in a home with a roof. She was there when it suddenly began to rain and she was going to rush to somewhere in search of a safe and dry place to huddle close to other kids for warmth when it dawned on her that she had a roof over the head. And in the home with a roof, there was a toilet. A toilet with a roof. She smiled so wide when she felt the urge to attend to nature’s call that the angel watching over her smiled too. In the dream, she simply entered the toilet with a roof and did her thing. No war like it many times was when she had to do it in real life. (2)

Many children like her on the streets share this same dream but unfortunately, they are denied this basic aspect of life because either their parents or society abandoned them. She finds a friend in another girl known as Odarley who is also in the same predicament as her. Two of them form a partnership in misery which shows the failings of the society. Also, there is a male character named Poison who is a street urchin but a victim of parental neglect. Poison tries to rape Fofo but she fights him off and runs away. Soon after, Fofo locates her mother Maa Tsuru who informs her about the death of her elder sister Baby T and how her body was dumped behind a small store. The news of the death of her sister provokes her to action and makes her resolve to avenge the death of her sister Baby T. Her sister Baby T, before her death was a child prostitute who was always sexually abused because she was forced into prostitution and she had no choice in the matter. The novel introduces another lady Kabria who is married with three children Obea, Essie and Ottu. Kabria’s life is responsible, she is married and works with MUTE and non-governmental organization.

Married sixteen years to Adade, her architect husband, Kabria loved her job with MUTE, a Non-Governmental Organisation that was basically into documentation and information build up, with passion. And with equal fervour, loathed the figure that appeared on her monthly salary slip. But topping it all was her shamelessness about her special attachment to her oldhand-me-down-thank-you-very-much-Adade-1975 V.W. Beetle nicknamed Creamy. (7)

She also has a troublesome car known as Creamy. Kabria’s life is a sharp contrast with the life of Fofo and her late sister Baby T. Kabria and Fofo meet in the most unexpected way. While Fofo was at the Agbogbloshie market as a pick-pocket disguised as a boy, she tries to steal Kabria’s purse but was caught. Kabria was standing where Baby T’s body lay. The mob in the market try to mob Fofo but Kabria rescues her. At that point, Fofo reveals her true identity and informs Kabria that the late Baby T was her sister. Kabria’s non-governmental organization MUTE takes Fofo into protective custody while they carry on with the investigation of Baby T’s death. The circumstances of Baby T’s death are revealed through Fofo and the investigation by Kabria’s non-governmental organization MUTE.

It is revealed that Baby T and Fofo are sisters from the same parents Maa Tsuru their mother and Kwei their father. Baby T is the third child while Fofo is the third child. However, their father abandoned them because he superstitiously believed that their mother was cursed from both therefore carried bad luck on her. After their father Kwei abandoned them, their mother found another lover Kpakpo but he sexually abused Baby T. Again, Baby T was sexually abused by Onko, their uncle who Baby T tried to confide in about what Kpakpo did to her. Kpakpo introduced Baby T into prostitution and she worked as a child prostitute at Maami Brooni’s brothel earning money which was sent back to her mother Maa Tsuru who didn’t care or mind that her child worked as a child prostitute. Onko locates Baby T at the hotel and wants to have sex with her but Baby T remembers what Onko did to her and refuses to let him into her body. Posion, who led Onko to Baby T is angered by her refusal to allow Onko have sex with her gets angry and slaps Baby T. She falls to the ground and her head breaks open after hitting the floor. Onko commits suicide at the sight of Baby T’s dead body.

**3.3 Instances of sexual abuse in the novel**

In the novel two major girl child characters suffer sexual abuse, they are Fofo and her sister Baby T. The cause of their sexual abuse is the same. They suffer parental neglect at an early age and when their father abandons them, the society could not offer the necessary protection. In their case therefore, both the society and the parents are responsible or they contribute to the fate that befell both characters. The first incident of girl child sexual abuse in the novel is when Kpakpo sexual abused Baby T. After Kwei their father abandoned them, life became very difficult for the family Maa Tsuru and her four children. Inevitably, Maa Tsuru found another lover since her husband abandoned her and her family. Her new lover is Kpakpo, a licentious man who rapes Maa Tsuru’s daughter Baby T. As with many cases when a girl child is sexually abused, Baby T does not have the confidence to tell the mother or make her pains public because she is was afraid of being ridiculed or blamed. This is a major challenge with cases of girl-child sexual abuse. When many young girls are sexually abused, they keep it secret because the society will definitely blame them. Most times when the girl-child family discovers what happened, they also keep it a secret in order to protect the girl-child from social stigma. In this way, the culprit, the man who committed the crime of girl-child sexual abuse is protected and walks as a free man. This is one of the greatest challenges of eradicating girl-child sexual abuse because the perpetrators are never caught.

