Runaway Love

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Introduction to Social Problems

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The song I choose to analyze is “Runaway Love” by Ludacris feat Mary J. Blige. The sociological problems that Ludacris addresses are parents that are using drugs and neglecting their children, abusive parents and teenage pregnancy in low income areas. This song was released in 2007, however is still very relevant today to many teens. People that are impacted by this problem are anyone. Many children grow up with parents that are abusive but never say anything because they don’t want their parents to get in trouble. These children love their parents and don’t want their providers to be taken away. Some children live with parents or older siblings that are their guardians that do drugs and neglect their needs or wishes. Lastly, you have females that get pregnant at a young age and don’t know what to do. All of these sociological problems can lead to children running away. This increases the homeless rate and leads the children to dark futures such as prostitution, drug dealing, the increase in crime, such as theft in order to provide, or worse death because they cannot provide for themselves.

In the first verse, Ludacris talks about a few sociological problems. The main problem is a mother addicted to drugs and neglecting her child. He sings, “Mama is on drugs getting high up in the kitchen… Tries to tell her mom but her mama don't believe her” (Ludacris, 2006). The Child Welfare Information Gateway states, “Many States have responded to this problem by expanding the civil definition of child abuse or neglect to include this concern” (2012). They have made laws in almost all states making it a crime to use drugs and neglect their children. The parents should know better and want to teacher their children by example of how to live a good life. This also addresses a single parent house hold. Most single parents struggle to provide for their family, however, in this case her mother is trying to provide by either soliciting sex or selling drugs, Ludacris does not specify. Her mother's life style can become a problem for her child, “Abuse may emerge from a biological or chemical predisposition or from a personality or behavior disorder” (Leon-Guerrero, 313). I feel that the mother is trying to cope with the fact she is a single mother who may not have a very good
job by using drugs. The Interactionist perspective states, “drug abuse is a learned through others” (Leon-Guerrero, 318). This means that later in life this child might think that drug use is ok because she has learned this through her mother’s abuse and may neglect her child because of learned behavior.

The next verse deals with child abuse. Ludacris sings, “Alcoholic step-dad always wanna strike her… Yells and abuses, leaves her with some bruises” (2006). This deals with a blended family. I feel that if the child where to say something to her mother about the abuse she would ignore it because the stepfather might be the sole provider for the family, or she would be afraid to confront her husband on the idea that she might also be abused for speaking out against him. This abuse, not only has a physical effect on these children, but also, “may lead to lifelong consequences, including low self-esteem, depression, criminal behavior, and adult abusive behavior (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2006)” (Leon-Guerrero, 177). Ludacris talks about how he is an alcoholic, “Alcohol use had also been associated with child abuse as both a cause and consequence (Widom and Hiller-Sturmhofel 2001)” (Leon-Guerrero, 325). According to Melinda Smith’s article “Child Abuse and Neglect”, “All types of child abuse and neglect leave lasting scars. Some of these scars might be physical, but emotional scarring has long lasting effects throughout life, damaging a child’s sense of self, ability to have healthy relationships, and ability to function at home, at work and at school.” (2013). Child abuse can be a life long struggle for these children. There are many children who face abuse and are too scared to say anything. This is a sociological problem because it hinders the way a normal adult is supposed to function while also leading to a higher risk of abusing their own children.

In the last verse, Ludacris talks about teenage pregnancy. He sings, “Plus she's having sex with a boy who's sixteen… The days go by and her belly gets big, the father bails out he ain't ready for a kid” (2006). This young girl is having unprotected sex and ends up getting pregnant. The boy leaves the pregnant girl to struggle on her own. He also sings, “Plus she lives poor so no
money for abortion” (Ludacris, 2006). She cannot abort because she is poor. I feel that this is a vicious cycle. She becomes a single parent who is trying to provide for her and her baby. She has to have means for money, so she may have to do things that she isn’t proud of in order to get it. The New York Times says, “Births among teenagers and unmarried women tend to lead to poor outcomes for their children.” (2007). Thus creating another generation that has lower education, “teen mothers in comparison with their childless peers, are likely to be poorer and less educated, less likely to be married, and more likely to come from families with lower incomes (Hoffman 1998)” (Leon-Guerrero, 182). This is a sociological problem because these singles mother, most unintentionally, are setting their children up for failure or a life similar to the mothers. A life where they cannot provide for themselves or their family and a lower education level that will not get them the job they need to provide.

There are many other topics that Ludacris talks about in this song such as teenage drug use, “So she pops X to get rid of all the pain” (2006), child rape, “Trying to have his way and little Lisa says ‘ouch’” (2006) and crime in the ghetto, “Until one day little Stacy gets shot A drive by bullet went stray up on her block” (2006). This song is a good representation of sociological problems that the many people deal with. Teenage drug use, like stated before, is a learned behavior. In this stanza, the female is scared and trying to get away from the struggles of her life, however, in the end is creating more struggles by becoming pregnant. The raping coincides with abuse and neglect. The mother ignores the signs while trying to get the next high or pay check. This produces the possibility that the child might not live a normally functional life or end up using drugs like her mother. The crime is a possible result of child abuse, neglect or even drug use.

Like stated before, this is vicious cycle. A girl from a low income area that has little education and becomes pregnant. She does not know what to do so she resorts to learned behaviors from her family. This can lead to drug use, child abuse and neglect and possibly crime. In conclusion, I feel that the
increase in education can solve some of these problems. Education on drug use and safe or even abstinent sex can lead a child to a brighter and healthier future. I also feel that the awareness of child abuse needs to be greater, so that teachers and friends can recognize the signs of these problems in order to put an end to them. I feel that a child needs to be strong and determined in order to get out of these lifestyles their providers have put them in. A solution to this is to emphasize the importance of going to college and maybe idolize the benefits of overcoming that type of lifestyle. I have personally learned that not everyone is given a fair chance to have a great life from the start. Some have to work really hard and there are many that don’t make it because life does happen.
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