

**Patriarchal Authority, Gendered Displacement, and Women's Entry into
Transactional Prostitution: A Comparative Analysis of Kannywood Films
Kona Gari and *Ankon Biki* (Korarriya)**

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Abstract

*Film strongly shapes societal perceptions by conveying powerful images, messages, and moral narratives to a wide audience. Particularly in African cinema and Kannywood (Hausa-language Nigerian cinema) in particular prostitution is often portrayed at the intersection of poverty, gender inequality, and socio-political dynamics. This paper examines transactional prostitution the exchange of sex for material gain as depicted in *Kona Gari*, and *Ankon Biki* (Korarriya). Using Social Constructionism and Feminist Theory, it explores these films' portrayals of the dangers and moral complications of prostitution, the influence of patriarchal rejection, and the wider societal implications. It also draws on Differential Association Theory, Social Bond Theory, and Differential Opportunity Theory to critique how Kannywood both reflects and potentially shapes public attitudes toward transactional sex. The analysis argues that patriarchal structures and gendered displacement serve as key catalysts for women's turn toward prostitution.*

Keywords: *film, prostitution, transactional sex, gender dynamics, patriarchy, Kannywood, Nigeria, societal attitudes, moral narrative*

Introduction

Media and film are critical tools for socialization and public awareness used by entities such as the National Orientation Agency and the Ministry of Information and National Orientation to address issues like HIV/AIDS, anti-corruption, and poverty. Films both mirror societal norms and shape them, especially through archetypal portrayals of women. Prostitutes are often depicted as moral objects commodified rather than humanized. Hirschman and Stern (1994) argue that the very labels used for female prostitutes render them as objects confined to their sexual function, stripping them of personhood and complexity.

In Kannywood, prostitution frequently emerges against a backdrop of urban poverty, gender inequality, and survival imperatives. Some films depict prostitution as a survival mechanism; others emphasize psychological trauma, exploitation, and moral decline. This study focuses on *Kona Gari* (2012), and *Ankon Biki* (2018), *Korariya* (2018), analyzing how they portray the perils of transactional sex and convey societal lessons regarding gender, morality, and economic hardship. Kannywood reveals the tensions within northern Nigerian patriarchal families, particularly how young women often marginalized or expelled due to moral transgressions may be driven to transactional sex as a result of displacement.

Hausa-language cinema, known as Kannywood, has emerged as a significant cultural force in Nigeria, offering a window into the socio-political dynamics of northern Nigerian society. At the heart of some Kannywood narratives is the portrayal of women's struggles with patriarchal systems that dictate their roles, behaviours, and life choices. One of the recurring themes in Kannywood narratives is the marginalization of young women by male authority figures, often resulting in their expulsion from the home. This forced displacement, often depicted as a response to perceived moral or familial transgressions, has been shown to push these women toward prostitution as a means of survival. In Nigerian films, prostitution is often depicted as a survival mechanism for women in helpless, vulnerable, and economically disadvantaged situations. Many movies however, present prostitution in a morally ambiguous light, where the protagonist is depicted as a victim or a survivor rather than as a criminal or immoral individual. This nuanced portrayal complicates the viewer's understanding of the reality of prostitution, potentially leading to the normalization of such behaviour in society (Abah, 2013).

While most films focus on the emotional and social consequences of prostitution, others glamorize the material benefits, and the perceived power associated with transactional sex. Such portrayals may unintentionally encourage young viewers, particularly women, to see prostitution as an acceptable means of earning, survival or solution to economic hardship (Soni, 2014). This article engages with a selection of two (2) Kannywood films to analyze how patriarchal structures governing family life in northern Nigeria are represented on screen and how they contribute to the phenomenon of transactional sex.

Literature Review: The Political Economy of Prostitution; Social Contexts and Global Estimates

Prostitution has a long history, dating back to the earliest mythological records. The Books of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi suggest that prostitutes were common among Jews centuries before Christ. The Code of Hammurabi included provisions to protect the inheritance rights of prostitutes. Documentation of prostitution can be found in Egypt and Greece, where Courtesans existed five hundred years before Christ. References to prostitution can be found in the Solonian Constitution, which was created in the early 6th century BC (Raleigh, 2015). Nonetheless, history presents notable exceptions. Some women, such as Theodora who rose from sex work to become empress of Byzantium and wife of Emperor Justinian I have leveraged their positions to gain wealth and political influence. These cases, however, are outliers and do not reflect the structural realities faced by the majority of sex workers globally.

Prostitution has long been shaped by the interplay of economic pressures, social norms, and shifting sexual values. In some historical and cultural contexts, it has even been perceived as a mechanism for preserving family structure and social stability. However, the overwhelming majority of women enter prostitution under conditions of coercion, economic vulnerability, or limited opportunity. In many societies, this results in enduring social marginalization and restricted prospects for upward mobility. The sexual services rendered by female prostitutes are often met with societal disapproval, further entrenching their exclusion.

Economic and social forces continue to drive the evolution of prostitution across contexts. In many countries, it remains deeply stigmatized especially when participation is coerced or economically motivated. Despite this, prostitution constitutes a significant, albeit under-acknowledged, component of the global economy.

