

Child Labour Practice and the Legal Perspectives: The Nigerian Public Sector Corruption as Antecedent

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Abstract

Children are born to this world to enjoy parental care till the age of maturity when they are able to decide rationally on their choices in life. Therefore, the purpose of this study investigates the legal perspective against Child labour, one of the factors that prevents children's access to education attainment that left them with no option than to serve under the forced labour. It also examines the effect of the prevailing corrupt political system in Nigeria as one of the major factors, it also explores global and regional legal frameworks preventing child labour and measures for eradication. The study is library research that makes use of international and domestic law doctrines. The future of the young segment of the society has no direction under corrupt leadership that may have devoured the national resources before the children come of age and consequently leave the society with no option than to be heavily involved in odd jobs to survive. This paper examines and exposes the practical implication of the role the poor governance, under a weak leadership play in thwarting the future of intelligent, ambitious and potentially reliable children due to poor education and failure of social policy implementation. The theory is based on the fact that the work is exploitative in nature, while the parents of the children in child labour lacks the true information as to the nature of the work. The theory established that the worst form of poverty is the driven force that pushed the children to child labour and must be critically addressed by the policymakers to phase out child labour phenomenon. Research found that majority of the factors that responsible for the engagement of the children in child labour are endlessly found within the government's faulty policy perspectives. All the studied factors are within the possible control of the concerned countries' leadership, even when parents living in abject poverty agreed to off children for child labour to sustain the family.

Keywords: Child Labour, Legal Perspectives, Corruption, Nigerian Public Sector.

Introduction

The world is witnessing backwardness instead of progress in human capital development. Nigeria as a case study fails in the last two decades in such a direction because the young ones that should be trained to take over the responsibility of managing the society are not properly trained with inclusive minimum standard education prior to the retirement of the elderly in leadership. The common reasons why children face challenges in their early childhood life are multidimensional, but common causes lie in the parents while the government share more of the blames as an inefficient umpire, that causes child labour to thrive. Punch (2022 September 3) reports that there are signs that the 11,536 schools that

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closed in 2021, affecting 5.3 million pupils, contributed to a considerable rise in the number of children not in school, from roughly 15 million in 2021 to 20 million in 2022-UNISEF. The study examines the causes of and effective eradication of child labour.

Education, as part of the social factors for knowledge acquisition, is a non-negotiable right for children. International NGOs such as UNICEF maintain their policy that all children must have access to education as they transform in lives to save them from becoming a wasted generation. That is one of the reasons the global organization strives to build peace, eradicate poverty and drive sustainable development, while the International labour organization (ILO) strictly condemns child labour in any form and under any condition to pave the way for their future.

Unicef (2022, May) reports that child labour is prevalent in Africa sub-Saharan with 26% of child labourers from age 5 to 17 years in contrast, to 7% of youngsters in the same age bracket that are working in potentially hazardous jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, Eritria, Somalia, Republic of Congo Afghanistan, Sudan Pakistan, Yemen are in the first 10 on the globe.

The legal perspective against Child Labour,

The study navigates the legal perspectives right from the legal framework of the country under study, Nigeria. The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs through the Federal Government of Nigeria found to have submitted an approved drafted report and the legal framework on Violence Against Children to the UN Secretary General's Independent Expert on Violence Against Children.

International human rights treaties on violence against children Since ratified by the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC), In the same way, the African Union Charter has been in place for the Rights and Welfare of the Child, instruments with international recognition. A variety of institutional and legislative measures focusing on addressing the violence against children have been instituted while some legislated prohibition against children rights include the Child's Rights Act (CRA) 2003; Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 that prohibits human trafficking; Ebonyi State enacted Law No. 010 in (2001) on prohibits the acts of using Harmful Traditional Practices Against Children and Women; Law that prohibits the practice of Female Genital Mutilation in Edo State 2000; Amendment Law 2000 of Edo State Criminal Code; Prohibition Edict of Hawking by Children of 1985 CAP 58; Female Circumcision (Prohibition) as well as Girl Child Marriages Law 2000 in cross River State.

