Towards Enhancement of Economic Growth via Eradication of Child Labour

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ABSTRACT
The study was an attempt to evaluate the effect of child labour on economic development. A sample of 200 respondents, 50 from each of the selected markets was used. Data was collected through interview of selected respondents. The formulated hypothesis was tested with the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tool. Findings revealed that the groups did not differ in their perception of the essence of education. It was also found that majority of the children involved in child labour live with their parents and relations, who do nothing meaningful to earn their living, but depend solely on the meagre income from the cheap labour supplied by their children. It was recommended among others that Direct Action Programmes which entail the immediate withdrawal of children from hawking, prostitution etc should be embarked on.

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Introduction
In the traditional African Society children are believed to be the blessing of marriage. Ayua and Okagbue (1996) posit that the regard for them is not only physical but also spiritual. They are vulnerable, and therefore regarded as the most cherished natural resource.

The national Policy on Education in its own capacity, asserts that Education fosters the integrity and development of the individual for his own sake and for the general development of the society. Unfortunately however, the above assertions are contradicted by exploitative child labour and trafficking. According to Olowokere and Olateru (2010), child labour means the engagement on a regular basis of children in some productive or income-yielding activities for which the primary beneficiaries are persons other than themselves.

The International Labour Organization Ilo (1995), estimates the number of working children between the ages of 5 and 14 years to be 250 million in the developing countries: 120 million are full time workers, 61% in Asia, 32% in Africa, and 7% in Latin America.

The clear indication here, is that child labour is practiced more in developing than developed nations. International Labour Organization argues that the eradication of child labour will increase the world’s total income by $4 trillion as well as boost a nation’s economy.

Statement of the Problem
Child labour is not just a national, but a global problem. Some international organizations like Ilo, UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO perceive child labour as detrimental to the mental, physical and psychological development of children.

In 1998, International Labour Organization reported a sharp increase in the incidence of child prostitution. 19% of the school children and 40% of the street children were economically active. Trafficked children are employed as domestic servants, sex workers, drug peddlers hawkers, petty traders, beggars and bus conductors (US Embassy Lagos).

Despite the efforts made by the Nigerian government between 2009 and 2003 to curb/eradicate child labour, the result of a study conducted by the International Labour Organization (Ilo), as released in a UNICEF bulletin (2006) depicted that 15 million children under the age of 14 are working within Nigeria.

This in no doubts, is a worrisome scenario that needs urgent attention since such a significant number of children losing out on education definitely impacts negatively on the economic development of the country.

Objectives of the Study
The broad objective of this study is to enhance economic development via eradication of child labour.

The specific objective is: To ascertain the influence of education on economic development.

Research Question: To what extent does education impact on economic development?

Hypothesis: There is no difference in the perception of the groups about the relevance of education.

Review of Related Literature
Conceptual Framework
The Concept of Labour
As a factor of production, labour means the various forms of human effort put into or used in production. It also refers to the mental and physical exertions generated during the production process. For every form of labour supplied, the suppliers of labour receive their rewards in the nature of wages and salaries.

Labour Force
The Labour Force of (working population) of any country comprises all active working individuals between the ages of 15 and 65 years.

Child
A child is a product of a lawful marriage subject to control and advice of the parents.

In his paper, Ali identifies the peculiar rights of a child as follows:
The Peculiar Rights of a Child

The various rights of the Nigeria today are derivable from six principal source of law namely:

The United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child which was enacted in 1989, Nigeria was one of the signatories to the Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity.

The 1979 Constitution in section 17(3) (f) provides that: “Children, Young persons… Should be protected against any exploitation whatsoever, and against moral and material neglect”. Section 18 of the same Constitution enjoins the government to direct its policy towards ensuring of equal and adequate educational opportunities at level.

It should be noted that statutorily, the welfare of children was first recognized in 1943 when the Children and Young Persons Ordinance was passed. This later became chapter 31 of the laws of Nigeria as revised in 1948 and was retained as Chapter 32 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria and Lagos as revised in 1958. The Ordinance which later became an Act was made applicable to Lagos in 1946 and was extended to Eastern and Western Regions of Nigeria by Order-in Council No. 22 of 1946, while it was enacted for Northern Nigeria in 1958.