In Southeast Asia, for instance, the sex industry is estimated to contribute between 2% and 14% of national GDP in countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines (Eser, 2025). In Japan, where prostitution is technically illegal yet widely tolerated, the industry reportedly generates up to \$83 billion annually (WorldMetrics, 2025). In Germany, where sex work is legal and regulated, approximately 400,000 prostitutes serve around 1.2 million clients daily, producing an estimated \$18 billion in annual revenue (Sorooptimist International, 2014).

Globally, the illegal prostitution economy is estimated to generate approximately \$186 billion annually (WorldMetrics, 2025). However, broader estimates that include legal forms of commercial sex such as pornography, cam work, and adult entertainment place the value of the global sex economy at up to \$1 trillion, or around 1% of global GDP (Eser, 2025). Estimating the number of individuals involved in prostitution remains challenging due to legal ambiguities and underreporting. Current global estimates suggest that between 20 and 30 million people are engaged in prostitution (WorldMetrics, 2025), although older figures placed this number as high as 42 million (UN, 2009; Goldman, 2013). Notably, up to 90% of sex workers are believed to operate within illegal or informal sectors, often under the control of third parties such as pimps, traffickers, or other exploitative intermediaries (Goldman, 2013; Eser, 2025).

Prostitution is not a phenomenon limited to developing countries; the global scale of prostitution is staggering. It has significant societal issues. The presence of prostitutes in the world's major urban centres, particularly in industrialized countries, has progressed from a rare occurrence to a serious global concern (Ogunkan et al., 2010). In Africa, where prostitution is relatively new compared to Europe and other industrialized countries, the presence of many prostitutes has become a major issue in major towns and cities.

Transactional prostitution a situation of exchanging sex for money, shelter, gifts or protection is often portrayed as survival strategy but sometimes glamorized in media. This duality contributes to reduced stigma while also downplaying risks (Weitzer, 2005). Research has shown that the portrayal of prostitution in the media often influences viewers' attitudes towards the practice. For instance, the glamorization of prostitutes as "victims of circumstance" or as empowered individuals can reduce public stigmatization but also lead to misconceptions about the real risks involved (Weitzer, 2005). In Nigeria, terms like "Italian Connection," "sex work," or "Ashawo business" are used to describe the phenomenon (Ogunkan et al. citing Obinna, 2009). Public and scholarly concerns have been raised by the growth of prostitution rings in the nation as well as the spread of sex worker hotels and brothels in urban areas. Women who work in prostitution are more likely to experience hazardous working conditions, become unwell, be exposed to infectious diseases, and suffer from poor nutrition because they have less access to quality healthcare. Women and girls who engage in rape-like prostitution experiences mental and emotional harm; many of them suffer

from PTSD, anxiety, melancholy, insomnia, irritability, flashbacks, emotional numbness, and hyper-alertness.

Legal and Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Prostitution in Nigeria

Prostitution in Nigeria is criminalized under multiple legal frameworks that vary regionally. In the northern states governed by Sharia law, sex work is explicitly prohibited, carrying severe penalties. In contrast, southern states enforce broader punitive provisions under the Criminal Code, which similarly criminalizes prostitution (DailyPost, 2025). The dual legal system comprising Penal/Sharia Law in the North and the Criminal Code in the South reflects Nigeria's complex legal pluralism. This framework was reaffirmed in 2025 when Nigerian courts dismissed efforts to legalize or decriminalize sex work, reinforcing the country's strict stance against prostitution (DailyPost, 2025). Despite criminalization, estimates suggest that around 410,000 sex workers were active in Nigeria as of 2019, many of whom are young women and minors (Independent, 2019). The legal status of independent sex work remains ambiguous, existing in a grey area that complicates enforcement and protection efforts.

While countries such as New Zealand have adopted decriminalization, improving safety and autonomy for sex workers. In contrast, the Nordic model like Sweden, Norway, France among others criminalizes buying sex but not selling, aiming to reduce demand while offering social support to exit prostitution. Critics argue that both full criminalization and partial criminalization increase risk, stigma, and exploitation for workers (TIMES). Nigeria is also a signatory to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol), which underscores its commitment to combating human trafficking and exploitation within the sex industry (UNODC, 2010). This international obligation strengthens Nigeria's criminal approach toward prostitution, especially where coercion and trafficking are concerned. The criminalization and societal rejection of prostitution in Nigeria are strongly influenced by the nation's predominant religious and moral values, primarily rooted in Christianity and Islam. Both religions hold conservative views on sexuality, which inform Nigeria's social norms and legislative frameworks. As a result, prostitution is widely stigmatized and considered morally unacceptable.

The adverse consequences associated with prostitution in Nigeria extend beyond legal concerns. Public health challenges are significant, including heightened transmission rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as syphilis,

genital herpes, human papillomavirus (HPV), chlamydia, bacterial vaginitis, scabies, hepatitis B, and HIV/AIDS (Akus, 2012; Gungul & Audu, 2014). Moreover, prostitution is frequently linked to broader social issues such as increased crime rates, family disruption, and human trafficking. These outcomes collectively impact the socio-cultural, religious, and moral fabric of Nigerian society, reinforcing the perception of prostitution as harmful both socially and in public health terms.