The African Union, a continental organization, had crafted its own approved legal framework in accordance with the values and concerns of the global organization's legal framework on child rights. The Children's Charter, enacted in 1990 and implemented in 1999, serves as the instrument, universal principles, and norms for the protection of children's rights. It is one of the few regional treaties that address civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child promotes and protects the rights and interprets the ACRWC's disposition as required of party states and all other institutions recognized by the AU or member states. The study finds that some of the child rights articles need to be tweaked to reflect African socio-cultural and economic traditions and values concerning children's rights. According to the organization, the Children's Charter arose because AU member states believed that the CRC overlooked important socio-cultural and economic realities specific to Africa, and that should be included for the sake of reality.

Terms of a global framework perspective on children's civil, cultural, political and economic rights from all races and religious beliefs as well as abilities is fundamental and a legally binding international agreement under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as agreed and signed by all countries, the Convention such as Life, survival and development, Protection from violence, abuse or neglect,

An education that enables children to fulfil their potential, Be raised by, or have a relationship with, their parents and Express their opinions and be listened to (UNCRC, 1989 November).

The UNCRC defines a child as any person under the age of 18 in Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and no child shall be treated unfairly for any reason. In response to research under context, the article (32) stated that even if they are not particularly addressed in this Convention, children have the right to be safeguarded against all other forms of exploitation (being exploited). Article 28 declares unequivocally that education is a right for all children in secondary and higher education. Discipline in schools should respect the rights of the children and discourage violence against them. Article 19 asserts that the government must protect children from violence, abuse, and neglect by anyone who looks after them in the broad sense of the government's responsibility. This final article invariably recognized the government as the sole authority capable of enforcing the rights with strict adherence.

In its own statistical study, UNICEF found that about 10% of children are under the influence of child labour across the globe, under which some are coerced into hazardous work by child trafficking groups. The global organization revealed that Alliance 8.7, of which UNICEF and ILO are partners, is encouraging all stakeholders, organizations and the Member States, to intensify their efforts in the universal battle against child labour as a new total of 160 million is identified worldwide, representing an increase of 8.4 million children from 151.6 million in the last four years. The organizations viewed that millions more are at risk as a result of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Theoretical Perspective of the Study: Theory of Exploitative Child Labour

Swinnerton and Rogers, (2001) researched child labour and came up with a model named the Theory of Exploitative Child Labour with two key features: first, parents lack complete knowledge of whether or not the available job secured by their kids are exploitative. Second, businesses decide whether to abuse their young employees. According to the model, a prohibition of exploiting child work is preferable since it eliminates the issue of parents' incomplete information and consequently, results in Pareto efficiency. Additionally, the model discovers that a ban lowers company profits—even for companies that do not exploit child labour—and raises the earnings of child workers. At the macroeconomic level, a ban can have both positive and negative consequences on child employment and output. Some of the authors included in the literature that developed this model of exploitative child labour contributed some relevant findings. For instance, Jean-Marie Baland and James A. Robinson (2000) and Priya Ranjan (2001) found that inadequate financial markets are a contributing factor to the phenomenon of working children; children may wind up working in part due to their families' inability to borrow money against future earnings to pay for their education. Similarly, Dessy and Stephane Pallage (2001) posit that some concerned firms may not be impressive to place priority on procuring skill-intensive technologies while some parents may fail to coordinate decisions on investing in their children's skill training or education. Therefore, the model supports the need that policymakers must examine and attest to or confirm the distinction between exploitative child labour and the work being offered to the children in organizations. This is the only way the significance of condemnation of child labour and, the fact that the Worst form of Labour can do damage to children could be justified. However, according to current economic theory, parents genuinely want to maximise the utility of their kids. But if parents want to make the most of their kids' potential and acknowledge that the Worst Forms of Child Labour hurt kids, then why are the children the centre of observation?