After Baby T was sexually abused by Kpakpo, she keeps the pain to herself but at some point, she couldn’t keep the pain again, so she tried to confide in Onko, a wealthy uncle who lives in the neighbourhood. However, and unfortunately, Baby T is once again sexually abused when Onko rapes and defiles her. The sexual abuse experience with Onko devastates Baby T and leaves a permanent scare of her mind and soul. After the two sexual abuse experiences by Baby T, she loses her self-identity and feels inwardly and outwardly defeated. With any friend or confidant, she suffers in pain like most girl-child victims of sexual abuse. Thereafter, she is sold into a ring of prostitution and starts working as a commercial sex worker at Maami Brooni’s Brothel. Her work as a girl-child prostitute is the highest and most extreme level of girl-child sexual abuse. In this case, both the proprietor of the brothel and the men who patronize her are guilty of sexually abusing a child. Also, her mother Maa Tsuru is guilty because she accepts money from the proceeds of girl-child sexual abuse without caring to know the consequences on her child.

Baby T’s experience and circumstances in the novel represents millions of female children around the world who find themselves in the same circumstance and situation. All over the world, many female children are raped by their relatives, father’s friends, teachers, neighbours and other people who share a close relationship with them. Like Baby T, many of these female children keep quiet and die in silence while the men guilty of defiling them walk free. Some of these men hold important positions in the society. It is therefore sad that the girl-child becomes a victim without their fault in the entire scenario. There are instances in contemporary society where female children who suffer sexual abuse commit suicide because they cannot stand the shame or endure the psychological pain. That Baby T resolutely refused to have further sexual intimacy with Onko is a testimony to the pain she felt after Onko first sexually abused her. She was adamant and resolute indicates her inner pain even at the threat of death by Poison.

Another character used in the novel to indicate or demonstrate girl-child sexual abuse is Fofo. Following her father’s abandonment of their home, their mother Maa Tsuru, as a typical African woman who is not profitably engaged in any trade of means of income, succumbs to the advances of Kpakpo and a relationship develops between them. Seeing that their mother was not in control and that her sister was a victim of sexual abuse, Fofo ran away from home because she did not want to suffer the same fate as Baby T her sister. After Fofo escapes from home, she arrives at the notorious Agbogblioshie market located in the notorious cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. While at the market, she got a job washing vegetables and doing other menial jobs but she was inevitably caught indulging in the general past time and attitude of all the young people who lived in the area. She became an object of sexual gratification. Sometimes she exchanged her body for money too. From the dream she had at the beginning of the novel, she longed for a good, decent life with a roof over her head but could not get it due to parental abandonment. According to the novel, while she slept at the Agbogblioshie market on a card board, she was sometimes raped because she wore no under pants. Poison and other street urchins took advantage of her predicament and made her a sex gratifying object. While she lasted on the streets with other young girls who suffered the same fate as her, the society and the government turn away and do not do anything about the predicament of the girls. Today, there are many young girls around the world who find themselves in the same situation as Fofo. Because they were abandoned by their parents, without love from anybody or even the government, these young girls walk on the streets and become prostitutes. Some of the tomes, they also indulge in the usage of illicit drugs and even armed robbery. In Nigeria, many of these young girls have fallen victims of ritual murder where their sensitive body parts are harvested by ritual herbalists for various diabolical reasons. It is hoped that this study will provoke a serious awareness in the society to protect and cater for young girls who have been abandoned by their parents and relations.

*Faceless* is a critical commentary on the social ills of the society as it concerns the sexual abuse of young girls. Although the novel is sent in Ghana, the issues raised are universal. There are many instances of social irresponsibility around the world which leads to the abuse of young girls sexually. Sodom and Gomorrah exist in every city of the world and not just in Ghana alone. There are many organizations like MUTE committed to helping young girls that suffered sexual abuse to regain their lives and live a normal life. But many non-governmental organizations like MUTE in Africa are challenged by the lack of funds and sponsorship. There are also cases of corruption whereby even when these non-governmental organizations win grants, their personnel embezzle the money while the organization suffers. The society may not know the level of harm and dislocation inflicted on it as long as young girls are abandoned to the streets where they embrace prostitution and consequently die in the process. Young girls are future mothers and should be protected by their families and the government.