Women, Prostitution, and Society

Hausa cultural proverbs such as “*Mata, Adon Gari*” (“women beautify the community”) and “*Mata iyayen gida, mata iyayen maza*” (“women as managers and nurturers of the home”) illustrate the dual expectations and marginalization women face in society. Women are crucial to the growth and development of any nation and the world at large, constituting more than half of the population and being homemakers, custodians of social, cultural and fundamental values. Despite contributing significantly to development, women often occupy subordinate roles due to cultural norms, discrimination, and systemic neglect.

Davies (1999, cited in Alokun, 2013) describes the poverty trap binding women, compounded by violence and exploitation. Prostitution, though termed the world’s oldest profession, is better viewed as the oldest oppression violating fundamental human rights (www.soroptimist.org, 2014). Terminological distinctions between “prostitutes” (a socially stigmatizing label) and “sex worker” (recognizing agency and employment) are essential to reframing discourse around transactional sex.

The term “prostitution” derives from the Latin *prostituta*, meaning “to offer for sale.” The practice includes full-time sex work, auxiliary services, and day or night labour. Despite its economic significance, prostitution presents profound challenges to societal morals, public health, and the wellbeing of the women involved, often threatening their personal integrity and social standing. Many women enter prostitution after enduring childhood sexual abuse, socioeconomic deprivation, or other forms of trauma. In the United States, the average age of entry is approximately 15 years, though involvement often begins earlier (Soroptimist International, 2014). Globally, it is estimated that 75% of sex workers are aged between 13 and 25, with a typical age of entry ranging from 15 to 16 years (WIFITalents, 2024; Eser, 2025). This early initiation is frequently linked to poverty, displacement, and histories of abuse, including incest and

sexual violence by family members or acquaintances (Goldmann, 2013; UNICEF, 2023).

Prostitution carries significant physical, psychological, and social risks. Women involved in sex work face societal stigma, increased vulnerability to violence, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and a lack of viable long-term career options. These dangers are compounded by the demands and control exerted by clients, pimps, and traffickers. Approximately 70–75% of sex workers worldwide report experiencing violence or intimidation, often perpetrated by clients, intermediaries, or law enforcement agents (Eser, 2025; WorldMetrics, 2025). In Nigeria, this vulnerability is particularly acute: 52.5% of brothel-based sex workers in Abuja reported experiencing violence within a six-month period, while street-based workers in Uyo and Lagos face even higher incidences of physical and sexual assault, extortion, and police abuse (BMC Public Health, 2022; Ajol.info). Moreover, studies indicate that up to 63% of Nigerian sex workers began sex work before the age of 19 (Eser, 2025).

The rise of the digital age has further complicated these dynamics. The proliferation of pornography and online exploitative content has expanded the reach of the global sex industry, which is estimated to generate over \$100 billion annually worldwide (Soroptimist International, 2014). Over 300,000 pornographic websites actively attract potential clients, normalizing and commercializing sexual content at unprecedented scales (Indian Strategic Knowledge Online, 2012). This media exposure influences public behavior, especially among young people, often perpetuating harmful stereotypes and facilitating exploitation.

Types of Prostitution and Social Perceptions

Prostitution manifests in diverse forms, ranging from street-based sex work to high-end escort services. Street-level prostitution remains the most visible and hazardous, disproportionately involving young, marginalized, and vulnerable women who face heightened risks of violence, addiction, mental illness, and poor health outcomes (Raleigh, 2015; Eser, 2025). These women, often at the bottom of the sex work hierarchy, navigate daily threats that are rarely experienced in more concealed forms of prostitution. Although higher-tier arrangements—such as escort services or “call girl” bookings are frequently glamorized in media and popular discourse, they are not immune to exploitation and abuse. Even women operating in these ostensibly privileged spaces report experiencing violence or

coercion, with studies showing that abuse occurs as frequently as twice annually (Goldmann, 2013; Eser, 2025).

The pervasive assumption that high-end prostitution offers safety is largely a myth. While financial returns differ dramatically street-based workers in developing regions may earn between \$20–\$50 per encounter, compared to \$150–\$250 for indoor or brothel-based workers and upwards of \$3,000 for elite escorts in metropolitan areas the risks of psychological harm, violence, and exploitation persist across all levels (WorldMetrics, 2025; Eser, 2025). Even in jurisdictions where sex work is legalized and regulated, such as the Netherlands or Nevada, protections are uneven. Nevada’s legal brothels, for instance, reported \$14 million in revenue in 2020, yet these establishments represent a fraction of the national or global market and offer only partial safeguards to workers (Goldmann, 2013; Eser, 2025).