Worst-Forms jobs pay more than other jobs that are open to children, according to Dessy and Pallage (2002). Even while parents are aware of the harm the Worst Forms might cause their kids, they may nevertheless place their kids in these professions if they believe

the higher pay makes up for the harm. The differential compensation for the accident caused by the Worst-Forms of Child Labor may be sufficient to prefer sustaining the harm than accepting a lower paying job that results in and suffering from an unsatisfactory low living condition with poor materials, especially in the context of extreme poverty. In this situation, Dessy and Pallage are correct to underline that politicians should give the poverty that leads to this child labour their full attention, rather than merely attempting to outlaw the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Barriers against Children Education and other Social Factors as Antecedents of Child Labour

Polygamy, Tradition and Lack of Parental Care: In the first place, polygamy increases children's vulnerability to child labor because the larger a man's number of wives, the lesser the care children can receive from their parents' limited resources, which may be inversely proportional to the children's necessary needs. Inadequate resources may have a great negative impact on their education if parents experience financial constraints as a result of many children who require adequate parental care. Family Tradition in Africa, where a man is expected to take care of the responsibility of his parents and their siblings outside his nucleus family, the tradition exerts more pressure on available resources in Nigeria where free education is limited to primary and secondary education only. In a situation parents are divorced, any single parent that takes up custody of the children may face financial stress depending on the legal decision of the court. In such a situation, it would be difficult to prevent children's involvement in child labour, where they would be extorted or physically abused if their parents are poor.

Poverty: Poor parents exposed their children to forced labour to enable them to secure financial resources to take care of themselves, siblings and their parents. It is understood that not every person is rich, the government is required to provide a basic necessity from the endowed natural resources and internally generated revenue to complement the well-being of the average citizen. The provision of affordable public housing and transport facilities, food and health services and free education would empower the people living under the poverty line. The policy could relieve them to overcome child exploitation and, the Worst Forms of Child Labour if the family is contented. Poverty is still one of the leading causes of children's drop out of school (Birdsall et al., 2005; Boyle et al., 2002; Brown & Park, 2002; Bruneforth, 2006; Cardoso & Verner, 2007; Dachi & Garrett, 2003; Hunter & May 2003). However, a corrupt government of many years may continue to celebrate an awkward and embarrassing system of administration if it successfully prevents its people from challenging the corrupt norms. Public workers' salary in Nigeria is poor and not consistently reviewed so, it is inversely proportional to the incessant inflation resulting in a rising standard of living. It is in Nigeria that a university professor of 20-year experience takes home a net salary of (NGN422, 000) equivalent to (US\$1,004) at the rate of NGN420/US\$, a fresh PhD takes home US\$416. However, on the contrary, each Nigerian member of the National Assembly, most with either a secondary school certificate, National Diploma, National Certificate of Education or a few with University First Degree education. All are receiving a jumbo salary every month for 4 years of a political regime term. The Senate President, Ahmed Lawan, in a presentation during a Distinguished Parliamentarian Lecture, organized by the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) in Abuja confirmed that "the total salary of a Senator is NGN1.5 million and NGN1.3 million for a member, House of Representatives" (Nigerian News Direct 2021 December 14).

Lack of Education: Manual job is always the only available job for uneducated children as they have no knowledge in skill acquisition on special jobs or knowing how to engage in professional work. The job offered to these young children may be valued at millions of Dollars, whereas the children could be paid like \$2 per hour instead of \$15 every hour. So, the children are extorted because they lack the skill and education which prevent them from knowing their rights and have no right to challenge the job's reward. The street

children or orphans are offered cheap labour in this situation (Mohd, Nik Ahmad Kamal, Ashgar Ali, Amuda, and Marhanum, 2018).

School Dropout: Many school children drop out of school when the parents whose responsibility to take care of the child's education and monitor the improvement is absent, especially when students lack basic needs and found no parent to come to their aid. Then, low academic performance is witnessed and students may start feeling depressed for experiencing low esteem, resulting from regular disgrace, mockery and humiliation received from peers. A persistent poor performance may lead to dropping out of school and, such a student may end up on the street, seeking a low-paid job that required no skill or qualification as he has none. This happened to many children from polygamous homes, divorced parents, poverty-stricken homes or some children's irresponsible parents. For instance, UNICEF News published research, related to access to education in Nigeria, which found that:

“Even though primary education is officially free and compulsory, about 10.5 million of the country’s children aged 5-14 years are not in school. Only 61 percent of 6–11-year-olds regularly attend primary school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education”

(UNISEF, 2013).