The importance of the CYPA makes it imperative to set out in broad outline its provision. The CYPA makes provisions for the welfare and treatment of young offenders and the establishment of juvenile courts. The Act also makes provisions for juveniles in need of care or protection. The law is divided into nine broad parts, part one deals with preliminary issues such as definitions. Parts two deals with juvenile offenders especially issues such as bail of children arrested, custody when they are not granted bail, association with detained adults while in custody, conditions under which a parent or guardian may attend court and so on. Other matters dealt with in part two include the constitution of the juveniles, method whereby children and young persons charged with offences may be dealt with and the power to establish places of detention for juveniles.

Part three deals with probation officers. Part four deals with approved institutions, while Part five deals with juveniles in need of care and attention and contains provisions on situations where the parent or guardian is unable to exercise control. Part six makes provisions for the contribution of parents or guardians toward the maintenance of juveniles, while part seven, eight and nine consider miscellaneous issues such as trading in another village or town, or sent to stay with a relative. At this stage, the CYPA makes a section providing as follows: 18. An educated child brings pride to the country to the need millennium must take good care of the children in the society.

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be clothed properly,befittingly and in accordance with the season.

Other Rights
These rights may include right of child to have free access to either parents; not to be retrained by any form of protocol. In essence a child whether male or female must be free with both parents, who must be ready at all times to play their roles on issues in which their admonition is needed. A male child has the right to ask his father concerning any physical changes he notices in his growth or development i.e. adolescent, while a female has the right to ask the mother concerning her own physiological changes as well. The outdated attitude of parents shunning their children on issues as the above does more evil than good.

Child Labour
The United Nations Convention in its Article 18 calls for an outright prohibition of child labour which is hazardous or likely to interfere with the child’s education or development which increases the risk of a child incurring physical or mental harm or which prevents the child from either attending school or which affects his school performance should be discouraged. The labour Act 15 in its S.59 provides that a child under the age of 12 cannot be employed or work in any capacity except where he is employed by a member of his family on light work or an agricultural, horticultural or domestic character approved by the Minister. A child cannot be required to lift, carry or move anything so heavy as to likely injure his physical development. Whatever the form of employment is, a child should not be prevented from returning to his parents or guardian at the end of each day’s work. The new trend in Europe and United States of America to refuse to patronize products that are produced with child labour, for example, football produced in China and India.

Empirical Review
Eswaran (1996) studied child labour and maintained that as long as the institution of child labour continues to exist, parents tend to have a preference for many uneducated, as opposed to few educated children. Dosunmu and Abidogun (2011) conducted a study on child labour among working children in Ogun State. The study revealed that most of the children had no flair for economic activities.

In her study of India, Swawinathan (1997) maintained that the share of child labour in the mills fell during the early nineteenth century because as they (children) grew up, there was a cohort of non productive adult workers.

A cross-sectional interview conducted by Feluga (1999) revealed that a higher prevalence rate of child labour existed among children living with their parents and relations than those living with other people with whom they had no blood tie. Also, child labour was found to be related to the number of children in the family. Anugwom in his study found that child labour is the product of the coincidence between economic hardship or poverty and the survival of the family.

Methodology
An interview study of 200 children between the ages of 8 and 15 was conducted in four markets Eke-Market Awka, Ose Market Onitsha, Main Market, Onitsha and Nkwo Nnewi Market.

The survey sample comprised 50 respondents from each randomly selected market. While simple percentage was used for analyzing the collected data, the formulated hypothesis was tested with Analysis of Variance.

Data Analysis
Using percentages, the data collected were analyzed using the following tables.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents based on sex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While 63% of the respondents were male, 37% were female, depicting the existence of more boys in child labour.

Table 2. Distribution based on forms of Child Labour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child begging</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child trade</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child prostitution</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 above depicts that 53% of the children interviewed were involved in child trade, 35% in child begging, and 12% in child prostitution, which was found to have stemmed from child trade.

Table 3. Domicile of Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Relatives</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangers</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While 72% of the children interviewed lived with their parents/relatives, 28% lived with strangers. This is a clear indication that many parents are not capable of meet the financial obligations of their families.

Table 4. Occupation of Parents/Guardian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not overt</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idle</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While 51% of the respondents are not certain about their parents’/guardians’ occupation, 49% assert that their parents/guardians are unemployed. This analysis clarifies the prevalence of child labour.

Table 5. Government Intervention to eradicate child labour (for example, withdrawal of children from market places, especially at odd times).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any intervention by government</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unfortunately, the analysis above is a clear indication that there has been a zero implementation of eradication of child labour.

