

**DRAMA AS TOOL FOR COMBATING HIV/AIDS IN
NIGERIA: A Reading of Tracie Utoh's *Cauldron of Death*
and Victor S. Dugga's *Hope Harvesters***

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Introduction

Worried by high level of poverty in the world today, especially among developing countries in Africa and some part of Asia continents, Developed nations in Europe and America continents had seen the need to provide a sustainable improvement in the lives of people. Declaration of eight Millennium Development Goals by the United Nation (UN) in the year 2000 was therefore greeted with great ovation. The eight Millennium Goals (MDGs) were targeted among other things on improving the quality and quantity of life of the people especially in Africa and Asia continents. The eight targets of the (MDGs) are aimed at combating HIV/AIDS and incidents of malaria and other killer diseases. Healthy people, they say, breed healthy nation.

Following the United Nations Declaration, many health programmes have been put in place to educate and offer first class health services to the people even in rural areas. In Anambra State for instance, Roll-back malaria is one of such health programmes aimed at conscientizing and mobilizing the public on the need to stem the tide of spread of malaria. Recently, the state ministry of health distributed mosquito nets free to many households. These measures are in line with the (MDGs) objectives. There is also a serious campaign against HIV/AIDS. Teaching Hospitals as well as

General Hospitals in some States distribute HIV retro-virus drugs to patients free of charge. The number of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working on HIV/AIDS are also on the increase.

HIV/AIDS which came as a rude shock to Nigeria has for long remain a dreadful endemic problem in the society. This is partly because no permanent cure has been found and partly because the syndrome is a “money “time” and “energy consuming” night mare. Over the years, HIV/AIDS Virus have been spreading like a wild harmattan fire threatening to wipe out the whole human race. The impact of this ugly incident has been considered very devastating. Richard G.A et al (1992), maintains that “AIDS an incurable and fatal disease (one of the Sexually Transmitted Diseases) caused by infection with the Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV) is a major problem and already the major cause of productive life lost in Africa.” (Cited in Adeniji, 2007:1). The scourge of HIV/AIDS filled our world with an unmitigated misery and is felt more in most developing countries of the world especially in Africa where poverty is the bane of the society. Consequently, health care facilities are very scarce and often those available are grossly utilized. Sexual health which is a state of sound sexuality of an individual has been regarded as of paramount concern to human growth and development.

The relationship between human sexuality and productivity are seen as primary indices of development. This is because through sexual and productive heath the human race is assured of continuity. This paper, highlight the need for combating HIV/AIDS in Nigeria through drama. Play production is a conscious effort to sensitive the public on the need to avoid unhealthy sexual practices that can enhance HIV/AIDS transmission and to embank on “safer sex” and health practices that can promote long life. This research focuses on textual analysis of the select plays. Despite the level of awareness of HIV/AID in our

society today, the syndrome is still on rampage. Certain factors, other than the ones enumerated above have been responsible. These factors have been ex-rayed by Tracie Utoh and Victor Dugga as casual sex, unscreened blood transfusion, use of unsterilized injection needles, rape etc. The plays, *Cauldron of Death*, by Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh and Dugga's *Hope Harvesters* present a devastating impact of HIV/AIDS in our society and call for caution and discipline. Different ways by which HIV/AIDS can be transmitted from a carrier to a healthy person are dramatized in the plays.

HIV is the viral strain that leads to AIDS. AIDS is one of the “epidemics” that has been certified “terminal disease” by the World Health Organization (WHO). It affects human being irrespective of age, sex, race, or religion. HIV/AIDS was first heard of in 1981 in the New York, USA. From there, it spread like a wild fire to other continent of the world such as South America and Africa. This fact is however under serious debt by some scientist who argued that it must have originated from Sub-Sahara Africa. Their belief was backed by Washington Post Magazine which states “the disease endemic is in ten African Countries of (Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zaire, Zambia) and might have originated there”. 1. HIV/AIDS started making waves in Nigeria in early 1980s. The first recorded AIDS victim was a thirteen year old child discovered in 1986. AC-CON HIV/AIDS Control Project in conjunction with United States Agency for International Development states:

HIV/AIDS constitutes a serious problem in this generation. The number of Nigerians living with the virus as at 2001 was about 2.6 million (aged 15-49 years) 2.

