

CHILD ABUSE AND CHILD LABOR- THE SOCIAL MENACE VOLUME 1

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THE SOCIAL MENACE

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Abstract

Child abuse and **neglect** are serious global problems and can be in the form of physical, **sexual**, emotional or just **neglect** in providing for the **child's** needs. These factors can leave the **child** with serious, long-lasting psychological damage. ;While Child Labour is an evil that destroys the health, development and education of many Nigerian children. The health and educational consequences of child abuse and child labour in Nigeria cannot be overestimated; for child labour, children from 5-17 years old are economically and physically lured or even forced into performing certain tasks that are likely to harm and interfere with their health and education. This research work investigated the health and educational consequences of child abuse and child labour in Nigeria using descriptive survey. To achieve this, two research questions guided the study of child abuse and child labour. The population of the study was the entire child labourers in Nigeria. Staged stratified sampling technique was used to select 1,800 child labourers from 6 states of the federation. Data were collected, using structured questionnaire, and in-depth interview. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency. The findings revealed that child labourers in Nigeria engaged in all sorts of child labour such as hawking, begging, carry heavy loads and experience a lot of health and educational problems ranging from injuries, pains of some sort, traffic accidents, chemical poisoning, pneumonia, difficulty in breathing, which have other serious health implications. The findings also identified poverty, wickedness, selfishness, greed, broken family, careless parents and guardian and others as some of the causes of child labour in Nigeria. It was also revealed that children's education suffer a lot as they do not receive quality education or no education at all. Recommendations were made to curb this cankerworm and social menace in the society.

Keywords

Child Labour; Child Abuse; Exploitation; Sexual Harassment; Child Molestation; Child Slavery; Mistreatment; Child Trafficking; Poverty; Domestic Slavery

Introduction

In Nigeria, just like any other nation of the world, many children's health, education and childhood are stolen by an evil menace and cankerworm called child abuse and child labour. Children are physically, emotionally, mentally and educationally abuse, children between 5-17 years old work as long as 8-15 hours a day and earn as little as few nairas, which are usually too meager to secure a meal or even used for themselves, as their parents or guardian collect the little they earn each day in the sun, in the street, in the market and in the hold- up where they are prone to accident. These children work more tediously and longer hours than normal at their tender age, instead of being in school learning or in the comfort of their home, resting, studying or playing with their playmates.

Also, sometimes some children work themselves to death in their own homes without pay, simply because the society they live in believe that these children must work as long hours and as tediously as adults in order to meet up with the socio-economic and cultural expectations without their health being considered. This is simply child abuse and child labour.

No matter the reason why children work, child abuse and child labour is an evil that should be eliminated in the society to enable a child grow normally and healthily. The elimination of child abuse and child labour also promote and develop children socially, mentally, physically, morally and intellectually.

CHILD ABUSE

Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation. It is also an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

What are the effects abuse can have on a child?

The effects abuse can have on a child is very serious. Children can obtain serious problems from child abuse. They can develop social problems, depression, and anxiety.

There are four types of abuse:

Physical abuse

Sexual, abuse

Emotional abuse

Neglect.

Multiple types of child abuse often occur to a child or even the same child:

- Physical abuse such as hitting or burning, that result in any type of bodily harm to the child also physical abuse can injure a child severely.
- Domestic Violence is another abuse that affects children greatly, it is a worldwide problem and affects the health and well-being of children and even young people open to it. Children that are exposed to physical abuse are at a very high risk.
- Sexual abuse includes sexual contact with a child and sexual exploitation of a child.
- Emotional abuse is an abuse that negatively affects the behavior of a child. It is a behaviour that impact a child's emotional development or self-worth.
- Substance abuse – exposure to drugs at a very early age, being around drugs or drug-impairment of the caregiver.

WAYS TO END CHILD ABUSE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Child Prevention Programs: Child abuse prevention is one of the main priorities of the Administration for Children and families, Child abuse prevention programs can protect

families and save the lives of children great but they require commitment from parents, individuals, and community organizations.

An Overview On Child Abuse Prevention

Definitions and statistics on child abuse and neglect; why prevention is key to addressing the problem.

1. **What Organizations Can Do.** Suggested child abuse prevention activities and supporting materials, including resources for working with the media.

2. **What Individuals Can Do.** Information about what individuals can do to prevent child abuse and neglect, how to recognize and report suspected maltreatment, and tips to help foster positive parenting.

3. **Resource Directory.** Information on national organizations that are working with their State and local chapters to prevent child abuse and organizations that can provide technical assistance.

4. **Poster.** Lists five strategies for helping individuals better understand the role they play in child abuse prevention.

5. **Social Media :** Achieve maximum change in eliminating this social menace known as child abuse and child labour in the community and raises awareness through social media. Regular and persistent use of social media and other online resources to post and raise awareness on child abuse, child labour and ways to prevent it.

6. **Sensitizing political leaders on child abuse :** Reaching out to political leaders and appointing them as matrons and patrons in your change making community or in your organization, thereby establishing networks of supporters and activists, and disseminating information on local, regional and global developments.

4. **Support Children:** For those children who have watched a parent inflict violence and abuse upon their spouse or upon another person's child, these children are more apt to

repeat this later on in their adult life with their spouses, partners, children or other people's children. Using drugs and alcohol abuse later in their lives is also a likely path. In order to break this future cycle of abuse, we need to offer therapy, counseling, psychosocial support, and other services to these children.