However, (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Rumberger et al., 1990; Rumberger 1995, Liu 2004, Ainsworth et al, 2005) empirically found in their studies that students, whose parents regulate, monitor their children’s school activities, and providing for them emotional support as well as encouraging self-determining policymaking are generally, actively involved in their performance in school. They are found to perform poorly and face academic challenges and consequently, likely to drop out of school.

Lack of Proactive Government: Many African countries are reported to be economically unproductive, recording poor economic, social and developmental records. Evidence of corruption may be obtained while accessing the court cases of corruption, the Nigerian history of Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, and reports on Nigerian corruption behaviours in the public sector are convincing evidence of the existence of corruption and its impacts may lead to child labour. Some funds earmarked for education are not judiciously used to prevent the out-of-school children phenomenon.

Table 1: Demand for University Education in Nigeria (2001-2015)

Academic Year	Application for University Placement	Admission to University
Admission as % of Application		
2001	893,359	106,304
2002	1,025,988	129,525
2003	1,172,313	175,358
2004	1,043,361	108,148
2005	926,133	125,673
2006	1,030,670	107,161
2007	893,259	149,033
2008	1,028,259	183,420
2009	1,183,574	211,991
2010	1,493,611	450,024
2011	1,503,933	500,058

2012	1,630,000	477,176	29.27
2013	1,920,000	463,395	24.14
2014	1,790,000	437,707	24.45
2015	1,610,000	485,338	30.15

Sources: Adapted from Omuta (2010); NUC (2013); Daily Trust (2017)

Table: 1 above shows that the total number of UTME successful applicants for admission into the Nigerian universities was over 800, 000 from 2001 to over 1 million in 2002 and 1.5million and above from 2010 to 2015. Only 33% of the yearly UTME examined students was the highest number of applicants ever admitted while the rest 67% were left to seek admission in the states and private universities which are expensive for the vast majority of Nigerian parents and guardians. The majority of university applicants fend for themselves an alternative such as repeating the UTME in the subsequent years, registering for foundation courses in the universities to get direct admission afterwards, some even sought admission in the Federal and States' Polytechnic and National Certificate of Education (NCE). For instance, from 2001 to 2009, a total of 7.9million UTME applicants couldn't get admission to the Federal Universities, while between 2010 and 2015, the applicants not admitted for that 6 years stood at 7.134million. It means in just 15 years from 2001 to 2015, over 15 million UMTE applicants could not be offered admission into the first-degree courses in Nigerian Federal Universities. This perennial leftover stands at an average of 1 million every year. (Okotoni and Adebakin, 2015) note that there has been an expansion of the tertiary institutions where Federal government funded universities have increased to 41, that of states increased to 40 and 69 private universities established across the country to meet the demand for Nigerian youth degree education as at 2015, yet, the educational sector has not been able to bridge the gap.

The ineffectiveness of the education sector forces some Nigerian youth to unconsciously fall into child labour when all options to get themselves engaged in further studies with affordable fees are not feasible. Table 1, shows that the number of students who aspired to acquire more knowledge in higher institutions is many, but the available vacancy to accommodate more new students into tertiary institutions is absolutely inadequate. Invariably, Cheap labour is the only option for unprofessional jobseekers, hence students not admitted may fall into the child labour trap.

War/Insecurity:

The loss of lives in countries under insecurity exposed many people to untimely death whether during defence, protecting the vulnerable members of the family like children and women or while trying to escape. Many parents are killed by the Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria. For instance, over 30, 000 children out of 2 million people who escaped when fleeing Boko Haram are in the Internal Displaced Persons' camps due to the loss of parents (Thompson Reuters Foundation, 2017). These children are vulnerable and may have consequently fallen into the child labour market.

Vulnerability: Some children found themselves in the trap of child labours' agents, either for or against their wish or out of necessity. Some child labour victims were so helpless that they needed to seek means of survival for themselves, their siblings and their elderly parents. Similarly, some younger children may have travelled to seek green pastures under the initial influence of traffickers' financial inducement offered to lure them into child labour. On arrival at the working place, the situation they found themselves abroad is not generous with human pleasure or satisfaction. The children may not realize they are in bondage of a human trafficking squad until they are denied of their rights and freedom under forced labour. They may realize they are fugitive when asked to be in hideout or escape to evade arrest of the security officers on the search for unauthorized migrants

who stay or work in the country without valid documents or when denied access to the free use of the proceeds of his/her job.