**3.4 Sexual abuse in *The Colour Purple***

Alice Walker’s novel *The Colour Purple* has been described by many people as a true-life story of the author but many people have debunked this view believing that the story in the novel has nothing to do with the life of the author. As with *Faceless, The Colour Purple* also addresses the issues of girl-child sexual abuse in an American society. However, the circumstances of the sexual abuse in the novels are different but the focus remains the same. *The Colour Purple* is set in a racial stratified American society when blacks were seen as second-class citizens and as objects of ridicule, shame and abuse. In that American society, the whites were lords over the blacks who mostly worked as slaves and servants. Under such conditions, blacks of all ages and across gender became victims of maltreatment, rape, sexual abuse and physical brutality. Because the focus of this study is to examine how the girl-child is abused in the novel and what psychological effect such experiences have on her. To a large extent, it appears that the case of sexual abuse of the girl-child in The Colour Purple is more gripping and involved than in *Faceless.* However, both novels address the same issue but in a different way. In *The Colour Purple*, we see instances of docile acceptance of rape and sexual abuse on the part of a girl-child and also instances of defiance and resistance. While Celie, a girl child serial victim of sexual abuse and rape accepts her condition and submits to such conditions under her step father Alphonso, her twelve-year old younger sister Nettie refuses to accept the same kind of treatment under an unnamed man simply identified as Mr. ---------. The two sisters represent different ways through which many girl-child victims of sexual abuse react to their situation and circumstances. Before examining instances of sexual abuse of the girl child in the novel, a brief synopsis is necessary.

**3.5 Plot Analysis**

The novel introduces the reader to Celie, a girl of fourteen years who is poor and uneducated living with her step father Alphonso in Georgia USA. Unfortunately, Celie’s step father Alphonso sexually abuses her through rape and physical brutality. In response to her very difficult situation, Celie resorts to writing letters to God as a way of ventilating her frustration and hoping that God will come to her rescue. Through the constant rape and sexual abuse by Alphonso, Celie gets pregnant for the first time and gives birth to a baby girl. Her step father Alphonso steals the baby and kills her in the woods. Again, she gets pregnant and gives birth to another baby, a boy and her father steals the boy again. Celie suffers psychological breakdown due the loss of her children and the constant sexual abuse by her step farther. Matters became worse for her when her mother dies through constant illness. Alphonso marries another wife and brings her home, yet continue to sexual abuse Celie.

Celie has a sister known as Nettie, a twelve-year-old girl who is described as bright and beautiful in the novel. Both of them get to know that an unnamed man who is known as Mr------ is interested in marrying Nettie. However, Alphonso refuses to let Mr---------- marry Nettie but instead preferring her to marry Celie. Mr------ already has a lover known as Shug Avery, a singer whose photograph fascinates Celie. Initially Mr---------- refuses to marry Celie because she is ugly but eventually agrees to marry her. After the marriage, Mr-------- makes life very difficult for Celie in a very unbearable union. Nettie is left with Alphonso who tries to sexually abuse her through rape. But unlike her older sister, Nettie refuses to succumb to sexual abuse but runs away from Alphonso. She goes to stay with Celie but when Mr------ tries to sexually abuse her, she runs away for the second time. Celie is encouraged by Kate, Mr………..’s younger sister who tells her to fight back when she is sexually abused. Mr----------‘s son Harpo falls in love with Sofia who gets pregnant for him. However, Celie notices that Sofia is a strong woman who refuses to be abused and maltreated by Harp and Mr-------. Shug Avery be cakes sick and Mr----- offers her accommodation in his house. Both Celie and Shug Avery are initially sceptical of each other but as time goes on, they become friends and began to get along well. Celie gets attracted to Shug and becomes infatuated towards her. Sofia gets tired of Harpo and moves out of the house.

Shug decides to stay when she learns that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_ beats Celie when Shug is away. Shug and Celie’s relationship grows intimate, and Shug begins to ask Celie questions about sex. Sofia returns for a visit and promptly gets in a fight with Harpo’s new girlfriend, Squeak. In town one day, the mayor’s wife, Miss Millie, asks Sofia to work as her maid. Sofia answers with a sassy “Hell no.” When the mayor slaps Sofia for her insubordination, she returns the blow, knocking the mayor down. Sofia is sent to jail. Squeak’s attempts to get Sofia freed are futile. Sofia is sentenced to work for twelve years as the mayor’s maid. Shug returns with a new husband, Grady. Despite her marriage, Shug instigates a sexual relationship with Celie, and the two frequently share the same bed. One-night Shug asks Celie about her sister. Celie assumes Nettie is dead because she had promised to write to Celie but never did. Shug says she has seen Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_ hide away numerous mysterious letters that have arrived in the mail. Shug manages to get her hands on one of these letters, and they find it is from Nettie. Searching through Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_’s trunk, Celie and Shug find dozens of letters that Nettie has sent to Celie over the years. Overcome with emotion, Celie reads the letters in order, wondering how to keep herself from killing Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_.