Another research work which reveals the endemic nature of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria was carried out by Ndako Yahaya Sheba. He observes that “estimated number of Nigerians living with

HIV/AIDS as at 2003 was 3.6 million". (See Yahaya Ndako 2007:49). This figure indicates that the spread of the virus is on the increase in Nigeria. Other researchers were also of the opinion that the virus has endangered the life of many. Mbachaga Desen Jonathan (2009:4) quoting (UNAIDS, para.2)2006 wrote that "More than 38.6 million people are living with HIV/AIDS world wide". The virus has gender and age dimension. United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS) report claims, "one fifth of people world wide with AIDS are in their twenties". In Nigeria, 15-29 years old account for 63% of all AIDS cases among females.

What this means is that the younger generation are susceptible to HIV virus because they represent sexually active group of the population. Besides, in every geometric population, people at the age bracket of 15-39 are mostly youths who are either in colleges or universities. This population can easily be influenced by peer group and they love ostentatious life style. There is also high level of promiscuity among them. The incident of unemployment also shares the blame on the increasing rate of sexually transmitted diseases especially among youths. What actually is HIV/AIDS?

"HIV" stands for Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus. It is the germ which causes AIDS. When a person is infected with the virus, the person is said to be "HIV positive", a "carrier" and a "victim". The person's body fluid such as blood, vaginal secretions, semen will contain HIV antibodies against the virus. HIV infection destroys the immune system and renders them powerless. IMMUNE SYSTEM refers to "anti-bodies" that defends the body against diseases. Body defence system is often referred to as soldiers of the body.

AIDS is short for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS occurs when virus is present in the body fluid and has therefore destroyed the body defense system of the victim. Experts believe that the period between HIV infection and development is between six weeks and six months. This period is often refers to as

window period. When the patient is not treated and sustained with antiretroviral drugs, at this "incubation" stage, the carrier develops full grown AIDS. And the person eventually dies of AIDS.

Researchers and medical experts have identified over ten ways by which a person can contact the virus. HIV/AIDS spread through unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person and through blood transfusion of unscreened blood. Others include using unsterilized clipper, razor blades and scissors for barbing, circumcision, manicure and pedicure. Using unsterilized needles, syringes for injection. It can also be transmitted from a carrier to a healthy person through in section such as tribal marks, (igbu ichi). An infected mother can also transfer it to her child during pregnancy, child birth or through breast feeding.

Many Nigerians are aware of the existence of the disease. However, what is problematic is that many Nigerians partly as a result of ignorance and partly as a result of promiscuity refused to accept the reality on the ground. A good number believe they will never contact the virus because they have strong anti-body that is resistance to the virus. Tor Iorapuu (2006:54) share the same opinion when he observes that:

People are now aware of HIV/AIDS prompting them to give various nomenclatures or cultural expressions that attempts to explain the behaviour of the disease. For examples, among the Tiv people; it is called "Akandeior" meaning that which sucks you lean. Among the Idoma people, it is called "opifiili" meaning one with a strange disease. While in Hausas, it is called "Kanjikiki".

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Similarly, the Eastern Igbo call it “obiri n'aja Qcha,” meaning that which sends one to the grave. They also call it “QR[a mm[nwX”, meaning the disease that dries one. All these local names establish the fact that HIV/AIDS syndrome is indeed, endemic in Nigerian society of today.