5. Report: Reporting requires our immediate action and not procrastination.

Child abuse case needs to be reported immediately, now, not tomorrow, not next week to the necessary authorities!!! If a child is in danger, he needs to be rescued from it immediately, today and now.

Ways to intervene and report:

- Call the police, the local law enforcement
- Call a legal practitioner who handles cases of child abuse or child labour or other child- related cases.
- Speak out by becoming the voice of the abuse child through social media medium, school sensitization, engaging students in child abuse debates and essays etc.
- Sensitize the public on how to monitor what their child(ren) watch, a child's television, video, and internet viewing/usage. Excessively watching of violent films, abusive and violent TV programs, and videos can pollute the mentality of children and harm children and young people.
- Also enlist the support of young people to volunteer at local child abuse prevention centers. Sensitize and train youth or volunteers on how to handle the case of a victim of child abuse.

CHILD LABOR

Child labor is any work or task a child below the age of 18 years undertakes with a view of being rewarded in cash or in kind or for any other reason at all, and which deprives him of his good health, good education and normal development. It is child labour because the children who do the labour are below the appropriate legal minimum working age (18 years) based on the International Labour Organization ILO minimum age convention or 1973 No 138.

Child Labour has forced millions of Nigerian children out of the comforts of their homes, and out of school into the labour world and does not leave them there. It goes on to drag children to all sorts of ill-health and illiteracy.

Child labour has been fought from many angles both internationally and nationally, yet it still exists and deranges children's health, and education. The International Labour Organization programmes on the elimination of Child Labour IPEC founded in 1992 aims at eliminating child labour. It operates in 88 countries including Nigeria. In 2013, Nigeria made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate child labour and provided funds to families to encourage children remain in school.

However, child labour still remains a major source of concern inspite of all these legislative measures and Nigerian children still engage in force labour in various dimensions. In Nigeria, it is common to see school age children roam the street, motor parks, filling stations traffic jams and market stalls begging for alms, engaging in menial labour and hawking goods, while others engage in domestic services, agricultural farm work and other menial jobs all during school hours. In actual fact according to Aliyu, the number of children involved in exploitative work in Nigeria is not known, owing to the wide dispersion of child labourers everywhere.

However, there are many reasons for the wide dispersion of child Labour in Nigeria which may be summarized in the following sub-headings.

Poverty

Poverty is one of the major factors that promotes child labour and obviously a dominant factor for child labour. Nigeria is a hungry nation as many of her citizens are dying due to poverty that is ravaging the country. However, poverty in Nigeria is man-made. Hence it is caused by social and political instability. In the present dispensation of poor governance characterized by “Winner takes all”, there is a wide gap between the rich and the poor, as the nation’s resources are shared by few hands, and the rest are left to work their fingers to the bone, leaving many families impoverished.

The Nigerian child according to Aliyu is the direct victim of the poverty level of the family. In poor families, children are compelled by circumstances beyond their control such as and daily needs to contribute to the family income, and the only way out is to engage in child labour, even when it is detrimental to their health and education.

Sometimes, families force their children out of school, to be employed in any job that will help in the support of family income without considering its effects on the health of the children. Sometimes also, children out of their own volition engage themselves in child labour for survival. For instance, in southeastern Nigeria, children from poor families earn their school fees through child labour. They may skip classes in order to work. They also work in the morning and attend afternoon school or vice-versa.

Broken Home/Family

In Nigeria, many socio-cultural institutions such as marriage and family structure have collapsed. Many families have broken, and some couples divorced or separated, while others are at logger-head, having indiscriminate squabbles and strife that distract them from managing their families. This result may to lack of care and affection toward their children, child abuse and neglect. In families like these, children with little or no income from their parents and relations engage in all sorts of child labour to sustain themselves in areas such as feeding and daily needs, and to also to find succor and reduce frustrations and abandonment. Children who are orphans may even be forced by poverty and lack of care to become the breadwinners of the family due to parental absence by death.

Cultural factors

Child labour according to Naidu may depend on the culturally determined and institutional roles and functions of the socialization process, and the normative attitude towards children in the society. The work children do depend on cultural aspects as concerns the concept of the child, his or her role in the family and society. Majority of Nigerian families believe that children are God-sent helpers who should be produced “in gross”. In such families, children are used as money making ventures by their families. In Nigeria today, as the economic recession increases, you see many families deploying their children into all sorts of child labour, ranging from hawking to begging without due consideration for the detrimental effects in the health and education of the children.

Family size

Many families in Nigeria are too large due to polygamous marriage and extended family affiliations. In such families, it becomes difficult or almost impossible for parents to cater adequately for numerous children in the areas of nutrition, health care and education. For the children to survive, many of them may be sent out to work outside home as house helps, babysitters, sales girls and boys, apprentices, and so on. Most of these children may be unfortunately sent to live with wicked employers who may abuse them physically and emotionally through child labour. In families like these, children leaving home is a relief to parents as the mouths to feed are reduced. Other children at home may engage in hawking, begging, working in building construction sites, barrow or truck pushing and so on to make ends meet.