The letters indicate that Nettie befriended a missionary couple, Samuel and Corrine, and traveled with them to Africa to do ministry work. Samuel and Corrine have two adopted children, Olivia and Adam. Nettie and Corrine become close friends, but Corrine, noticing that her adopted children resemble Nettie, wonders if Nettie and Samuel have a secret past. Increasingly suspicious, Corrine tries to limit Nettie’s role within her family. Nettie becomes disillusioned with her missionary experience, as she finds the Africans self-centered and obstinate. Corrine becomes ill with a fever. Nettie asks Samuel to tell her how he adopted Olivia and Adam. Based on Samuel’s story, Nettie realizes that the two children are actually Celie’s biological children, alive after all. Nettie also learns that Alphonso is really only Nettie and Celie’s step-father, not their real father. Their real father was a storeowner whom white men lynched because they resented his success. Alphonso told Celie and Nettie he was their real father because he wanted to inherit the house and property that was once their mother’s.

Nettie confesses to Samuel and Corrine that she is in fact their children’s biological aunt. The gravely ill Corrine refuses to believe Nettie. Corrine dies, but accepts Nettie’s story and feels reconciled just before her death. Meanwhile, Celie visits Alphonso, who -confirms Nettie’s story, admitting that he is only the women’s stepfather. Celie begins to lose some of her faith in God, but Shug tries to get her to re-imagine God in her own way, rather than in the traditional image of the old, bearded white man. The mayor releases Sofia from her servitude six months early. At dinner one night, Celie finally releases her pent-up rage, angrily cursing Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_ for his years of abuse. Shug announces that she and Celie are moving to Tennessee, and Squeak decides to go with them. In Tennessee, Celie spends her time designing and sewing individually tailored pairs of pants, eventually turning her hobby into a business. Celie returns to Georgia for a visit, and finds that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_ has reformed his ways and that Alphonso has died. Alphonso’s house and land are now hers, so she moves there. Meanwhile, Nettie and Samuel marry and prepare to return to America. Before they leave, Samuel’s son, Adam, marries Tashi, a native African girl. Following African tradition, Tashi undergoes the painful rituals of female circumcision and facial scarring. In solidarity, Adam undergoes the same facial scarring ritual. Celie and Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_ reconcile and begin to genuinely enjoy each other’s company. Now independent financially, spiritually, and emotionally, Celie is no longer bothered by Shug’s passing flings with younger men. Sofia remarries Harpo and now works in Celie’s clothing store. Nettie finally returns to America with Samuel and the children. Emotionally drained but exhilarated by the reunion with her sister, Celie notes that though she and Nettie are now old, she has never in her life felt younger.

**3.6 Instances of sexual abuse in *The Colour Purple***

Three characters will be sued to demonstrate instances of sexual abuse of the girl-child. In each of the characters, it will be demonstrated how they reacted to being sexual abused. The first character to be examined here is Celie. She is a black, fourteen-year-old girl who finds herself living with her step father Alphonso. However, Alphonso sexually abuses her constantly which led to her having two children. Her two children were also taken away from her, first, a girl and second a boy. Celie finds herself in a hopeless situation of having to submit to a man she calls father. She is raped, beaten and harassed by Alphonso. Due to the constant harassment and rape, Celie is inwardly defeated. She loses self-confidence and does not believe she can do any better than having to accept her fate. In Celie’s first letter to God, we learn that she has been raped by her father, Alfonso. Alfonso told her that she must not tell anybody what happens, except God. Celie falls pregnant twice and is taken out of school. Alfonso puts the children up for adoption, and they are taken in by a reverend living in the town. After her mother dies, Celie’s father marries her off to Mr. Albert \_\_\_\_\_\_. Married life is also quite painful for Celie. She must raise Albert’s children, take full control of any house chores, endure unenjoyable intimate nights with her husband, and undergo regular, unnecessary beatings from him. Things improve for Celie for a short while after her sister Nettie comes to live with her. Unfortunately, Albert (who always preferred Nettie to Celie and asked Nettie to marry him first) refuses to allow Nettie to stay in his house unless she rewards him. When Nettie leaves, he follows her and tries to rape her, but she escapes and seeks out the Reverend, who is raising Celie’s children.