Prostitution is fundamentally shaped by structural gender inequalities. Globally, women engaged in sex work—especially those in street-based or pimp-controlled contexts often do so under the pressure of poverty, abuse, racism, and limited economic opportunities. Despite their centrality to the discourse, women’s voices are frequently marginalized in policymaking processes that concern them. The allure of fast money and a glamorous lifestyle often draws young women, particularly adolescent girls, into exploitative arrangements, obscuring the often brutal reality of the trade.

Ultimately, the sex industry reflects and reproduces broader social hierarchies. Whether street-based or elite, prostitution cannot be detached from the structural conditions that render certain populations more vulnerable to exploitation. A nuanced understanding must therefore consider not only the visible harms of street-level sex work but also the concealed risks embedded within so-called "high-class" forms of prostitution.

Places and Players of Prostitution

The prostitution industry is driven by multiple interconnected factors including male consumers, pimps, brothels, escort services, clubs, and cultural norms. Although some sources mention four key factors, a broader view identifies six: male consumers, pimps, brothels, escort services, clubs, and cultures. Cultures often normalize prostitution, indirectly creating a demand for victims. These

factors collectively fuel the demand for prostitution, largely driven by the belief that male consumers are the primary demand source.

Brothels are establishments where clients pay for sex with prostitutes. Clubs, hotels, and recreational facilities serve as social gathering places that indirectly facilitate prostitution. Hotels, which provide lodging, food, and other services, play a critical role in enabling prostitution businesses in urban areas. Pimps, also called flesh mongers or panders, manage prostitutes' activities to profit from their earnings. In some countries, the term extends to landlords, partners, or exploiters of forced prostitutes (Cockayne, 2001, cited in Ogunkan et al., 2010). While pimps are mostly men, some women operate in this role, referred to as *mamas*, *madames*, or *magajiyya* in Hausa (Ogunkan et al., 2010). Johns, or clients, purchase sexual services. When prostitution is consensual and legal, the client is simply a customer; however, if the prostitute is underage, the client is also a pedophile. Johns often face fewer legal consequences than prostitutes or pimps, reflecting patriarchal and misogynistic societal attitudes that blame women for prostitution rather than the men who buy sex.

Pimps often "control the actions and live off the proceeds of one or more women who work the street," sometimes maintaining "stables" of several women (*Kawali or Ubanbariki*). In a U.S. study across seven cities, 58% of prostitutes reported violence by pimps, and 36% reported abusive clients (Soroptimist International, 2014). Women in prostitution are repeatedly beaten and murdered at disproportionately high rates 18 times more likely than comparable women (Soroptimist International, 2014). An international study across nine countries found 71% of prostitutes were physically abused and 63% raped by customers (Raleigh, 2015). Typically, street prostitutes are poor, female single parents, while johns tend to be married suburban men in skilled or white-collar jobs. Johns (*Maidadiro or Dandadiro*) often demonstrate entitlement and seek brief encounters devoid of responsibility or reciprocity (Raleigh, 2015; Soroptimist International, 2014). Prostitutes suffer endless and widespread abuse and violence, stigma, and police abuse, especially among street-based workers. Coping mechanisms include: bribing police, client screening, sexual gratifications, forming cult like protective peer circles or networks etc.

To cut the long story, male consumers, pimps, brothels, clubs, hotels, and cultural acceptance drive prostitution. Law enforcement increasingly focuses on supply rather than demand.

The Depiction of Transactional Prostitution in Hausa and Nigerian Movies

Hausa films (*Kannywood*) form a vital part of Nigeria's cinema, often exploring family, morality, and social issues. Increasingly, they portray prostitution, typically dramatizing characters who engage in transactional sex due to homelessness, financial hardship, or societal pressure. Films like *Kona Gari* (2012), and *Ankon Biki (Korarriya)* (2018), highlight the human stories behind prostitution but may underrepresent the emotional, physical, and psychological toll involved, potentially minimizing its dangers.

English Nigerian films (*Nollywood*) often portray prostitution as a route to wealth and social status for young women in urban settings. Films such as *The Other Woman* (2015) and *Jenifa's Diary* (2014) depict transactional sex as a path to social mobility. Both Social Constructionism and Feminist Theory critique these portrayals, emphasizing the emotional harm, physical risks, social stigmatization, and reinforcement of gender inequality that transactional prostitution entails. These films act as cautionary tales, encouraging reflection on prostitution's causes and gendered impact.

Makate Mutu (2021) vividly portrays prostitution's emotional cost, showing that while it may temporarily alleviate poverty, it often leads to long-term psychological harm. Physically, women in prostitution face exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other health risks. This underscores the vulnerability of women in transactional relationships and the need for systemic interventions to address prostitution's root causes.

Childhood Victimization, Mental, Physical Health, and Emotional Consequences of Prostitution

Childhood sexual abuse strongly predicts prostitution involvement (Simons & Whitbeck, 1991, cited in Raleigh, 2015). Female prostitutes report higher rates of childhood sexual abuse than the general population, with abuse acting as a catalyst toward prostitution and other deviant behaviors. Other drivers include poverty, family responsibility, addiction, lack of education, and systemic collapse due to

war, famine, or economic crises.