Greed and illiteracy as a factor

High level of illiteracy and greed among parents and children may lead to child labour. In Nigeria the majority of illiterate families do not send their children to school. With little or no access to schooling, children are forced by instincts to go into doing all kinds of jobs at an early age in order to keep themselves busy and to survive.

In many illiterate and greed families, school aged children are lured or even forced to miss school or even drop out of school entirely and join the tedious adult works that

may be dangerous to their health. It is very common to see parents in rural areas refusing to give their children sound education with the belief that if there are unemployment, children should not be educated, rather they should start early to work to support the family income.

All over the world, child labour has been recognized as a global health problem and the extent to which many children have been maimed, brought to chronic illnesses or even died though it cannot be overestimated.

As a matter of fact, every dimension of child labour is detrimental to the physical and emotional health and education of the child. Some major dimensions of child labour in Nigeria and their effects in children's health and education include the following:

Hawking: In Nigeria many school aged children make sales through carrying goods, travelling about 12-13 hours daily to wherever they can find a buyer. Many children hawk for the upkeep of themselves and their families, while some others hawk for wages, or for people they live with outside their homes. Hawking is more prevalent in Nigerian cities than in rural areas.

In any angle child hawking is perceived, it has a lot of health implications on the child hawker. Child hawkers trek very long distance or wander about selling goods they carry on their heads. Children by nature suffer fatigue easily and as hawking poses long hours of strenuous trekking (heavy loads on the head), the fatigue increases the demand for rest which may not be satisfied. Consequently, the fatigue leads to chances for accidents, and stress related diseases. Stories abound where child hawkers who chase moving cars and cluster near traffic jams are knocked down by other moving vehicles, leading to injuries, bone fracture and amputation, maiming and death. Child hawkers due to long hours of wandering about and lack of time to rest and eat experience physical exertion, malnutrition and premature aging.

Furthermore, child hawkers may be attacked by mad people, rapists, ritualists and child traffickers (as they carry and cry their wares).

A child may contract HIV/AIDS through rape, or be injured by a mad person or a ritualist. Child hawkers who are employed as sales girls or boys usually receive little or very low wages or may not be paid in cash, but are usually forced to replace or pay for items lost during hawking by their masters or mistresses. Some child hawkers are denied of some days' meals while many receive thorough beatings and are chased out of the house in the night as punishment for lost items. All these expose children to emotional health problems, sexual molestation with its sexual transmitted infections, kidnapping, trafficking, injuries, malnutrition and body pains.

Educationally, hawking among school aged children leads to truancy, missing lessons, total absenteeism in class, low academic achievement and high rate of school dropouts. This is because, children who hawk before going to school are bound to miss lessons. Thus, they are deprived of the opportunity to learn. Those who hawk after school do not have time and energy for their take home assignments and home studies as they always go home late in the night and are too tired to do any academic work. Most of child hawkers are not allowed to go to school at all. Lack of education becomes a ditch in the road to their progress in life.

Begging is a nuisance worldwide. However, in most nations like Nigeria, there may be genuinely very vulnerable people who beg to eat. Such are those suffering from acute disabilities or extreme poverty, but are still left to fend for themselves. In fact, many Nigerians have become beggars of some sort, as Nigerians have sustained begging with philanthropic sustentation or pretentious and religious justification. Nevertheless, the issue of begging in major cities in Nigeria is a worrisome subject as it has become one of the numerous dimensions of child labour, a nuisance in the environment, and a bad image of the country to foreign visitors.

In the south-eastern Nigeria, some women take begging as a profession and involve their children in the act. They force their children to join in the job to attract sympathy.

Odogwu reported that over 150 parents who used their children for begging and other 50 child beggars were arrested in Anambra State by the police. Some of the beggars who faked being blind, deaf and dumb, lame and so on, saw, heard, and talked, walked

and ran away as police tried to arrest them. In major cities in Nigeria, many other women do use their children to beg. Some women also had been reported to have hired other women's children to beg for alms.

Beggars in Nigeria generally tend to be dirty, partially due to lack of care and partially to attract sympathy. Some beggars stay in strategic places such as churches, bus stops and government approved areas. These beggars are likely to contract airborne infectious and skin diseases due to body contacts and dirtiness. There are still others who move about (the mobile beggars) and parade themselves in motor parks, streets and markets. These beggars are easily knocked down by traffic as they usually rush at moving vehicles to beg for alms. Female child beggars are commonly reported in the news to have been sexually molested or kidnapped. Child rape during begging for alms has led to many child beggars sustaining injuries and contracting sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS (The National Newspaper 2014).

Almajiri begging system: This is a type of begging for alms that is prevalent in the northern Nigeria and practiced specifically by muslim children. In that region, Muslim families send their children from their homes into major towns and cities to live with and receive qur'anic education from Islamic teachers called "Malams". These children are known as "almajiris". It has been estimated by the Ministerial Committee on Madrasah Education in December 2010, that Nigeria has about 9.5 million almajiris.

The usual Islamic law is that the almajiris have to ask their host community for food only if they are hungry, and when they are satisfied, they go back to the classroom. Unfortunately, these teachers "Malams" transform the children into professional beggars by forcing them to beg for money in the street and do other menial jobs for money from dawn to dusk and surrender the proceeds (money).

These activities of begging, working and surrendering money are a sort of child labour as the children are not given the opportunity to study education, and their health is not left untouched.