It should be noted that Government at Federal, State and even International level have put in place various means to checkmate the spread of the virus. These means include radio and television jingles as well as newspapers adverts and cartoons. Others include free distribution of condom which serves as a palliative measures and also considerable improvement on health care delivery system in Nigeria. However, despite this growing campaign against HIV/AIDS, there seems to be an increase in the spread of the virus. This ugly incident, according to Tor Iorapuu (2006:6), can be attributed to sheer ignorance. He states that:

Male youth group in Benue tie woven palm leaves around their waist. The leaves according to them have its power to appease death. Tying leaves around the waist during sex is a mark of respect for HIV and so the virus will be pleased to bypass its victim.

There is no gainsaying that culpable ignorance promotes rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in most Nigerian communities. It is still a common practice in Nigeria to see people use the same manicure and pedicures kits. This practice is sustained mostly by young boys whose source of living is hawking of petty wares. The crux of the matter is that HIV/AIDS and its related diseases are claiming millions of lives, daily. It is this helpless situation and its attendant misery that challenged playwrights like Tracie Utoh to warn that

humanity is on the verge of extinction if something drastic is not done to checkmate the spread.

***Cauldron of Death* by Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh**

The play, *Cauldron of Death* by Tracie Utoh is the only non-sponsored drama on AIDS which seeks to enlighten the public on the danger of the increasing spread of HIV/AIDS. She presents a vivid picture and dehumanizing effect of HIV/AIDS virus in the psyche of the average Nigerian. In the play, the virus make a clean sweep of the entire family of Ikem whose twenty-five year old boy, Junior is infected with the virus. As the play progresses, virtually all the characters who incidentally, are members of the family are victims of HIV/AIDS. The playwright painstakingly presents a society roped in dilemma. The ravages, the danger to economic growth and stability as well as the psychological trauma of the characters and the HIV/AIDS victims are first registered through the character, Junior.

He contracts the virus through his much sexual expenditure. The playwright presents Junior as a very careless young man. He belongs to the class of men who feel that women are merely sex objects meant for their sexual satisfaction. This is indicated in from the rate at which Junior jumps from one woman to another. His parent is rich. But they are morally bankrupt. It is as a result of this moral laxity that Junior is sent to his early grave. His girl friends are as numerous as the stars in the sky. They include Vera Agba, Moji, Sandra, Soko etc. at one time or the other. Junior has sexual intercourse with all of them. Sexual expenditure with multiple sex partners ruins the future of the entire family. Not only that, Junior never for one day practice “safer sex” method either by using condom or subjecting himself to routine medical check-up. The playwright condemned promiscuity and warns the fact that people who engage on unprotected sex are simply “collecting death on a platter of gold” (see page 130).

Death motif is used as a metaphor in the play and is skillfully re-enacted in the dream-like flashback which frightens the major character, Junior. He therefore mourns his demise. "I am dying mum. I no longer have a future. All your dreams for your son. All those plans" (123).

From the character Junior, we can feel the psychological torture of the HIV/AIDS victims. A person suffering from AIDS can no longer work. He/She is constantly sick and lives on drugs. The virus is a threat, a menace and has become endemic. Tracie puts it more succinctly when she observes, "An AIDS victim has become 'an apparition'. A ghost of (his) former self. A skeleton." (125). Utoh stresses the fact that a victim of the syndrome is socially, psychologically and physically isolated from the rest of the world. Again, the character Junior attests to this fact.

Sometimes, I have to battle to suppress great desire for those things I will never be able to do again...driving to work, playing lawn tennis; attending party...I ruin my social life (128).

The essence of the campaign against the syndrome is to console victims like Junior and encourage them to adopt more positive attitude to life. According to medical expert, an AIDS victim for now stands no other chance than to await death by instalment. Millions are dying every day. Tanko Sabatu (2007:15) also attests to the fact that the virus had created many vacuums in the life of many families.

Many children are being orphaned and many are dying as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic ...In many families, productive young adults ...have been rendered unproductive by this disease. Many affected Nigerians are suffering from physical, psychological and social pains.