Violence is common among prostitutes, especially street workers. Pimps often physically and psychologically break women through hitting, starving, raping, and verbal abuse before exploiting them (Sterk & Elifson, cited in Raleigh, 2015). Sterk and Elifson cited in (Raleigh, 2015) reported that 89% of their sample of

prostitutes with a pimp had been physically assaulted by their pimps. Often times, the abuse women and girls experienced in childhood becomes a constant, pervasive reality in prostitution. Women who experienced early sexual abuse are at risk for a later recurrence of sexual and physical trauma. Incest, rape, and prostitution may be seen as points on a continuum of sexual exploitation and abuse. Early abuse often recurs, creating a continuum of sexual exploitation from childhood into prostitution. Films glamorizing prostitution frequently omit health risks like STIs and emotional trauma, obscuring the harsh realities faced by sex workers.

Health implications are well-documented by scholars such as Raymond (1999), Hughes (2000), Cockayne (2001), and Liberator (2004), cited in Ogunkan et al. (2010). Prostitution poses high risks for sexual abuse and HIV/AIDS transmission. Emotional trauma often exceeds physical violence, with 90% of 119 women in one study reporting negative emotional experiences, 73% describing it as emotionally painful, and 77% noting decreased self-esteem since entering prostitution (Raleigh, 2015). One adult prostitute equated her childhood sexual assault to rape, illustrating the trauma's depth.

Children of prostitutes also suffer health consequences. Over two-thirds of female prostitutes have children, averaging 2.25 to 3.4 each (Weiner, 1996; Dalla, 2004, cited in Raleigh, 2015). Addressing physical and mental health needs is critical for improving the well-being of prostitutes.

Causes: Entry into and Exit from Prostitution

Entry into prostitution is multifaceted, involving poor social interactions, family instability, economic hardship, addiction, psychological disorders, desire for new experiences, and coercion (Dalla, 2002; Leidholdt, 2004; Williamson & Baker, 2009; Raleigh, 2015). New entrants are often "turned out" by pimps or veteran prostitutes during initiation (*kawali, dandaudu, magajiya*).

Factors linked to entry include hunger, poverty, parental neglect, greed, broken homes, poor upbringing, media influence, godlessness, distorted values, and ignorance. Street prostitutes frequently feel compelled by circumstances to sell sex, sometimes viewing it as a rational choice. The themes of trauma, disruption, and abandonment in childhood, which result in isolation and feelings of separation, are central to narratives of juveniles who become involved in prostitution. Many run away from their homes, including treatment centers, foster

homes, and group homes, which places them at an increased risk of being targeted by a pimp. This running away is not an act of defiance but a last resort to self-protection, as they perceive being homeless as less dangerous than their home environment. Due to their young age and having come from chaotic environments, these children often lack problem-solving skills and the ability to meet their basic survival needs, including food and shelter. This not only makes them more vulnerable to pimps but also forces them to turn to “survival sex” to meet their basic needs. The International Labour Organization (ILO) published alarming findings in March 2024: Forced Commercial Sexual Exploitation (FCSE) accounts for 73% of illegal profits from non-state forced labour, even though it only comprises 27% of the total victims. Profits per victim: FCSE: \$27,252/year. Other forced labour: \$3,687/year (ILO, 2024; Statista, 2024). The ILO estimates \$236 billion in total illegal profits from all forced labour much of which remains untaxed, unregulated, and steeped in gender-based violence.

Juvenile prostitutes often report a greater history of running away and experiencing childhood emotional abuse than adult entry prostitutes. Adult prostitutes, however, experience more serious drug and alcohol problems than those who entered prostitution in adolescence.

Trauma, disruption, and abandonment in childhood underlie many juveniles’ narratives, leading to running away from homes or care facilities to escape abuse or neglect. Homelessness increases vulnerability to pimps and forces juveniles into “survival sex” for shelter and food.

Juvenile prostitutes report more childhood emotional abuse and runaway behavior than adults, whereas adult prostitutes exhibit more severe substance abuse issues.

Summaries of *Kona Gari*, and *Ankon Biki*, (*Korarriya*)

Kona Gari, produced by Usman Mu’azu in 2012 and directed by Aminu Saira, assisted by Ali Gumzak and Kamal S. Alkali delves into the issue of prostitution in society, focusing on the personal and societal consequences of this profession. The story centers around Mansir (Ali Nuhu), a young man from a humble background who is betrothed to a girl named Sa’adiya. During a business trip from Kano to Kaduna, Mansir becomes captivated by the beauty of Aisha (Maryam Muhammad), a street and brothel prostitute, whom he encounters while arriving late in the city. Intrigued by her beauty, he approaches her, asking about the terms of her work. He ends up paying her more than the agreed-upon price but

refuses to sleep with her, which sparks her suspicion. Aisha, curious about his intentions, confronts him, leading Mansir to express his admiration for her beauty and his desire to marry her, though he wants to learn more about her past first.