Almajiri activities have serious health implications. According to a research by Zalar et al. 99% of the almajiri beggars have carbohydrates as their main meal which they take

twice a day which may lead to malnutrition, and therefore vulnerable to diseases, as they do not feed well, but work hard from dawn to dusk. 52% of the children abuse drugs like glue and Indian hemp. Consumption of Indian hemp may according to Lauren lead to respiratory problems. 73 lack access to good drinking water and water to bathe, hence they bathe in stagnant lake which may expose them to water borne diseases. 95% have no toilets and defecate in the bush, which may result in spreading of diseases. Generally, the almajiris trek from street to street and house to house which may lead to road accidents, and kidnapping.

The almajiris according to U.S. Dept. and Shepler are reported to participate in political and religious riots and violence, hence some of them are used for terrorists attack such as suicide bombers that threaten Nigerian nation up till date, claiming many lives and leaving other maimed. Commenting on the activities of the almajiris, Elder Theophilus Ajibola an educationist lamented that almajiri is the worst thing that has happened to Nigerian child.

Lifting and carrying of heaving loads: Lifting and or carrying of heavy loads by children is a kind of child labour if such loads are too heavy for such children. However, many children take the job of carrying or lifting heaving loads such as concrete, water, bags of cement and other building materials in building construction sites. Others do the same job in hotels, factories and even at home where children lift and carry water containers for family use. In some Nigerian universities, children according to Nigerian Time Newspaper carry luggage for students and staff to their hostels and houses respectively for a meager fee. This child labour is spread all over the country, but carrying of loads for strangers is most found in Northern Universities.

Unfortunately university authorities approve of uniform for these children called "Yaro boys" for security purposes, thereby supporting this kind of business. The children's health is never considered.

According to health practitioner, Dr. Zubair Patel the maximum load a child should carry is (10%) ten percent of the body weight and if not, such child will have short and long term health problems such as musculoskeletal problems.

Lifting of heavy weights according to University of IOWA may speed up the closing of growth plates in the spinal cord before they have a chance to fully develop. This leads to stopping the growth process, thereby causing stunted growth among children. According to Hesperian, lifting and carrying of heavy weights by female children may result to back bone problems, poor pelvic bone development that may lead to dangerous pregnancies later in life such as miscarriages and prolonged labour.

The overall effects of carrying loads on the head has been documented as causing catastrophic injuries such as spinal pain and fracture, dislocation, or death. Frequent carrying of water containers on the head may result in musculoskeletal disorders and spinal pain and is related to disability problems. It also causes early degenerative damage. It can also result in early onset of degenerative changes in the cervical spinal.

Agricultural work: Agricultural work can be a sort of child labour if under aged children work in farm lands and agricultural firms. Many agricultural families take their children to the farms and due to lack of enlightenment allow or force the children to do all sorts of work in regular and longer hours along with adults. They may not know that children and adults according to Child Labour Today should not do the same work and or spend the same period of time in any work due to physical and developmental differences. There are still other children who are employed in agricultural farms and or firms to perform a lot of tasks that are not appropriate for children, such as application of chemicals on the farms in hazardous environment, and handling certain farm implements.

Children working in agricultural sites are the most hit when it comes to injuries, snake and insect bites and so on. Many children have been mutilated while cutting with machetes in the farm. Agricultural child labourers are exposed to pesticides, working with machines and sharp tools, lack of clean water, hand-washing facilities and toilets. ECLT informs the public that the use of dangerous chemicals such as pesticides, can lead to instant death. It can also lead to long term health problems such as respiratory disease, asbestosis and a variety of cancers. Children who apply pesticides on farms by hand or without protective equipment according to University of IOWA. This may have a

health risk including dermatitis, memory problems, birth defects, cancer, reproductive problems, blood, liver and kidney disorders.

Educationally: Working in agricultural sites may deny children of regular school attendance and lead to poor academic performance and low grades. This is because in predominantly agricultural settlements, children are not allowed to attend school regularly due to high rate of illiteracy. Children work longer hours in the farm on an empty stomach and are expected and forced to work as hard and as long as adults. When this happens, school activities are neglected.

Domestic services: In Nigerian society, children are expected to render unpaid domestic services in their homes, doing all kinds of household chores. Sometimes the older ones take the responsibility of parenting other younger siblings, cooking, washing and managing the home. However, when children are over loaded with tasks that are too much for them to an extent that their education, health, rest and sleep are affected, then it becomes child labour.

Domestic child labour in Nigeria takes the form house helps, baby sitters, cooks and errand boys. No matter the nomenclature, domestic child work is characterized by long working hours and lack of rest days or vacation. Domestic servants are made to wake up earlier than adults to work, and retire to bed at night later than other members of the family, working yet, most of them are denied of care, affection and love, schooling and leisure.

Some domestic child workers are paid servants who receive meager amount of money (too small compared to their sufferings) from their employers. Some others are not paid in cash but may be promised of good food, care and education as a reward although they may neither be rewarded in any way. It is disheartening to see a child take her fellow children of almost the same age to school, and come back to stay behind in the house working, just because she is a maid.

Domestic child labour is often called “hidden” as it is difficult to find the labourers or know the extent of their sufferings as many children are abused by their own parents and relations, let alone strangers who employ them ILO.