As defined by Convention 182(3), the worst forms of child labour consist of

- “all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, including the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, and serfdom, as well as forced or compulsory labor, including the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- the use, procurement, or offering of a child for prostitution, pornographic production, or pornographic performances;
- the use, procurement, or offering of a child for illicit purposes, particularly drug production and trafficking, as defined in appropriate international treaties; and
- Work that is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children due to its nature or the circumstances under which it is carried out, as determined by national authorities.”

In this report, one of the criteria for identifying victims of the Worst Forms of Child Labour is; working and living on the streets. According to Article 4 (Paragraph 1) of Convention 182, "the types of work referred to in Article 3(d) shall be determined by national laws or regulations, or by the competent authority, after consultation with organizations of employers and workers concerned, taking into account relevant international standards, in particular paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendations" 1999. With close observation and strict implementation of these clauses in Article (3) of Convention 182 by government agencies in-charge of labour in Nigeria, it would be difficult for any employer or work agent to manipulate the life of young children under the pretext of providing them with labour or job opportunity for economic importance by exposing them to the worst type of works. However, some public servants, can easily compromise the ethics of duty for bribery.

Social Economic Status of Parents

The evaluation of the Socioeconomic position of parents, which is determined by income and education standard, is consistently found to be important in studies related to the family. This combination is a powerful predictor of school achievement and dropout behaviour once parents' income is no longer sufficient to support their children's education (Pong & Ju, 2000; Rumberger, 1995; Bryk and Thum, 1989; McNeal, 1999; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; Ekstrom et al., 1986). Therefore, the impact of the parents in managing the survival of the children from involving in child labour is centered around their level of education, orientation, awareness and access to reliable information as well as their level of income.

Public Sector Corruption in Nigerian in the case of Nigeria

Corruption is one of the major causes of resource exploitation; wherever there is poverty, there is also corruption (Murphy, 2005). According to the (UNDP) (2012) “Corruption exacerbates inequality, undermines human development and stability, creates poverty, encourages conflict, violates human rights and disrupts the functionality of democratic principles in a corrupt society.” Onyemachi (2010) insists that another factor impeding social and economic development and that also increasing poverty is corruption among government officials. Therefore, corruption is negatively responsible for the denial of children's rights, such as health care, education, and infrastructure. In some countries, employers use corrupt labour inspectors or recruitment officers to hire underage children, such as in India. Thus, a prevalence of corruption emanates from child labourers (UNDP, 2012).

Since Nigerian independence in 1960, Nigeria has been facing security challenges despite a better economic situation. In the unstable political environment under the military regimes, a couple of staged military coups ousted Heads of state were challenged to rapid

and consistent development. Therefore, the lack of educational development in Northern Nigeria accounts for the prevalence of Child labour in the North East more than in other parts of Nigeria (Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2006).

Poverty in Nigeria is steadily increasing as a result of public sector corruption, robbery, insecurity and, increased unemployment. Many parents have lost hope in their children's future because the corrupt government could not effectively control most of the nuisances. Furthermore, urbanization contributes to the causes of child labour because some cities such as Abuja, and Lagos are growing faster than others and cheap labour is required to reduce the building cost, this also contributes to rural-urban migration in the 80s in Nigeria. Over two decades of democratic government has faced with insurgency and security challenges that caused the incidence of child labour as most children in IDP camps are orphans, they are left with no choice but to hawk for survival every day. Therefore, the children's ambition to acquire knowledge via quality education after the demise of their parents in terrorist attacks is unrealistic. Some children work on commission by selling SMEs' locally manufactured products and processed food items such as potatoes, plantain chips, bread, fried doughnuts, and other varieties of snacks and chilled soda during rush hour in traffic jams, in some Nigerian crowded cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt and others.