She gets a job as a maid with the family. The Reverend, whose name is Samuel and his wife Corrine are both missionaries preparing to go to Africa. After they find that one of their partner missionaries is unable to go, they offer Nettie the chance to join them in Africa. Nettie is delighted and accepts. When Nettie arrives in Africa she begins to write frequently to Celie. She is constantly worried that her letters will not reach her sister and voices her concern, telling Celie that Albert had promised that she would never hear from her again. Celie accordingly is not given a single letter from Nettie for years. Albert’s eldest son Harpo falls in love with a fifteen-year-old girl named Sofia. She is soon pregnant, and they marry. Harpo tries to dominate Sofia the way his father dominates Celie, but she is stronger and fights back. Eventually Sofia gets fed up with Harpo and leaves him to go live with her sister Odessa. Albert finds out that his mistress of many years, Shug Avery, is ill. He drives off and brings her home, where Celie is required to take care of her. Celie is happy to do so; she remembers the first time she saw Shug in a photograph before she got married, and she thinks Shug is even more beautiful in the flesh. Shug is ill-tempered and nasty to Celie at first, but she soon starts to like Celie.

Harpo converts his house into a juke joint when Sofia leaves, but no one comes. He decides to ask Shug, who is a well-known jazz singer, if she will sing at his place. She agrees. Albert does not want Celie to go on the first night, but Shug insists that she go. Shug draws a large crowd and dedicates one of her songs to Celie. Shug plans to leave but, in an attempt to keep her from going, Celie tells her that Albert beats her. Shug promises not to leave until he stops. Shug also learns that Celie has never enjoyed sex. Shug tries to educate Celie about how to get pleasure from sex, but it is soon clear that Celie feels nothing for Albert because she is attracted to women. Later, Celie experiences her first sexual pleasure with Shug. One day Sofia turns up at Harpo’s place with a new boyfriend named Buster. She sees Harpo, they start chatting, and he asks her to dance. His new girlfriend Squeak is very jealous and slaps Sofia. Sofia immediately punches Squeak back, knocking out several of her teeth. Soon after, out in town, Sofia meets the Major and his wife Miss Millie. Quite taken with the children and impressed by their cleanliness, Ms. Millie asks Sofia to work as her nanny. When Sophia refuses, the Mayor slaps her and, in response, Sofia knocks him down. She is arrested and given twelve years in jail. Squeak is sent on a mission to get Sofia out of jail and move her into the Major’s house to work as a maid. Squeak goes to visit the warden and is raped by him. The visit is not fruitless, however, and Sofia is moved into the Major’s house as a maid. Following her rape, Squeak tells Harpo to call her by her real name, Mary Agnes. Shug returns to Celie and Albert, bringing with her a new husband named Grady. Shug warns Celie that Albert is hiding letters from her, and they soon discover that Albert has been hiding Nettie’s letters all this time. Celie is furious, but Shug keeps her calm. Together they find all of the letters and start to read them.

Nettie’s early letters explain the beginning of her missionary trip to Africa with the Reverend and his family. The Olinka tribe there worships the roof leaf the people use for their roofs—without it their homes would be destroyed in the rainy season. The natives view Nettie as a second wife of Samuel, which makes Corrine very jealous. Soon she stops Nettie from meeting with Samuel in private or from borrowing her clothes. After a few years, Corrine comes down with a fever and dies, but she learns the truth about Nettie and her adopted children beforehand: Olivia and Adam are not really Nettie’s children by Samuel. Soon after, on a trip to England, Samuel and Nettie are married. A road is built right through the village of the Olinka by a rubber manufacturing company, and it destroys the entire village. They are forced to relocate to a more barren area with poor water. The new owners of the land charge them for water and for the new tin roofs which the Olinka are forced to use. Many of the people leave to join the mbeles, a group of natives deep in the jungle who are struggling against the white man.