Some children according to ILO suffer violence, poverty, lack of education, gender and ethnic discrimination in their homes. For instance, a 14 year old girl called Faith was forced by her mistress to sit on a burning electric cooker because she Faith allegedly wetted her bed IPEC – ILO identified some of the common challenges of child domestic labourers, which include; long and tiring working days, use of toxic chemicals, handling of dangerous items like axe, hot pans, knives, electrical equipment and lifting of heavy loads, insufficient good meals, lack of accommodation, physical violence and sexual abuse.

All these may expose them to stress, chemical poisoning, injuries, electrical shock, emotional health problems, musculoskeletal problems, malnutrition, infectious diseases, and sexually transmitted infections.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the health effects of child abuse and child labour in Nigeria.
2. To identify the educational effects of child abuse and child labour in Nigeria.
3. To highlight the preventive measures to end child abuse and child labour in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the health effects of child abuse and child labour in Nigeria?
2. What are the educational effects of child abuse and child labour in Nigeria?

The instrument for data collected was structured questionnaire and in depth interview. The questionnaire was designed to reflect the research questions. Those who could not read and write were helped by a research assistant.

Childhood under threat

In Nigeria, child labour does mostly occur in semi-formal and informal businesses with hundreds of thousands of young domestic servants, mainly working for prosperous urban

families. Domestic servants are the least visible category and often sexually harassed. Among young domestic workers, one half of those employed in Lagos said they knew of sexually molested domestic servants.

Overall, hazardous work in fields, quarries, private households and on the streets exposes children to abuse and exploitation and poses serious threats to their health and development.

Where do children in Nigeria work?
Nigeria Children aged 5- 17 years old works in public places such as streets and markets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> street vendors (64%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beggars (13%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shoe shiners (4%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> car washers/watchers (6%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vulcanisers (24%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bus conductors (17%)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iron / metal workers (6%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carpenters (14%), tailors / weavers (14%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scavengers (5%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feet washers (8%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hairdressers / barbers (18%)
<p>Semi-public settings such as cottage industries and mechanic workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apprentice mechanic / • Private households • Domestic servants. • caterers (8%)
<p>Agricultural plantation and quarries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • farm and quarry workers

Methodology

Descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The population of the study was the entire child labourers in the country. Staged stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Firstly, six (6) states were selected. The second stage of the sampling was to select two major cities in each of the states. Thirdly, major streets, markets, motor parks, and households were selected. The sampling size was 1,800 child workers contacted from these areas. Out of the 1,800 children, 300 child workers of any sort were contacted from each of the 6 states. ($6 \times 300=1800$). To

participate in the interview, a household must have at least a child between the ages of 5-17 years. Permission was granted by parent(s) for a child to participate in the interview which had a high level of confidentiality between the interviewer and the interviewee.

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(6 × 300=1800). To participate in the interview, a household must have at least a child between the ages of 5-17 years. Permission was granted by parent(s) for a child to participate in the interview which had a high level of confidentiality between the interviewer and the interviewee.

The instrument for data collected was structured questionnaire and in depth interview. The questionnaire was designed to reflect the research questions. Those who could not read and write were helped by a research assistant. Audio tape recorder was used during the in-depth interview. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages and frequency.

Results

The data in **Table 1** showed that 44% (792) child labourers are males, while 56% (1,008) are females. 11% (198) children are between the age of 5-7 years. 14% (252) are 8-9 years old. 20% (375) are between 11-13 years, 24 (432) are 14-16 years. 31% (558) are 17-18 years.

Table 1 Personal data.

S/N	Sex	Frequency	Percentage

1	Male	792	44%
2	Female	1,008	56%
		1,800	100%
3	Child age		
	5 – 7	198	11%
	8 – 10	252	14%
	11 – 13	375	20%
	14 – 16	432	24%
	17 – 18	558	31%
		1,800	100%

The data in **Table 2** revealed that 24% representing 432 children work due to poverty. 16% (288) respondents do child labour due to lack of care. 22% (396) are forced to work. 20% (360) children work due to large family. While 18% (324) work due to lack of what to do.

Table 2 Reasons for child labour.

Reasons for child labour	Frequency	Percentage
- I work to support my poor family	432	24%
- Nobody cares for me	288	16%
- I am forced to work	396	22%
- We are too many in the family and our income is insufficient	360	20%
- To keep myself busy	324	18%
Total	1,800	100%

The information in **Table 3** indicated that out of five dimensions of child labour researched on, 32% representing 576 children, work as hawkers. 28% (504) are beggars, 10% (180) carry loads for people, 12% (216) work in agricultural sites while 18% (324) children are domestic servants.

Table 3 Dimensions of child labour.

Dimensions of child labour	Freq.	Percent
- Hawking	576	32%

- Begging	504	28%
- Working in Agric. sites	216	12%
- Carry of loads for people	180	10%
- Domestic services	324	18%
Total	1,800	100%

The summary of data in **Table 4** indicated that 11% (198) of the respondents have had a traffic accident. 16% (288) had injuries. 4% (72) had fever and headache. 3% (54) children experienced itching. 2% (36) of the respondent had rape, while 5% (90) complained of pneumonia. 10% (180) had crawl-crawl. 2% (36) had waist pain. 5% (90) respondents experienced muscle pains. 3% 54, suffered spinal injuries 4% (72) child labourers complained about snake and insect bites. 2% (36) children have had burns while 1% (18) had experienced electric shock. 6% (108) had difficulty in breathing, while 1% (18) have had chemical poisoning, while 101% (180) are usually sick due to hunger.