For Junior in the play, *Cauldron of Death*, his health condition is not as pathetic as that of her sister, Ozoemena who has a fatal accident and in a bid to save her life, they quickly transfer blood from Junior without screening. This silly mistake on the part of medical personnel made Ozoemena a victim of HIV/AIDS (130).

In fact, Utoh expands the scope of awareness of means of transmission of the virus by giving us different ways of spreading it. Transfusion of unscreened blood is one of the means of spreading the dreaded virus as can be seen from the case of Junior versus Ozoemena. Another means is sharing syringes during injection. Junior admits being a drug addict.

I took drugs, cocaine, marijuana, barbiturates, morphine, opium. We share needles. The needles were not sterilized (139).

This brings us to the issue of performance enhancing drugs and the youths. The rate of abuse of hard drugs among youths is on the increase and is a major factor that deteriorates the endemic spread of HIV/AIDS related diseases in our society. Most youths under the influence of drugs involve themselves in all forms of atrocities such as rape, arm robbery, kidnapping and outright murder. This situation is worsening by high unemployment rate among youths not only in Nigeria but also in other part of the world. Idealness they say is the devil's workshop. Ideal young boys and girls engage in all forms of immoral behaviour. Some of them drop out from school to form street gangs, garage touts and often armed robbers. Young girls among them took to prostitution. Again, Tracie Utoh raised alarm on high level of moral decay especially infidelity in marriage. We notice this through the character, Mr. Ikem, Junior's father. He represents most promiscuous men. Such men sleep around. They can hardly keep to their partners. The patriarchy ideology seems to complicate the issue further.

The fact that means of production and other prestigious positions are reserved men made women subordinate to men. More often than not, men used it against women. In most countries of the world, men exploit women sexually on account of poverty probably because they have excess liquidity on them. They use their wealth to entice their female counterparts who are merely reduced to a "mere commodity". This situation is exposed in *Cauldron of Death* by the character Ikem, the bread winner of the family who engages in extra marital relationship with young girls of his children's school mates. The horrifying effect of the family's dilemma is enhanced by the information contain in Sandra's letter to Junior.

Through the letter, Mr. Ikem discovers to his utter dismay that he too is living with the virus without knowing it. He contracts the deadly virus through casual sex with Sandra. Sandra is one of Junior's numerous girl friends .She writes to inform Junior that she is an AIDS patient. The implication of the letter is that Nneoma, Junior's mother may have contacted the virus through her husband during sexual intercourse. It is a doom for the whole family. No wonder Nneoma rhetorically asked "why did the devil let his angles loose in my house?"

The greatest victim of HIV/ AIDS in Utoh's play is Nneoma. First, her promiscuous son, Junior contacts the disease. Then her daughter, Ozoemena contacts it through blood transfusion from Junior. Worst still her unfaithful husband has just find out that he is a carrier which makes it possible for her Nneoma to be a victim. The entire family of Ikem is faced with a bleak future as a result of this misfortune. The character Nneoma is presented in the play as an ideal mother who is caring, loving, kind and supportive. Of all the members of Ikem's family, she is the most responsible and discipline. Despite the tragic situation in the family, she remains very supportive and caring to Junior and Ozoemena. The playwright draws our attention on how innocent people can be made to suffer unjustly as a result of one or two people's rascality

and moral decadence. Nneoma and Ozoemena are on the receiving end. They are the most tragic of all the characters in the play. Early dictation of the virus would have probably solved some problems. At least they can be placed on retroviral drugs after expert medical advice.

Chukwuemeka Ike is a concerned Nigerian writer. In his book, *Our Children Are Coming* (1990) he laments on the increasing rate of promiscuity and moral decadence among our youths of school age. In the novel, he paints a picture of Apo the daughter of an Archdeacon Obi who was caught in prostitution. In her defence, she claimed, "All these men had stolen money belonging to everybody in this country". She felt it was her duty to sleep with all of them till she had collected all the money.