Aisha's beauty leads Mansir and the audience to wonder how someone so attractive could end up in prostitution. The story unfolds as Mansir, now obsessed with finding Aisha, goes from one brothel to another, encountering various prostitutes and learning about the tactics and strategies they use to conceal their identities. His search is fraught with challenges, including an arrest by the police, from which Aisha intervenes to secure his release, revealing her powerful connections with influential figures, such as senior police officers, highlighting the pervasive corruption and influence that ties prostitution to powerful sectors of society.

Aisha eventually opens up to Mansir, revealing her tragic backstory. She was once a respectable girl from a reputable family, raised with Islamic values. However, her life took a dramatic turn when she fell in love with a boy, Kamal (Adam Maigaskiya), who lured her into premarital sex and impregnated her. When her parents found out about the pregnancy, her father harshly rejected her, forcing neighbours, and the community, including his own relatives, to turn against her. Her father physically assaulted her, and despite her mother's pleas, he refused to forgive her. Aisha's life spirals into further tragedy when, after being chased and hit with a car by her father, she suffers a miscarriage and is left homeless, eventually escaping from hospital and turning to prostitution for survival.

In her journey, Aisha meets Fa'izan Kano (Hauwa Waraka), another lady with a similar story of unwanted pregnancy, and the two become prostitutes, assuming fake names to conceal their identities. Mansir, moved by Aisha's story, asks her a poignant question: if she were to die without repenting, where would she go? Aisha answers "Hell," without any hesitation acknowledging the weight of her choices. Mansir then works to convince her that it's not too late to change her life and leave prostitution behind.

The film also introduces Sameera (Maryam Gidado), another prostitute who shares her regrets about entering the trade. She feels that she has lost her moral integrity, self esteem and the sense of pride that she once had. Through her, the film explores the psychological toll prostitution takes on women, as they gradually lose their sense of self and struggle to break free from the cycle.

In summary, *Kona Gari* presents a critical examination of prostitution, focusing on the personal stories of individuals trapped in this lifestyle due to societal pressures, family rejection, and personal choices. The film addresses themes of redemption, moral decay, and the possibility of change, while also highlighting the impact of societal corruption and the importance of self-awareness and repentance. Through the characters' journeys, *Kona Gari* explores the human cost of prostitution and offers a call for personal transformation and societal accountability. The film explores corruption as Aisha uses powerful connections to protect herself, and psychological struggles through characters like Sameera (Maryam Gidado), who regrets losing her moral integrity. *Kona Gari* critically portrays prostitution as a product of societal failures and personal tragedy, emphasizing themes of redemption, morality, and transformation.

Ankon Biki is a film written by Auwal M. Sarki, produced by Ishaq MIA, and directed by Ali Gumzak, which focuses on the cultural practice of "Ashoebi", Anko in Hausa a tradition where people wear the same attire for a special event, particularly among women. The story revolves around Fa'iza (Sadiya Kabala), a young girl from a humble background, who is betrothed to Mubarak (Adamu Zango), a struggling but determined young man. Fa'iza, influenced by her ambitious and materialistic friend Bintu (Hafsat Idris), pressures her fiancé into securing an event hall for pre-wedding celebrations, despite their financial limitations.

Fa'iza's parents disapprove of her friendship with Bintu due to her poor character, but Fa'iza persists. She convinces Mubarak to secure the event hall, though he is unable to afford it. When they arrive at the venue, it turns out the hall had already been booked by someone else, leaving them stranded. Fa'iza and Bintu resort to bargaining with the hall's manager, who demands sexual favours in exchange for the venue. After much persuasion, Fa'iza reluctantly agrees, only to be caught on camera which was made available to Mubarak, who brought it to the wedding venue for her father to see and went on to cancel the wedding and demands a refund of his expenses.

Fa'iza's father, humiliated by her actions, disowns her, comparing her to a prostitute and declaring that prostitutes are better because they engage in the profession out of necessity, while Fa'iza did so for status. Fa'iza leaves home and, filled with resentment, vows to succeed in the world of prostitution to punish her father. She adopts the name "Korarriya" (meaning "the one who was sent away")

and enters the world of prostitution, determined to excel and eventually return home with an unwanted pregnancy to make her father feel the pain she endured. Fa'iza encounters Zee (Fati Shu'uma) in a brothel but they part ways due to conflicting values. She later meets Dan Agulla (Aminu Shariff), a driver who camps her. Her father, regretful of his harsh decision, searches for her but is unable to recognize her when they meet in a motor park, as Fa'iza has covered her face with a Niqab.

As time passes, Fa'iza begins to feel remorse for her actions and realizes that punishing her father would also harm her innocent mother, who had done nothing wrong. She calls her mother, who pleads for her to return home, and Fa'iza promises to do so. Eventually, she returns home, pregnant and ashamed, and gives birth outside wedlock. Her father acknowledged his mistake, and the family seeks mutual forgiveness. Fa'iza also visits her old friend Bintu in an abandoned classroom of a public school, revealing that she was responsible for the friend's downfall. She explains that the evil sown by her friend grew and bore consequences, and she paid her back for the bad training she had received. The film concludes with Fa'iza and her family reconciling and seeking forgiveness for their actions.