Table 4 Health effects of child labour.

Health problems of hawking	Sometimes	Almost always	Total
- Being knocked down by vehicles	5% (90)	2% (36)	7% (126)
- Injuries from beatings	1 (18)	4 (72)	6% (108)

- Fever and headache after hawking	4% (72)	0% (00)	4% (72)
- Body pains	3% (54)	12% (216)	15% (270)
- Injuries from rape or attempted rape	2% (36)	0% (00)	2% (36)
- Always sick due to hunger	3% (54)	2% (36)	5% (90)
Health problems of beggars			
- Traffic accidents	1% (36)	2 (36)	5% (72)
- Itching at the private part	2% (36)	1% (18)	3% (54)
- Pains from rape	2% (36)	0% (00)	2% (36)
- Pneumonia due to cold	1% (18)	4% 72	5% (90)
- Craw-craw-skin disease	6% (108)	4% (72)	10% (180)
- Always sick due to hunger	2% (36)	3% (54)	5% (90)

Health problems of lifting and or carrying heavy loads			
- Waist pains	1% (18)	1% (18)	2% (36)
- Spinal injuries muscle pains	1% (18)	2% (36)	3% (54)
- Muscle pain	2% (36)	3% (54)	5% (90)
Health problems of Agricultural child labourers			
- Injuries from machines/knives etc.	0% (00)	2% (36)	2% (36)
- Insect and or snake bites	1% (18)	3% (54)	4% (72)
- Difficulty in breathing	3% (54)	1% (18)	4% (72)
- Machine accident – cuts	1% (18)	0% (00)	1% (18)
Health problems of domestic servants			
- Injuries	1% (18)	2% (36)	3% (54)
- Burns	1% (18)	1% (18)	2% (36)

- Body pains	0% (00)	1% (18)	1% (18)
- Electric shock	1% (18)	0% (00)	1% (18)
- Breathing difficulties	1% (18)	0% (18)	2% (36)
- Having been diagnosed with chemical poisoning.	1% (18)	0% (00)	1% (18)

The summary of data in **Table 5** according the severity of health problems of child labour indicated that children suffer body pains most. These pains came as a result of too much trekking with heady loads during hawking, pains from rape, waist and muscle pains when lifting heavy or carrying heavy loads, and body pains due to tedious domestic works. 25% (450) of child labourers injuries of all kinds which 15% (270) child workers experience. The 3rd in severity traffic accident that affects 11% (198) of the respondents. Others in order of severity include; crawl-crawl with 10% (180) respondents, sickness due to hunger which 10% (180) suffer from. Pneumonia affects 5% (90), fever and headache affects 4% (72), snake and insect bites effect 4% (72), itching affects 3% (54), burns affects 2% (36), chemical poisoning with 1% (18), cuts affect 1% (18) and finally electric shock affects 1% (18).

Table 5 Health effects of child labour according to severity of the problems.

	Rank	Almost always	Sometimes	Total
All body pains	1st	17% (306)	81% (144)	25% (450)
Injuries of all sorts	2nd	12% (216)	4% (72)	16% (288)

Traffic accidents	3rd	4% (72)	7% (126)	11% (198)
Craw-craw	4th	4% (72)	6% (108)	10% (180)
Sickness due to hunger	5th	1% (90)	5% (90)	10% (180)
Difficulty in breathing	6th	2% (36)	4% (72)	6% (108)
Pneumonia	7th	4% (72)	1% (18)	5%(90)
Fever and headache	8th	-	4% (72)	4% (72)
Snake and insect bites	8th	3% (54)	1% (18)	4% (72)
Itching in the insect bites	10th	1% (18)	2% (36)	3% (54)
Burns	11th	1% (18)	1% (18)	2% (36)
Chemical poisoning	12th	-	1% (18)	1% (18)
Cuts	12th	-	1% (18)	1% (18)
Electric shock	12th	-	1% (18)	1% (18)

Pneumonia affects 5% (90), fever and headache affects 4% (72), snake and insect bites effect 4% (72), itching affects 3%.

The data in **Table 6** revealed that the most severe educational effect is the children who attend school in the morning and work in the afternoon in which 24% (432) children are affected. The second in rank are the children who do not go to school at all for them to work, they are 342 (18%). The third in rank is 16% (288) children who do not have time to do home studies. The fourth constitutes 15% (270) child labourers who do not attend school in the morning due to child labour. Second to the last in severity are those who miss class whenever they have worked to do. They constitute 13% (234) of the respondents. The last constitute 12% (216) respondents who drop out of school for child labour.

Table 6 Educational effects of child labour.