According to her, the act did not take away any anything from her body. (See pg 37) This non-challant attitude and irresponsible behaviour can be linked to that of Sandra, Junior's girl friend in the play. She defies all moral and throws caution to the wind and continues to practice prostitution. Though the playwright did not tell us whether she encourages her "numerous clients" to wear condom, the truth remains that she is highly promiscuous making nonsense of any "protective means". Here lies the real problem that enhances the spread of HIV/AIDS in our country. Both men and women, young and old play around having unprotected sex for money, fun and sometimes for other diabolical purposes. It is this kind of crude ideology and idiosyncrasy, among Nigerians that promote wide spread of HIV/AIDS and other related diseases in our society.

It is worthy to note that the playwright examined all the means of contracting HIV/AIDS in her play. They include sexual intercourse as in the case of Junior and his father in the play, *Cauldron of Death*. HIV/AIDS can be transmitted sexually through genital sex such as anal sex (that is intercourse through the anus), oral sex (a man's penis to a woman's mouth or vice versa). It can be

through coitus, (that is penetration of a man's penis into a woman's vagina). Transmission can also occur through blood transfusion as in the case of Junior and Ozoemena. Other means enumerated in the play by the playwright include sharing of syringes. Junior and his gangs smoke hard drugs and share needles. Other factor that aid transmission of the virus is high rate of rape incidents in the country. Nigeria Newspapers and Magazines are filled with such stories every day. According to a publication of Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (2007:21),

Rape, incest, pornography are threats and violation against the dignity of women. These threats worsen the state of procreative and family health in Nigeria.

Violent crime like rape has become very rampant nowadays. Victor S. Dugga, a scholar, critic and director of Theatre, takes a psychological journey towards the general view on HIV/AIDS and victims of the diseases as the greatest challenge of our time. The playwright calls for a change of attitude towards victims of the disease and demands for more positive human approach to the situation. This he believes will not only reduce rancour and bitterness but will also reduce pressure in the society at the same time, prolong the life of HIV patient.

***Hope Harvesters* by Victor Dugga**

Victor S. Dugga (2008) presents us with one out of many incidents of rape in our society. In his play *Hope Harvesters*, he reaffirms that rape remains a violent crime against women in our society.

It is a devastating social cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of our nation. Incidents of rape are very rampant nowadays. This may be attributed to the technological age which exposes people to a lot of things including pornographic pictures. *Hope Harvesters* presents us with a pathetic story of an orphan girl,

Nkoyo, a Quick Action Courier Staff who contracts HIV after being raped by three Area Boys. On that fateful day, she was on her way to deliver a mail in a remote neighbourhood. (28). Poor Nkoyo! She does not know she contracts a HIV virus until she goes for a compulsory medical test with her fiancé. When the incident occurs, she neither goes to the hospital nor report to the police. The fear of social stigma and unnecessary bureaucracy prevents her from reporting the incident to the police and other appropriate authority.

Kwalba, the fiancée though very caring and supportive, demands for an explanation. Amidst tears and tension Nkoyo explains how she is raped repeatedly by three little area boys in an uncompleted building while trying to deliver a mail in a remote neighbourhood. One expects Kwalba to jilt her fiancée or at least scold her in her condition but he is sympathetic and understanding. He does not hesitate to renew his marriage proposal to Nkoyo and stand solidly besides her.

The playwright's message here is manifold. First, dialogue is a first step to solving any human problem. Secondly, we have to approach every situation with the right frame of mind. Thirdly, where true love exists, sickness cannot be a barrier to marriage. By demonstrating that a victim can still live his or her normal life including marriage without unduly interference, the playwright reminds us that sickness is one out of many misfortunes that can befall man.

However the story is different with Kwalba's family. When they discover the most awaited "daughter in law" is HIV positive they become disappointed with their son. The family vehemently opposes the union and quickly reminds Kwalba that he is the only son who will carry the family name. Uncle Gambo is the first to point out this;

Uncle Gambo

Alright I tell you a bit of our family history. Your father and I were the only sons of your grandfather when he died. I have

six daughters and no son. I am not fighting God for that, but you are the only male child left to perpetuate our family lineage (35).