According to Elijah and Okoruwa (2006), child trafficking as a result of corrupt government officials who compromised their official duties for financial gain does allow children to cross borders after they may have been bribed by child trafficking cartels who take underage children to foreign countries for sexual exploitation. Many children are trafficked, particularly from West African neighbouring countries such as Niger, Cameroon, Gabon, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Togo, and others, to work in agricultural enterprises, as domestic labour, prostitutes, or sold into marriage (Elijah & Okoruwa, 2006). Millions of children are compelled to work to support and provide for their families (Owolabi, 2012; Ekpenyong & Sibirii, 2011). Onyemachi (2010) discovered that corruption reduces economic growth and raises poverty, while Kevin Bales (2005) agreed that corruption also reduces food production and population in many countries (Makni, Hachana, Elloumi, 2023).

These corrupt acts range "from passivity (ignoring or tolerating), to actively participating in or even organizing human trafficking, that is, from a breach of duty to corruption or organized crime" (PACO, 2002: 7). In exchange for effecting a thorough checking of human traffickers' travelling documents, visa and immigration officials, receive free sexual services instead (Agbu, 2003). It is not surprising that countries accused of high levels of corruption also make little effort to combat human trafficking, whereas, on the contrary, states with low levels of official corruption make significant efforts to combat human trafficking (PACO, 2002).

The Program against Corruption and Organized Crime in South Eastern Europe (PACO) has reported that officers involved in corruption in intelligence and security services, private businesses, armed forces, travel agencies, airlines, and financial institutions (PACO, 2002). According to PACO's report, corruption practices identified a majority of southeastern Europe states are linked to human trafficking, because while "trafficking occurs, corrupt officials play an active role" (PACO, 2002: 9).

Effects of Child Labour

"Child labour is capable of causing mental harm, bodily harm as well as death in extreme cases. It is more or less an economic exploitation, equally regarded as slavery and sexual exploitation. Child labour gradually eliminated children from paying prime attention to schooling, their health care status while reducing children's basic rights, leading to uncertain futures" (UNICEF, 2021 June 9). The number of child workers in Nigeria is 15 million, equivalent to 43% of the total population of minors, which was regarded as the highest rate of child labour in Western Africa (ILO, 2020).

Child labour covers under-age children whose parents asked for their service to help them sell their merchandise across the neighborhood. Some of the females among them are faced with sexual abuse, while their male counterparts face challenges in school as they do not have enough time to study. These affect their academic performances and ability to measure up with brilliant students. Most of the children living under child labour are faced with regular sickness because of tiredness and lack of medical treatment after the daily stressful hawking while striving to sell a higher quantity of goods to collect high commissions. Those involved in prostitution risk sexual-related diseases like HIV and others. In conclusion, most children found in child labour are not found to be progressive in life because there is no financial support to acquire standard education or training in modern skills to secure a sustainable future (Vasilcova, AlHarthi, AlAmri, Sagat, Bartik, Jawadi, Zvonar, 2022)

Findings

Nigeria has almost 50% of its population as a youth (World Bank, 2019) so there is much to do to prevent the vulnerable children under child labour. Divorce among parents is responsible for the lack of parental care for many of children and consequently becoming prey to child labour agents. Proper monitoring of the secondary school students' class attendants and end-of-the-term performance has been designed as an important strategy to assess students' challenges in school before they end up as dropouts. According to table 1 above, Nigeria has a higher education crisis because over 15 million applicants for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) were successful in the examination and eventually eligible for admission into the degree program in the Nigerian Federal government universities. Not all the successful candidates were granted admission, except a negligible part of the applicants because of inadequate resources. When carefully calculated, over 15 million applicants who paid for the examination were not guaranteed placement in federal universities, and the money paid for the examination was non-refundable, not to mention the cost of logistics and extra lectures their parents financed to prepare them for the UTME examination. In light of this, it is critical that more universities be established, as well as more classes be built in universities, to accommodate the majority of candidates on a yearly basis, rather than being left to sort out their own admission in private institutions where parents would pay exorbitant tuition fees. Alternatively, the federal government should implement a policy of subsidizing the education of students not admitted in private universities, as this will prevent them from roaming about for cheap employment to survive. There is an urgent need to increase the education budget on a yearly basis in order to meet the World Bank's recommended education budget of 4.529% of GDP.