Educational effects of child labour	Rank	Sometimes	Almost always	Total
- I do not go to school at all so that I can work	2nd	00 (00)	19% (342)	18% (342)
- I miss class for work	5th	8% (144)	5% (90)	13% (234)
- I do not have time to do my home studies	3rd	10% (180)	6% (108)	16% (288)
- My parents(s)/guardian ask me to drop out of school for work	6th	8% (144)	4% (72)	12% (216)

- I work in the morning and attend afternoon school	4th	9% (162)	6% (108)	15% (270)
- I attend school in the morning and work after school	1st	11% (198)	13% (234)	24% (432)

Discussion

The data in **Table 1** revealed that there are more female child labourers than males. This may be as a result of the fact that in Nigeria, male children attend school and are more preferred than female children who are easily given out for house helps and hawking business. The data also indicated that child labour activities increase as the age of the children increases.

The data in **Table 2** showed that children engage in child labour due to the following reasons – poverty, broken family, cultural belief of children being sent by God to help in the family, family size and lack of schooling. Poverty being a major factor in child labour, supports the findings by UNICEF that poverty is the major cause of child labour in Nigeria.

The data in **Table 3** identified hawking, begging, working in agricultural sites, carrying of loads and domestic services as dimensions of child labour as stated by the researcher.

The data in **Table 4** discussed the health effects of child labour on the child labourers. The findings revealed that 11% of the children (198) studied had traffic accidents in one way or the other. The findings in this work shows that child workers experience high rate of motor accidents. The data also indicated high level of injuries among child workers, as revealed by a vast body of other research studies such as UIOWA, International Labour Organization, Child Labour – Atom (2011).

The World Health Organization WHO (2002) that show high rate of injuries among child workers. Such injuries may develop to infertility and cancer later in life. This study revealed that 12% (216) of the respondents suffered one kind of injury or another. 4% (72) of the child workers had fever and headache after hawking. Child Labour - Atom

also reported that one out of our child labourers suffer illnesses. Research also indicated that child labourers experience body pains after work. ILO, World Health Organization, also support this finding.

The findings showed that 3% representing 54 respondents experienced itching at the private part due to working in filthy environment. 2% (36) child labourers have had an experience of rape which can result to HIV/Aid and any other sexually transmitted infections, pains emotional trauma. 5% (90) complained of having had pneumonia. Beggars as a matter of fact are usually exposed to bad weather and are never protected from it. From such environment they catch cough and develop pneumonia. International Labour Organization investigation on the worst form of child labour revealed that labourers easily develop cough and catch pneumonia. It has also been revealed through these research findings that 180 child labourers (10%) had craw-craw. The findings also indicated that pains are a common health problem among child workers more especially those who lift and or carry loads that are more than the estimated load weight for children. As a matter of fact, 2% (36) complained of waist pain, 5% (90) experienced muscle pains. 3% (54) of the respondents stated that they suffer from spinal injuries. 72 (4%) complained of snake and insect bites as they work in agricultural farms. 36 (2%) of the children have had burns while 18 (1%) had experienced electric shock. These respondents who work as house helps engage in cooking and cleaning without due experience on how to do the job. 6% (108) according to the findings have had difficulty in breathing due to their contact with chemicals and other hazardous environment, while on 18 (1%) have had chemical poisoning. A 6 year study by PCC according to Woolf et al. revealed that 538 child labourers were suffered from toxic exposure from pains, solvents, glues, caustics and other chemicals. 10% (180) experience constant hunger.

Educationally every child labourer has one academic problem of or another ranging from children who attend school in the morning and switch over to business of working immediately they come back from school, to those who do not attend school at all. This is very serious and disheartening.

UNICEF has been fighting for children's education all over the world including Nigeria. Studies by UNICEF Nigeria indicate that child labour is a serious threat to children's education.

International Labour Organization ILO has also been creating awareness for the elimination of child labour and upholding education through many programmes, seminars, convention etc. IPEC-ILO after investigations, concluded that education is a crucial weapon against child labour, and that child labour has robbed children of their education.

In the 2015 Report: Child Labour and education: progress, challenges and future directions, Global Partnership for Education's findings revealed that:

- i. Child labour lowers not primary school enrolment ratio.
- ii. That child labour affects school attendance.
- iii. That children who combine work and education do not perform well in the class.

Other information revealed through direct interview indicated that 60% of the children (1,080) do not eat before setting out for work. 2% (36) of the child workers complain of having experienced a chase or having harassed by unknown persons during hawking or begging. Up to 10% (180) hawkers reported that sometimes they are not given accurate balance of money from their customers who use the children's lack of education to dupe them of their money, while some are not paid after sales by their customers who intimidate them with threats. 6% (108) of children reported of not being paid by their employers after the day's labour.

Child Protection

The Nigerian Government has formally adopted three International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions setting a minimum age for the employment of children at sea, in industry and underground. In addition, the country signed a Memorandum of Understanding in August 2003 in cooperation with ILO to launch a country programme under the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). The

Government showed further commitment by implementing the West Africa Cocoa Agriculture Project (WACAP) and by passing the Child Rights Act Sections 28 and 29 into law. The Child Rights Act prohibits exploitative Labour and enforces sections 58 -64 of the Labour Decree of 1974, now the Labour Act. All legislation is designed to protect children from exploitative work. Some states, like Anambra State, have also banned children from working during school hours. While substantial legislation is now in place, legal enforcement remains another challenge to be met.