Since arriving in Africa, Adam and Olivia have become very good friends with a young Olinka girl named Tashi. Tashi decides that she must undergo the ritual Olinka scarring ceremony on her face as well as the female circumcision initiation in order to honor her culture. But she becomes so ashamed of the marks that she soon leaves to join the mbeles. Adam goes after her and brings her home, but she refuses to marry him because she is afraid, she will not be accepted in the United States. Initially scathing about Tashi’s decision to become scarred, Adam now gets his face marked as well so that they look alike and so that she will not feel ashamed. Tashi and Adam are married, and the whole family then makes plans to return home. After finding her sister’s letters, Celie decides to leave home with Shug. She tells Albert she is leaving. When he tries to stop her, she stabs his hand with a fork. Before she leaves, she curses him for the way he has treated her and tells him he will be cursed until he changes his ways. In response he refuses to send her any of Nettie’s letters as they keep arriving.

Celie goes to Memphis with Shug, where she starts making a lot of pants. Eventually she gets so good at designing them that she receives regular orders. Shug helps Celie turn the work into a business. Soon after, Celie learns that Alfonso, known to her as Pa, is not her real father after all, just the man who married her mother after her real father (who was a successful businessman) had been killed. After Alfonso dies, Celie receives a phone call telling her that her family home now belongs to Nettie and herself. Celie fixes up her new house while Shug elopes with her new love interest, a nineteen-year-old flute player named Germaine. Celie is heartbroken, but she meets up with Albert occasionally when she visits Sofia’s daughter Henriett and they become good friends—he has changed a lot since the old days. Apparently, after Celie left, he let everything go and almost died of malnourishment. Harpo finally forced him to send Nettie’s letters to Celie, and from that point he began to change his life around. Shug returns and decides to retire, for her flute player has gone to college. Celie is now financially comfortable. She has her new house and her father’s dry goods store (which she also inherited) as well as her business. Nettie finally returns home with Samuel and with Celie’s grown children. Celie and Nettie fall into each other’s arms and lie on the ground hugging. Celie writes that she has never felt so young before in her life.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**4.0 Sexual Abuse and social harm**

The issue of sex and sexual abuse is synonymous with many social ills all over the world. It is so important to social harmony and growth to the extent that many writers dedicate the themes of their work to it. Sex is at the heart of what many people call fun. It is at the heart of procreation for those who want to have children or are in a marriage. For many men, sex is the number one idea of self-indulgence. In fact, some men can go all the way to ensure that they have sex. There are indications according to many men that they cannot do without sex for a period of time. Ostensibly, men desire sex more than women although women also like sex. Different societies of the world have different ideas about sex to the extent that there are myths and beliefs about it. In some societies, sex is scared, it serves as a sign of moral uprightness for a young girl to remain a virgin until marriage. In many different societies, sex is pleasure, it is a way to demonstrate the highest level of intimacy between two people. The absence of sex in a love relationship between a man and a woman could be interpreted to mean a sign of lack of love. Lack of sex can create frustration in men and women. Conversely, the abundance of sex in a relationship between a man and a woman can create happiness, togetherness and comfort. To underscore the importance of sex to people, some men pay huge sums of money to have sex with a lady. Also, some ladies pay some young men huge sums of money to be satisfied in sex by the young men. Sometimes, married people go outside of their marriage to look for sex especially if their partners in marriage are sexual inadequate. Some religion view sex with a lot of concern and reverence. Adherents of different religion believe that sex can hinder spiritual growth therefore anytime anybody is engaging in a spiritual activity, then that person must not engage in sex. Such is the importance of sex among human beings in different parts of the world.

Like every genuine aspect of human indulgence, there is abuse in sex. This brings us to the issue of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse as earlier stated is the misapplication of the very wonderful human activity of sex in which case, either of the parties involved in the activity is forced, coerced, intimidated or brutalized into engaging in sexual activity. In many countries of the world, sexual abuse is a crime punishable by different codes or provisions in the law. In some cultures, sexual abuse is a taboo which requires a degree of propitiation to cleanse the land. But because the interest of this study sexual abuse of the girl child as demonstrated in the two novels used for the research, the study will examine the effect of sexual abuse of the girl child and how it harms the society. Contemporary societies in the world consist of different aspects which, when they are abused, the effect on the society is also enormous. The girl child is considered fragile, delicate and lovely. They are future mothers whose wellbeing is important for the development of the future family structure. The psychological make-up of the girl child must be protected at all times if they are to develop into good wives, good mothers and help to nurture and raise children with same well structure psychology and attitude. It is believed that a society with a destroyed girl-child base will hardly develop into a good society. If we are to link the wellbeing of any society to the wellbeing of the girl-child, them the interest of the girl-child must be protected at all times.