Table 6. How would you feel if government takes this job off you and gets you enrolled into a school?.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very happy</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While 90% of the children interviewed expressed and affirmed their support, only 7% were indifferent, while 3% of them showed dissatisfaction. This is a clear indication that the children are not comfortable with the present situation.

The Formulated Hypothesis was tested with the data in table 6 concerning respondents’ awareness of the relevance of education.
Within group degrees of freedom = number of groups minus 1 = 4 – 1 = 3.

Between group degrees of freedom = number of groups = 4.

Between Group Variation, BGV = \sum n_i(X - \bar{X})^2

\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\hline
X & X_i & (X-X)^2 & X_i & (X-X)^2 & X_i & (X-X)^2 & X_i \\
\hline
40 & 14.7 & 6.40 & 3 & 14.7 & 13.7 & 1 & 14.7 & 18.8 \\
50 & 18.7 & 9.80 & 4 & 18.7 & 2.16 & 2 & 18.7 & 17.9 \\
45 & 16.3 & 8.24 & 3 & 16.3 & 17.7 & 1 & 16.3 & 234 \\
45 & 17 & 784 & 5 & 17 & 144 & 1 & 17 & 256 \\
1 & 17 & 256 & \\
\hline
\end{array}

Within group variation = \sum (X_i - X)^2 = 4,859

Between Group Variation = 33

Between Group Degrees of Freedom = number of group degrees of freedom = 8

Also in his work, Ahloja (2007) posits that societal acceptance of child labour discourages people from reporting child labour violations.

Various types of child labour identified in table 2 are in consonance with a 1998 report by International Labour Organization (ILO) which maintained that about 19% of the school children and 40% of street children are economically active. The submission is also in keeping with an earlier UNICEF report of 1996 wherein it was stated that 64% of Nigeria children are vendors.

The analysis in table 3 depicts that a higher percentage of children involved live with their parents and relatives. This is a clear indication that parents of children involved in child labour are not capable to send their children to school. This assertion corroborates with the views of Anugwom (2003) wherein he posits that child labour stems from a combination of economic hardship (poverty) and the survival of the family. Also in consonance with the assertion is a cross-sectional interview conducted by Feluga (1999) which revealed that a large family size with meagre resources would certainly compel parents to engage their children in labour activities. Also revealed by the study is that a higher of prevalence rate of child labour was seen among children who live with their parents as opposed to those who live with guardians with whom they have no blood tie.

Table 4 reports the same situation of parents’ inability to afford the bare basics of substance as a result of unemployment / near unemployment.

On government intervention, table 5 depicts clearly that children have not felt any impact of government’s effort to eradicate child labour. This assertion is corroborated in the views of Ahloja (2007) wherein he argues persuasively that the existing Nigerian measures have failed to take cognizance of the realities of child labour, thus the government’s inability to ensure an effective enforcement of its labour laws.

The reaction of children towards attending classes (table 6) shows that they yearn to be educated. This is substantiated in the result of a study conducted by the US Department of Labour which affirms that any country that desires to end child labour must first make education compulsory and enforce laws on eradication of child labour.

Conclusion

Child labour has remained a major source of concern in Nigeria. Irrespective of legislative measures, poor implementation and consequent poor educational achievements certainly impact negatively on the social, moral, cognitive and physical development of children directly concerned.

Recommendations

1. All births must be registered and documented, as this is in line with the efforts to promote equity.
2. Direct Action Programmes which entail withdrawal of children from hawking, prostitution, etc should be immediately embarked on.
3. State and Local Government should be integrated into Direct Action Programmes. Traditional Rulers and Community leaders are not to be exempted.
4. On the basis of the stipulation in section 301 of the Criminal Code Act, which demands that parents (or guardians) must provide children with necessities, the government should endeavour to train enough personnel and provide adequate equipment for creating awareness through seminars and workshops for parents.
5. Since education is the most effective way to dismantle the cycle of poverty (the most overt cause of child labour), free and compulsory education must be considered imperative.

\[ F = \frac{SB^2}{SW^2} = \frac{33}{607} = 0.0518 \]

\[ H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4 \]

\[ H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \neq \mu_3 \neq \mu_4 \]

\[ H_1 \] is rejected when the computed value of F is greater than the critical value (4.07), and accepted when it is less than the critical value (4.07).
References