Unfortunately Kwalba is as resolute as ever and no amount of persuasion or pressure could stop him from achieving his heart desire. When all efforts to dissuade him fails, the family members conspire and harsh a devastating strategy. The opportunity came on the day of church wedding. In an attempt to void the marriage, Kwalba's family kidnaps him from the church on the wedding day. Though the kidnapping causes an embarrassment and disaffection between Kwalba and Nkoyo, it becomes a blessing in disguise as it strengthens the affection and resolution of the two lovers.

Kwalba: You do not know me, K.O. When I said I love you, I meant it. No HIV can stop that (30).

In *Hope Harvesters*, we also observe that the HIV/AIDS victim also pass through hell and needs our co-operation to overcome the emotional stress and apathy. Nkoyo, while narrating her experience states:

I went through the pain of rejection. I have suffered harassments of all sorts, but to be deserted was a new experience (50).

The character, Ojo is highly traumatized when the nurse tells him in the hospital that he is HIV positive. He becomes aggressive and even wants to tear the nurse into pieces. At the end of the play, the message is clear. HIV/AIDS patients should not be treated as a leper or an outcast. We must respect and protect human dignity in the affected person. A victim has a right to associate with people and live like every other human being on earth.

Dugga added another dimension to the campaign against

HIV/AIDS: stigmatization of the victims of HIV/AIDS. Stigmatization refers to public attitude towards the carriers. A lot of people avoid HIV/AIDS victims the way the deride people suffering from leprosy. As a result, a lot of them suffer more from the psychological trauma and often die as a result than the disease itself. A good number of them lose their jobs not out of choice but rather as a result of discrimination. Many are made to face untold hardship as a result of this unfortunate development. Campaign against stigmatization will improve psychological trauma of the victims. For Dugga, HIV/AIDS psychological trauma has direct effect on the victim and is responsible for sudden death of many carriers.

Many factors are responsible for this poor public attitude towards HIV/AIDS carriers. There still exists a false notion in some quarters that the virus can be contacted through handshake or embrace with the infected person. Some believe it can also be contacted through sharing of personal belongings like combs, bedding and clothing. Others think sharing of food and cutlery with carriers will automatically make them victims. There is also fear that insect bites such as mosquitoes and tsetse fly can transmit the virus from the carrier to a healthy person. All these are unfounded lies. It is perhaps to dissuade the public and to give succour to the victims of these diseases that motivate the writing of the play, *Hope Harvesters* by Victor S Dugga. The playwright no doubt becomes the first apostle of charity to these dejected of the population. The play presents a message of hope not only to the victim but also to the rest of humanity. The message of Hope states that HIV virus is one out of many health problems in our society. A victim stands a better chance of living his/her normal life using HIV retro-viral drugs.

Another issue of campaign aptly captured in the play is the need for constant medical examination by everybody especially sexually active persons. Routine examination for ones HIV status will go a long way to reducing its continuous spread in the society.

Medical experts are of the opinion that early dictation of a disease can lead to its cure. Early dictation of HIV will help to reduce the incident of AIDS. The victim will be placed on retro-viral drugs which will prevent development of full blown AIDS.

Drama as a Tool for Conscientisation of the Masses

Drama has been acclaimed as a major tool for educating, propagating and disseminating of information. There is no doubt that it has served as the most effective means of advertising most government programs in most subtle and acceptable manner.

The power of drama to persuade majority is as old as drama itself. Some drama and theatre scholars have testified to this in their various works. Roberts (1962:2), Hopkins (1965:89), Whiting (1968:2) and Franklin (1997:387) have examined the functions of Theatre in its various ramifications be it religious, entertainment, political and satirical dimensions. Hopkins, in particular, has argued that the Theatre is a very strong means of propagating ideas, whether such ideas are aimed at encouraging support for the national government and its programmes or at eliminating customs and practices deemed atavistic (Cited in Oga, 2003:80). The campaign against HIV/AIDS can only be best achieved through drama because of its efficacious nature.