Ankon Biki summarily, revolves mainly around Fa'iza (Sadiya Kabala), who was pressured into securing an expensive wedding hall by her ambitious friend Bintu (Hafsat Idris). When the hall manager demands sexual favours, Fa'iza reluctantly complies, only to be exposed and disowned by her father. Resentful, she turns to prostitution under the name *Korarriya* to punish her family but eventually seeks forgiveness and reconciliation.

The films highlights the consequences of materialism, familial rejection, and personal remorse, offering a nuanced perspective on prostitution's social and emotional dimensions.

Lessons from Hausa Movies on Prostitution

Hausa and Nigerian films often depict prostitution as a grim and complex social issue, while simultaneously highlighting the urgent need for social change and women's empowerment. These films expose the systemic factors driving transactional prostitution, prompting critical reflection on societal structures that perpetuate gender inequality and economic exploitation. Key lessons emphasized include the importance of women's education, entrepreneurship, and financial

independence as essential tools to break free from the cycle of prostitution. Moreover, these films advocate for stronger support of women's rights and the urgent re-orientation of deeply entrenched patriarchal systems. The portrayal of prostitution in African cinema underscores the broader need for social and cultural transformation, particularly addressing gender-based violence, impulsive paternal decisions, economic disparities, and the stigmatization of sex workers.

Reasons for Prostitution: Observations and Lessons from *Kona Gari*, and *Ankon Biki*, (*Korarriya*)

Before delving into specific reasons for prostitution, it is important to acknowledge that these films collectively offer nuanced insights into the social realities that drive women into prostitution, as well as the consequences of these choices on individuals and communities.

Drastic and Regrettable Actions or Decisions by Parents

The characters Aisha and Faiza from the selected films reveal the delicate nature of parenting and the profound impact parental decisions have on their children's lives. Parents must recognize that children are not mere assets but also liabilities requiring careful nurturing and guidance. The Qur'an explicitly instructs believers about the challenges within family relationships and the trials posed by children and wealth:

"O ye who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: so, beware of them! But if ye forgive and overlook, and cover up (their faults), verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Your riches and your children may be but a trial: but in the Presence of Allah is the highest Reward. So, fear Allah as much as ye can; listen and obey and spend in charity for the benefit of your own soul and those saved from the covetousness of their own souls, - they are the ones that achieve prosperity." (Qur'an 64:14-16).

In the films, the remorse of parents over their earlier neglect or harsh decisions is palpable. They desperately wish to reclaim their daughters, but often the damage has been irreparable embodying the proverb, "it is too late to cry when the head is cut off." The Hausa saying "ka haifi da..baka haifi halinsa ba" underscores the distinction between biological birth and character creation, emphasizing acceptance of destiny and focusing on proper upbringing.

Parents like Aisha and Faiza's have made regrettable decisions, highlighting the delicate nature of parenting. It is crucial for parents to recognize that children are not just assets but also liabilities and should be treated accordingly. Both parents in the selected movies became very remorseful and regretted their earlier actions and decisions. All they wanted is to have their daughters back. But the damage has already been done like the saying is too late to cry when the head is cut off. We must accept destinies and take things as they come to us, not plan for them. As humans, we can only do what is humanly possible. We have a duty to provide the best training and upbringing for our children while seeking guidance from Allah. It is disturbing and embarrassing for a daughter to be pregnant without marriage, but it is also dangerous to drive them away. It is better to have an unwanted pregnancy than a prostituting daughter. Bad is always better than worse. While unwed pregnancy is socially stigmatized and embarrassing, forcibly driving daughters away can result in worse outcomes, such as prostitution. Thus, the lesser evil should be chosen, and parents should prioritize care and guidance.

Lamentation and Remorse by Prostitutes

The films reveal moments when prostitutes' consciences prompt reflection on their life choices, though often these feelings are ignored due to fear or resignation. In *Kona Gari*, the dialogue between Samaeera/Rukky, Aisha Ringim, and Fa'izan Kano presents contrasting perspectives on prostitution.

Fa'iza defends prostitution as a form of freedom a way to live without restrictions or oppressive family structures, such as the tyranny of a mother-in-law. However, she admits ignorance of marital responsibilities. Aisha, on the other hand, argues that prostitution is a degrading and hopeless profession. She contrasts the lives of married women, who are supported and cared for by their husbands, with the struggles of prostitutes, who face isolation, illness, and a lack of support. Aisha highlights the shame and humiliation that prostitutes experience, particularly when they become pregnant or grow old, as they are left with no security or dignity. In contrast, married women are proud of their families, and their children care for them in old age. Conversely, Aisha condemns prostitution as degrading and hopeless, contrasting it with the supportive life of married women, who enjoy family pride, care in old age, and social respect. Prostitutes, she argues, face isolation, illness, shame, and insecurity, particularly when pregnant or aging.

The dialogue also touches on the reasons women enter prostitution, such as poverty, broken homes, and a lack of guidance or understanding. Both Fa'iza and

Aisha reflect on their own experiences, with Aisha expressing a desire to leave prostitution for a better life. Both in *Kona Gari* and Fa'iza in Korarriya reconsidered their actions after realizing the harm they may cause their mothers and others around them.