The issue of financial incapability under polygamy; some men married more than one wife and hence, have many children while income is inversely proportional to the required cost for their adequate training and living cost. Increased income has been shown to reduce prevalent child labor trends (Edmonds, 2001). At the macroeconomic level, the incidence of child labor tends to decrease as nations become wealthier, as seen in China, Thailand, India, and other countries. Around 70% of children work as child labour (112 million), 20% work in services (31.4 million), and 10% work in industry (16.5 million).

About 28% of children involved in child labour fall between aged 5 to 11 years and 35% of children aged 12 to 14 years are found to be out of school while the prevalence of child exploitation in rural areas is 14%, almost trice of those in the urban areas (5%). Child labour contributes to the children's physical and mental problems, affecting their education, limiting their rights and opportunities and leading to repeated phenomena occurring in the future generation and those after.

As a result of the proactive stance of UNICEF on child labour, its Director has made a strong appeal to the world that:

“We are losing ground in the fight against child labour, and the last year has not made that fight any easier,” “Now, well into a second year of global lockdowns, school closures, economic disruptions, and shrinking national budgets, ... Prioritize spending on initiatives that can help kids return to school after a break from employment and on social protection initiatives capable of assisting families in preventing their decision on child labour as alternative option.”

UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, 2021

Measures to stop transform the life of Child labour Victims

The international organization advocate for universal child benefits, calling on the government to prioritize increased spending on quality education and affordably priced social security for all and re-enrollment of all children, including those who were absent prior to COVID-19. Encouragement of decent work for adults so that families do not have to rely on children to generate family income. The abolition of harmful gender norms and discrimination that influence child labour. There is a need for robust spending on child welfare-related policies. The ILO also called on governments to embark on aggressive investment in rural services. Agricultural development, basic affordable infrastructure, and livelihoods. Poor salary, lack of states' commitment to finance a Free Primary Education Policy, monumental corruption in the Nigerian public sector, and lack of government enforcement against errant parents must be addressed by the authorities. Government and Civil Society as well as the NGOs need to guide parents and new couples on divorce or separation of the parents, the tradition of using children for the parent's business, deviant children, moral decadence within the family and environmental factors and poverty are playing major roles as causes of child labour. The policymakers should encourage and motivate means for a decent life for children to inherit leadership to strategize better options to build a sustainable future (Khan, Ali, Fatima, El-Moneam, 2023).

Disease outbreaks such as Covid-19 Pandemic, meningitis, Yellow fever, Polio, Leprosy and other infectious diseases play a devastating role in reducing the chances of children attending schools regularly in order to receive commendable training in schools. For instance, schools have been shut down in many countries of the world since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic when it was early detected in Wahun, China in December 2019 to prevent the spread of the pandemic disease among children. To prevent the future outbreak of any other diseases, the government may need to establish strong health centres in major schools that could cover 10 other schools around the same locality to see that children performed academically well without being disturbed by health challenges. The government need to provide free education, feeding and monitoring to prevent their dropping out of school for child labour option.

The government may need to strengthen the law, legislate an Act, banning any primary, secondary and uncompleted underage students from crossing the national borders while scrutinizing the adult travellers' purpose of travelling alone or with children. The policy will enable identifying child trafficking gangs for prosecution under stringent laws. A memorandum of understanding should be signed between the Nigerian government and some states where Nigerian children and sex workers' cartels operate in such callous practices within the country and outside the borders. This may be easily worked out in Diplomatic relations among countries.

Technical schools need to be established in each capital city of every Nigerian state to train all school dropouts and deviant students for skills acquisition to eradicate child labour and create enabling environment for these young children.

Conclusion

The study is based on the understanding of child labour, the legal framework of the International and regional organizations against it, causes and effects and the theoretical perspective from economic theory. The research shows that different causes bred child labour while the contributions of the roles of parents and the authorities are very important in preventing the prevalence of such disturbing phenomenon. The international organizations such as the ILO and INSEF have played important roles as intervention agency that revealed series of result and statistical data of many researches on child labour while their effort show amazing reasons for the concerned states to become active in addressing the phenomenon and regulate the activities of the perpetrators with punitive approach. The public sector corruption needs leadership's proactive intervention as Nigeria is one of the signatories to the treaties and conventions against child labour. Therefore, no sacred cow on child labour offences should be allowed to see the light of the day.

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