For instance, drama can penetrate where other means of communication cannot. Ebede, Patience (2005:16) explains:

Cauldron of Death was staged at the conference organized by FIGHT AIDS AFRICA in June 1999 at the Bishop's Court Conference Hall Jos, Plateau State. The play was also staged at the rehearsal ground of the Theatre Arts Department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka in 2002 for the purpose of enlightening the people on HIV/AIDS.

When drama is staged, a large number of heterogeneous public are educated and drama has more lasting impact on people. This is

because the effect of what is seen will produce catharsis which according to Aristotle, is purging of emotion. To achieve the much desired eight targets on the Millennium Development Goals, drama no doubt is the most effective weapon.

Another important reason why drama can be used as the best tool to spread and combat HIV/AIDS is because indigenous language can easily be used as a language of communication in drama. Drama is also an education tool that is effectively used in teaching in most secondary and tertiary institutions.

Conclusion

Victor Dugga, presents another dimension to the reality on ground; the human management angle. He represents an unbiased observer and feels that more positive approach should be taken to rehabilitate victims of HIV/AIDS in our society.

However, *Hope Harvesters* is philosophical and psychological play that challenges us to re-examine our attitude towards one another. Nkoyo does not get the virus out of her own carelessness or promiscuity. The play raises questions on moral upbringing of our youths, insecurity in our country as well as mass unemployment in our country. These are teething problems facing the entire nation. Security of life and property is as serious as life itself. Increasing violence, vandalism, robbery, kidnapping etc need to be properly addressed in order to improve the quality and quantity of life of the people.

Similarly, the horror and doom of a family presented in *Cauldron of Death* by Tracie Utoh calls for need for moral and sex education of the youths both at home and in the society. There is also need for spiritual revival of our families. Family system is gradually collapsing as a result of gradual disappearance of moral values. Emphasis on the use of condom as a "safe" means of combating the spread is only a palliative measure that also amount to playing dangerously. This is because nobody can always

guarantee the quality of the product. Besides, latest discovery by medical experts reveal that human sperms are permeable even to the wall of condom. The many question of destiny raised by Nneoma can best be avoided if only we make hay while the sun shines. Today's children and youths in particular need our attention. Good moral upbringing, good hygiene and responsible parenthood can go a long way to reduce the ugly incident of rapid spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Tracie Utoh emphatically states that HIV/AIDS has no cure. Retrovirus drug does not cure AIDS. It can only prevent development of AIDS. This is a warning that we must stick to. Another important issue raised in the play is that of people's attitude to medical care. The need to know ones HIV status is very important. "AIDS they say, no dey show for face."

Finally, all health agencies, NGOs, religious leaders as well as parents should join hands to see that there is an improvement in procreative and family health in our society. Health they say is wealth.

Recommendations

1. Theatre Festivals organized in Kenya under the auspices of Theatre for Development Enterprise was a veritable tool to combat spread of HIV/AIDS in the area. Nigeria Government can set up similar workshops in our collages and institutions of learning.
2. HIV/AIDS screening should be made compulsory for everybody especially children of school age every six month.
3. Ban should be placed on prostitution.
4. Provision of employment to our teeming youths.
5. Religious Instruction must be a compulsory subject in every school and parents/guidance should co-operate to reinforce it.
6. Government at all level must Endeavour to provide basic necessity of life.

Notes

1. B. Harden. "AIDS Seen as Threat to Africa's Future". Washington Post. May 31, 1991. Quoted from The Role of Drama in the Campaign against HIV/AIDS: Tracie Chima

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2. This researcher is not ignorant of the fact that there may have been more recent findings on HIV/AIDS.

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