

The Role of Social Workers In Child Protection In Nigeria Towards Illegal Child Adoption.

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ABSTRACT

Children are the greatest gift to humanity and Childhood is a critical and susceptible stage of human development as it holds the possibility to the future development of any society (Alte&totala, 2014). Illegal child adoption is thus a major threat to global development and its resultant damages have a ripple effect which cuts across boundaries of geography, race, class, religion and culture in both developed and mostly developing nations. Some children are particularly vulnerable because of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability or social status. Illegal child adoption occurs in every country in the world in a variety of forms and settings and is often deeply rooted in cultural, economic, and social practices. And no country is immune, whether rich or poor (Pinheiro, 2006). (WHO, 2008). ILO (2006) estimates that 218 million children were involved in child labor in 2004, of whom 126 million were engaged in hazardous work and also estimates from 2000 suggest that 5.7 million were in forced or bonded labor, 1.8 million in prostitution and pornography, and 1.2 million were victims of illegal child adoption (Fyfe, 2007). Only 2.4% of the world's children are legally protected from illegal adoption and corporal punishment in all settings.

According to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2002), social work is defined as “a profession that promotes social change, social justice, problem-solving in human relationships, identification of origin, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work” (Hare, 2004).At this stage of the research, Illegal child adoption connotes or translates to child labor, child abuse and child trafficking that result to child protection issues.The aim of this research is to explore child protection strategies within the context of illegal child adoption, using the perspectives of social workers' role about child welfare and assessment of children in need. The research objective is to understand social workers' views on child protection work that guide their assessment of illegal child adoption. And finally, to conceptualize the ways in which social workers can help in tackling illegal child adoption issues.

To understand the level of advocacy and public awareness that is employed towards changing the definition of what constitutes illegal child adoption and its impact on families. The researcher seeks to apply qualitative research methodology in other to capture the subjective experiences of the research participants using collective case study. To explore child protection strategies within the context of Illegal child adoption, using the perspectives of a social worker's role, data will be collected from qualified social workers in other to gain insight into a social worker's views on child protection towards illegal child adoptions through semi-structured interviews.

Keywords: Illegal child adoption; Child protection; Social workers; Role; Nigeria