Some organization supported interventions

UNICEF Nigeria undertakes a mix of activities to raise awareness and combat child labour across the country, including:

1. Advocating for the ratification and enforcement of international laws that protect children.
2. Supporting the passage of the Child Rights Act at the State level.
3. Supporting an inter-agency approach especially with ILO-IPEC on child Labour.
4. Supporting a National Baseline Survey with government partners and ILO, which will include data on sexual exploitation, child violence and youth militia.
5. Supporting the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) to develop child protection indicators and assessment tools which will assist with the monitoring of child labour and other child protection issues in Nigeria.
6. Signing a memorandum of understanding with the University of Lagos for the establishment of a University Chair to oversee the compilation of relevant peer reviewed child protection research including child Labour.
7. Supporting African Network for the Protection against Prevention of all Forms of Child Abuse, Nigerian Chapter (ANPPCAN) to establish two sentinel centers to monitor child protection abuse in Enugu and Port Harcourt.
8. Continuous technical and supplies support for residential care institutions nation-wide caring for children who lack primary caregivers.

The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with a number of partners:

- provides technical and normative guidance for evidence-based child maltreatment prevention;
- advocates for increased international support for and investment in evidence-based child maltreatment prevention;
- provides technical support for evidence-based child maltreatment prevention programmes in several low- and middle-income countries.

An institutional care study is frequently carried out to make sure that vulnerable children in institutions like orphanages and care centres have access to their basic rights and are protected from exploitation.

The Save & Nurture Child Care Foundation (SNCC) in collaboration with the SNCC Ambassadors of Change, Police, Immigration and NGOs are working ceaselessly to eradicate and eliminate child abuse and child labour in the communities in Nigeria and other developing countries. Also efforts are being made to sensitize the affected communities on the rights of children and highlight the evils of child abuse and child labour.

Recommendations

Although the awareness and action around child labour and health has greatly increased, it is still expedient that public awareness be increased more until something better happens.

Children have different stages of development which slowly build up throughout their developmental stage. So children engaging in tedious tasks during their developmental stage may have high health risks that may affect their health and wellbeing. Children are very delicate due to brain, tissue, bones and physiological development. As a result, children should not be allowed to do the tedious work.

Health professionals are in better key position to identify children at risk and advise parents and guardians on strategies to reduce these risks and recommend action to policy makers. There is also the need to translate the knowledge and legislation into action, moving good intention and idea into protecting the health of children. The

elimination of child labour may be difficult but our children cannot be allowed to be injured or harmed at work in the struggle to survive.

Adults body weight is more than that of children. As a result, doses of chemicals are likely to accumulate on the children's body more than that of adults with greater chemical concentration in the child's body and tissues. Therefore children and adults should not be exposed to the same or similar doses of chemicals. Adult farmers and factory workers should know all these and avoid working with chemicals along side with children.

Children need food and rest. They need adequate rest and high quality food that contains all types of nutrient so as to grow healthy. Studies have shown that the amount of hours children work can significantly affect their health and development. So children should be allowed to rest, and works arranged in a manner to cancel any linkage to child labour.

The education of the child should be seriously guarded. For no reason should any child in Nigeria be deprived of full time school attendance because of any work. No work whatsoever whether in the family or outside home should interfere with children's education.

Members of the medical and scientific groups, parents and guardians, teachers, the government, and the entire Nigerian society should say "No!" to child labour, and focus their efforts on the prevention of any work or labour that harms a child and improve the optimal good health of children.

Government should make a law that forbids child hawking in Nigerian cities. Law enforcement agents should be mandated to arrest any child hawkers especially during school hours and late evenings in Nigeria cities and make parents to pay for their release.

In Northern Nigeria, schools have been built for almajiris but the children do not attend most of the schools. More awareness should be created through mass media about the importance for education and the health implications of child labour.

In Southern Nigeria where parents use their children for begging, the police should continue to arrest and punish these parents until they stop this shameful activity.

Universities should ban the activities of children carrying loads for students & staff, and not giving them uniform for security purposes. It is better to save the children than to save property.

However, religious activities in the northern Nigeria seem to pose challenges on the elimination of child labour. The religious beliefs such as Islamic justification of begging through the almajiris are a serious problem against the elimination of child labour in Nigeria.

In the Southern Nigeria, people believe that children are a gift from God that may be used to fend for the family in time of need irrespective of the age of the child and health and educational implications. This belief also poses challenges to the elimination of child labour.

These problems require serious solutions if child abuse and child labour will be stopped in future.

Conclusion

Child labour is a serious effect of poverty, and poverty is a consequence of child labour. This is because children due to poverty may engage in child labour. As they grow into adulthood, they become low wage adult earners. As a result, their offspring will also be compelled to work as child labourers to support family income. In this way, according to Gall and Happer et al. poverty and child labour are passed from generation to generation. So poverty should be dreaded and eliminated, though in a righteous way.

Child labour results to infectious diseases, chronic illnesses, denial of childhood, and put them in conditions that may be detrimental to their health and even their lives. It is therefore a killer to children's health, development and education. Nigerian governments and non-governmental agencies have shown considerable interests and concerns on the problems of child labour in the country, and have suggested practical policies and strategies to put an end to or minimize this problem, but their efforts are not adequate

enough as the situation worsens on daily basis due to economic recession, political instability, greed, cultural, religious, and traditional beliefs.

For further information on Child abuse and Child labour, check SNCC work in our official [website](#) or contact us by [E-mail](#)

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