Many young girls suffer sexual abuse for no fault of theirs. When they do, their psychology is destroyed, their self-confidence is destroyed, their future sometimes is also destroyed if they fail to heal properly. Some men take undue advantage of the helplessness of the girl-child to abuse her. Sometimes, these men are relations, fathers, uncles, teachers or neighbours. The innocent, unassuming girl-child walks into a trap without knowing what she will experience. These issues play out in the two texts used for this study.

In *Faceless,* Baby T is a victim of fatherly abandonment and because her mother is uneducated and poor, she desperately needed a man in her life to take care of her and the children. Kpakpo happens to be the man in her life at this time. Baby T as a young girl sees Kpakpa as a father figure, one who would fill the gap left by Kwei her father. Unfortunately, Kpakpo betrays the trust Baby T reposed in her by raping the young girl. Destroyed, abused and shameful, Baby T does not confide in any body for fear of being ridiculed or blamed. The rape by Kpakpo marks a turning point in her life albeit in a negative way. Given her condition, Baby T desperately need someone to confide in. Again, she sees Onko, an uncle of hers that lives in the neighbourhood, as someone she could confide in. She confides in Onko but unfortunately, Onko takes advantage of her once again and rapes her in a most vicious way. Broken and battered, Baby T sucks up her shame and is inwardly defeated. She loses herself assuredness and her identity. She hates the society and thinks that does not have any reason to preserve any social values since the society betrayed her and could not protect her. For that reason, she accepts prostitution without any protest and the money realized from the illicit attitude is sent to her mother who did not care at all.

One of the major ways that the society is harmed as a result of the girl-child sexual abuse is that many of them embrace prostitution. Baby T and her sister Fofo are examples. First, after Fofo witnessed what happened to her sister Baby T, she was too scared to remain in the house seeing that the house offered her no protection. Therefore, she ran away and went to the Agbogblioshie market to get a job as a vegetable washer. While doing her job, she slept in the open market and inevitably indulged in cheap sex, drugs and prostitution. As young girls, Baby T’s experience in the hands of Kpakpo was what pushed them to become prostitutes. If we agree that prostitution is a social vice and the continued indulgence of young girls in the vice is a social menace, then we can say that since Baby T and Fofo were pushed into it after Baby T’s rape by Kpakpo, then sexual abuse of the girl child affects the society in a big way.

In *The Colour Purple,* Celie and her sister Nettie have different reactions in their circumstances towards sexual abuse. While we may say that their sexual abuse affects the society in a different way given that the American society is different from the African society, it still boils down to the fact that they were sexually abuse and it affected the society. First, after Alphonso sexually abuses Celie which leads to pregnancy and the birth of two children, Celie is destroyed psychologically, she loses self-confidence and the ability to resist abuse. The result is that she becomes subservient and docile, submitting to Alphonso to the point of stupidity. Her case is an example of a defeated young girl who ultimately lost interest and belief in the society. It is apparent that Alphonso does not have any genuine interest in her except using her to satisfy his sexual urges. When Mr------ indicated interest to marry Nettie, Alphonso refuses to let Nettie go but instead, asked Mr---------- to marry Celie who he describes as ugly. The effect of the constant sexual abuse on Celie is that she hates men and is ultimately attracted to her fellow woman Shug Avery. Celie loses every form of feeling or emotion for the opposite sex. She is turned into a sadist and hates the society because she thought that the society could not protect her. With such animosity in her heart after her childhood sexual abuse experience, Celie becomes a social black spot and will do everything to get back at the society. Such is the effect of a sexual abuse in the life of a girl child. In the same way, her sister Nettie becomes an outcast several times after Alphonso and Mr……. tried to keep how down and sexually abuse her. Unlike her sister who accepts to be abused, Nettie rejects to be sexually abused and runs away from Alphonso and Mr-------- to become a destitute without a home. If we agree that destitute are a menace to the society, then Nettie has become a menace in her bid to escape or avoid sexual abuse as a child.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**5.1 Findings**

Based on the research questions, aim and objective of this study, a number of findings were made while carrying out this research.

In the first place, a careful reading of the texts shows that a girl-child sexual abuse is mainly caused by family/parental abandonment. When parents abandon their children, in this case their daughters at a young age without care and regard, the girls are exposed to all manner of vices especially sexual abuse. In fact, parental irresponsibility and abandonment have been discovered as the most factor that causes girl-child sexual abuse. Baby T and her sister Fofo were abandoned by their father Kwei which exposed them to sexual abuse. If Kwei had not abandoned his family on the flimsy excuse that Maa Tsuru his wife had bad luck from birth, if Kwei had showed love to his family and live up to his responsibility as a father, he would have been in a position to protect his family and his daughters would not have been exposed to sexual abuse. In the same way, Celie and Nettie do not have parents. But this case, their parents were not irresponsible or abandoned them. Their father was killed by white supremacists earlier in their loves while their mother was always sick. In their case, the society abandoned them and they were inevitably exposed to sexual abuse by Alphonso and Mr------. This study finds that parental abandonment and social neglect are the chief causes of girl-child sexual abuse.

