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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 children and power to make regulations respectively. The religion of Islam has its own set of rules on the rights of a child which are comprehensive and comparable with all the rights enunciated in other systems of law earlier alluded to. Lastly, the various native law and custom indigenous to Nigeria have rules on the subject. The importance of the right of the child stems from the fact the about 47 percent of Nigeria’s population of 100 million are children as earlier defined. Generally speaking, the peculiar rights of a child after survival include right to life, right against cruelty, right to education, right to health, right to shelter, food and clothing and any other right that are found to be due to the child.

Right to Life

Life is sacred and important. Just like S.30 (1) of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria speaks about the right to life of every citizen of Nigeria. It is pertinent to state here that the world “every person” used in that section includes children. It is barbaric to offer a child as sacrifice to a God or a goodness to gain a favour. It is even

worst if a child is sexually and physically abused by some of the depraved men and women in our society.

Right against Cruelty

This subhead has so many facets. In some cases a child can be refused his meal if he refuses to work on the farm with the parents. In the same vein, rights are denied a child for refusal to run errands or carry out menial jobs. A child can be beaten if he visited his divorced mother without the father’s consent. A child hawking till late in the night is deprived of so many things which his mates enjoy at home. It is also cruelty against a child who is sent away from his parents to learn trading in another village or town, or sent to stay with a barren relation. The examples can be multiplied. The killing of a female in showing preference for a male is barbaric and cruel. Dumping of new born babies in the refuse dump is cruelty. There is provision for unwanted babies at the children welfare homes in all states of the Federation.

Where a child develops habit of pick-pocket due to poor feeding or too troublesome for parents to handle, S 34 of the Children and Young Persons Act provides that the parent or guardian of such a child could go to juvenile Court for necessary orders. Children are said to be leaders of tomorrow. Any society that wants good leaders that would lead the country to the need millennium must take good care of the children in the society.

Right to Education

Every child has a right to be educated and such responsibility is on the parents and the society. A child must not be made an idle or vagabond as a result of the parent’s poverty. A child should be allowed to be educated as far as he could go. A child who is educated would be less burdensome on the parents and the society when he becomes an adult.

He would strive hard to pay back if not all, at least part of what the parents and the society spent on him when he was a child. Usually a child pays more than what was spent on him. An educated child brings pride and glory to the family. Moreover, it is easier to lead an educated society than one infested with illiteracy. The Nigerian motion is an example of the latter.

This issue would have been frontally addressed if the provisions of Section 18 of the 1979 Constitution are justifiable 14. The Section provides as follows: 18.

(1) Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.

(2) Government shall promote science and technology

(3) Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy and to this, Government shall as and when practicable provide:

(a) Free, compulsory and universal primary education.

(b) Free secondary education.

(c) Free university education and

(d) Free adult literacy programme.

Right to Health

A child has the right to be catered for medically. In Nigeria of today unlike the time of our parents, a child is entitled to adequate health care and must be immunized against all deadly diseases to safeguard him from attacks. Both the Federal and State Ministries of health are really working and expending monies on the expanded programmes on immunization for the survival of our children.

Right to Shelter, Food and Clothing

A child is entitled to be sheltered in a comfortable and well ventilated home, he is entitled to be fed with good and nutritious food for energy body building and strength. A child is entitled to be clothed by his parents or guardian. This clothing may not necessarily be expensive, but a child must

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 out right 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.

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Males	125	63
Females	75	37
Total	200	100

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.

Forms	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Child begging	70	35
Child trade	106	53
Child prostitution	24	12
Total	200	100

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.

Forms	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Parents/Relatives	145	72
Strangers	55	28
Total	200	100

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.

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Not overt	102	51
Idle	98	49
Total	200	100

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).

Any intervention by government	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	Nil	0
No	200	100
Total	200	100

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?.

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very happy	180	90
Indifferent	15	7
Sad	5	3
Total	200	100

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.

	Eke Market Awka	Ose Market Onitsha	Main Market Onitsha	Eke Market Awka
V. happy	40	50	45	45
Indifferent	3	4	3	5
Sad	1	2	1	1
	$\frac{X_1}{X_1} = 44$	$\frac{X_2}{X_2} = 56$	$\frac{X_3}{X_3} = 49$	$\frac{X_4}{X_4} = 51$
	$\frac{X_1}{X_1} = 147$	$\frac{X_2}{X_2} = 18.7$	$\frac{X_3}{X_3} = 16.3$	$\frac{X_4}{X_4} = 17$

Within group degrees of freedom = $(n_1-1)+(n_2-1)+(n_3-1)+(n_4-1)$
 $= 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 = 8$

$$\text{Overall average } \bar{X} = \frac{14.7 + 18.7 + 16.3 + 17}{4}$$

$$\bar{X} = 16.7.$$

Between group degrees of freedom = number of groups minus 1 = $4 - 1 = 3$.

Between group variation, $BGV = \sum n_i (X_i - \bar{X})^2$

$$4(14.7 - 16.7)^2 = 16$$

$$4(18.7 - 16.7)^2 = 16$$

$$4(16.3 - 16.7)^2 = 0.64$$

$$4(17 - 16.7)^2 = 0.36$$

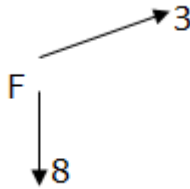
$$33.0$$

X	\bar{X}_1	$(X - \bar{X}_1)^2$	\bar{X}_2	$(X - \bar{X}_2)^2$	\bar{X}_3	$(X - \bar{X}_3)^2$	\bar{X}_4	$(X - \bar{X}_4)^2$
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	824		
3					16.3	177		
1					16.3	234		
45							17	784
5							17	144
1							17	256

Within group variation = $\sum (X_i - \bar{X}_i)^2 = 4,859$

Between Group Variation = 33

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



$$SB^2 = \frac{\text{Between Group Variation}}{\text{Between Group Degree of Freedom}}$$

$$= \frac{33}{3} = 11$$

$$SW^2 = \frac{\text{Within Group Variation}}{\text{Within Group Degree of Freedom}}$$

$$= \frac{4859}{8} = 607$$

$$F = \frac{SB^2}{SW^2} = \frac{11}{607} = 0.018$$

Statistical Decision: Since the computed value of F (0.018) is less than the critical value (4.07), we accept H_0 and reject H_1

Conclusion

The various groups do not differ in their perception of the relevance of education.

Discussion

Considering the fact that numerous male children within the stipulated age range are barrow pushers, we had more males than females. This is in line with the findings of Grootaert and Patrinos (1999), cited in Dosunmu and Abidogun (2011) which depicted a higher percentage of males than females in child labour. This is basically because girls are more susceptible to sexual exploitation than boys. However, Basu (1998) in his study maintained that social norm actually precipitates a parent's decision to send a child to work.

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.

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