Both women acknowledge poverty, broken homes, and lack of guidance as primary reasons pushing women into prostitution. Their reflections and regrets reveal the potential for repentance and hope for a better life outside the profession, though this path is fraught with challenges. Ultimately, the discussion paints prostitution as a grim, hopeless profession, leading to shame and suffering, while marriage is portrayed as a more stable, supportive, and dignified life. The dialogue is a reflection on the consequences of choices, repentance, and the hope for a better future away from the world of prostitution.

Financial Need: Struggling to Survive at All Costs

Basic survival necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare are primary drivers that push girls and women into prostitution, especially those who have been expelled from their homes or are victims of domestic violence. Street prostitution exposes them to further risks, including theft, substance abuse, and exploitation.

Research consistently identifies poverty and limited employment opportunities as systemic causes of transactional sex (Raleigh, 2015). For many women, prostitution becomes the only viable option for survival.

Social and Community Disadvantage: Rejection by Society

Society often views prostitutes as immoral and unclean, which leads to stigmatization, segregation, and a sense of abandonment among these women. This societal rejection fuels resentment toward 'respectable' members and fears about reintegration after quitting prostitution.

The lack of legitimate employment opportunities exacerbates their vulnerability, often exposing them to pimps and traffickers (Clawson et al., 2009). This cycle of exclusion and exploitation creates formidable barriers to exiting prostitution.

Marrying a Prostitute: Risk or Sacrifice?

In *Kona Gari*, Mansir questions the point of repentance without acceptance. Marrying a prostitute is viewed as an act of bravery and sacrifice, given the

pervasive stigma attached to sex workers. The films highlight how societal rejection prevents prostitutes from reintegrating and embracing repentance, trapping them in cycles of marginalization and self-destruction.

Deception by Men and the Perpetuation of Gender Inequality

The films depict men as perpetrators of sexual abuse, often escaping accountability. This reinforces harmful stereotypes that women are commodities for male pleasure, perpetuating gender inequality and marginalization.

To combat early pregnancies and prostitution, education programs targeting both boys and girls are essential. Studies show that many boys are first exposed to sexual content through pornography at an average age of 11, well before formal sex education begins (Sorooptimist International, 2014). Early, comprehensive sexual education focusing on respect and healthy relationships is crucial to changing harmful attitudes and reducing violence against women.

The "Kungiya" Circuit: Organized Control

The films reveal the existence of powerful groups or “*kungiya*” that profit from prostitution. These groups impose strict rules, making it easier to enter but extremely difficult to leave. While visible criminals like *Tantiriya* and *Dan Agulla* operate openly, the real beneficiaries include pimps, influential men, and officials who exploit vulnerable women (Clawson et al., 2009; Raleigh, 2015).

Such groups maintain control through intimidation and occult practices, as shown in *Kona Gari*, where quitting prostitution is prevented by threats of madness and social ostracism.

Barriers to Leaving Prostitution

Studies indicate that many prostitutes desire to leave: 67% of street prostitutes want to quit, with 94% in Phoenix, USA, willing to leave if they had alternative employment (Kramer, 2004; Raleigh, 2015). However, economic dependency, lack of education, and fear of retaliation from pimps make leaving challenging.

Psychological issues also hinder successful exit; women unsuccessful in leaving often suffer from mental illnesses like depression and bipolar disorder (Dalla, 2006; Raleigh, 2015). The *Kona Gari* portrayal of Aisha's struggle reflects these real-life difficulties.

Criticism of the Films: Typical and Technical

While the films offer valuable insights, they fall short of portraying the full complexity of prostitution. Important issues like forced marriage and other socio-economic factors were omitted. The films focus more on prostitutes than on pimps or clients, ignoring the violence and victimization many women endure.

Portrayals sometimes inaccurately depict prostitutes as living comfortably, neglecting the severe emotional and physical toll of sex work. Mental health consequences and suicide risks were largely absent.

Technically, the films contain minor but noticeable errors (e.g., microphone visibility, lighting inconsistencies, actors breaking character) that detract from professionalism.

Moreover, narrative inconsistencies such as confusion over character names in *Kona Gari* and failure to address broader societal expectations (like parental pressure for high social status contributing to immoral behaviors) weaken the films' social messages.

It is acknowledged that films primarily aim to entertain, and therefore may sacrifice educational accuracy. However, as Raleigh (2015) suggests, future productions should strive for more accurate, empathetic portrayals that foster understanding and social change.

Conclusion

Hausa Nigerian films like *Kona Gari*, *Ankon Biki*, and *Korariya* illuminate the multifaceted nature of prostitution, emphasizing systemic causes and the need for social transformation. They underscore the importance of education, economic empowerment, and societal acceptance in combating prostitution and its associated harms. For real progress, a collaborative approach involving education, social services, legal reform, and community support is necessary to dismantle the cycles of poverty, stigma, and exploitation that perpetuate prostitution in Nigeria and beyond.

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