In the second place, this study finds that sexual abuse happens as a result of the existence of paedophiles in the society. Paedophiles are men who are attracted sexually to children. When these paedophiles see unprotected children, the first thing that comes to their mind is how to sexually abuse them. Paedophiles are classless, that is, they can belong to any class of the society. Some of them are highly placed while some of them are lowly placed. Although Kpakpo is Maa Tsuru’s lover, it does not stop him from sexually abusing Maa Tsuru’s daughter Baby T. In the same way, Onko is described as a wealthy uncle to Baby T who lives in the neighbourhood. One would expect such a wealthy person to live above such base behaviour as sexually abusing a young girl. But Onko abuses Baby T sexually not minding his position in the society. This study finds that most men guilty of sexually abusing a girl-child are paedophiles and they are classless.

In the third place, this study finds that most girl-child victims of sexual abuse are helpless and can easily embrace any form of vice in the society. Therefore, sexually abuse for them serves as an entry point or initiation point to delve into many social vices like prostitution, drugs, gambling and pornography. *Faceless,* Baby T becomes a prostitute after she was sexually abused by Kpakpo and Onko. In the same way, her experiences lead her sister Fofo to run away from home to embrace prostitutions, drugs, and pornography. Celie embraces lesbianism when she finds love and admires Shug Avery. Her change of attitude towards men is because of her experiences in the hands of Alphonso and Mr-----------. She believes that she can never be happy or find love in the hands of a man. Therefore, she tries to find love in a fellow lady thereby embracing lesbianism. This study finds that most girl-child victims of sexual abuse always embrace other end up embracing vices in the society.

In the fourth place, this study finds that many girl-child victims of sexual abuse develop hatred and become insensitive towards the society. Baby T and her sister, after they were sexually abused developed hatred towards people around them and the lager society. In the same way, Celie and Nettie develop hatred for people around them. While Nettie runs away, Celie hates men. All the girl-child victims of sexual abuse in the novels suffer from one form of social alienation or another. It is a psychological problem all over the world which is naturally inflicted on those female children who suffer sexual abuse. From the texts studied, this research fins that girl-child victims of sexual abuse suffer from one form of social alienation or another. They also hate the society and do everything to get back at the society.

**5.2 Conclusion**

This study has researched into the causes, effects and nature of girl-child sexual abuse. From all indications, girl-child sexual abuse is a social menace which must be eradicated to save the society from its ugly, dangerous effects. The government of various societies, the authorities concerned should do more to ensure that paedophiles, rapists and all those who indulge in sexual abuse of the girl-child are brought to book. Government’s involvement will go a long way to ensure that the girl-child is protected from sexual predators. For example, if the government in Ghana is active and concerned about the welfare of the girl-child, a place like Sodom and Gomorrah would not exist. Because the government does not care or show any form of interest in the welfare of the girl-child, Sodom and Gomorrah thrives in business and becomes a place for the destruction of young people. Every government has a ministry of Social Welfare or Youths and Sports. These ministries should do more to take care of children, take them off the streets and ensure they get a decent education. There are millions of abandoned children all over the world who live on the streets of major world metropolis. Majority of these children end up as prostitutes, gangsters, armed robbers and drug peddlers in the absence of any care from the government or parents. Also, Nettie runs away to become a street child because she would never succumb to sexual abuse. It is therefore advised that the government at all levels should through their agencies and ministries protect the girl-child, show more interest in their welfare too.

Non-governmental organizations should also be committed to the challenges facing the girl-child. In *Faceless,* it is Kabria’s non-governmental organization MUTE that rescues Fofo, gives her protection and a new life. Those who run non-governmental organization for girls should concentrate more on sexually abused children because there are many of them in the society. These non-governmental organizations should adopt a grass root approach to go into the villages and local places to identify girls who have been abandoned and are engaged in several vices among which is prostitution and drug abuse. Overall, sexual abuse of the girl-child as represented in literature provides an opportunity for scholars and researchers to beam their searchlight on the plight of female children abandoned in the society. It is a clarion call which demands the participation and involvement of everyone including religious groups.

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