



EFFECTS OF CHILD TRAFFICKING ON THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUTHS IN ABA, ABIA STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effects of child trafficking on the educational development of the youths in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey research. The study consists of 100 respondents randomly drawn from the sampled schools in Aba. Simple percentages and mean statistics were used to analyze the data collected. The study revealed that broken homes, neglect and poor cultural values lead to child trafficking in Aba. The study also revealed that child trafficking results to prostitution, low self esteem and drug addiction amongst the youths in Aba. The study then concludes that public enlightenment campaign programmes be mounted to combat mass ignorance and freedom from all forms of child trafficking and abuse by the government and also recommends that parental attitude towards giving children the right educational training be encouraged.

Keywords: *Child trafficking, educational development, youths, effects.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Trafficking of children is a form of human trafficking and is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring and or receipt of a child for the purpose of slavery, forced labour and exploitation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 1.2 million children are trafficked each year. In 2012, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that the percentage of child victims had risen in a 3 year span from 20% - 27%. In 2014, a research by the anti-human trafficking organization reported that internet sites like Craigslist are often used for conducting business within the industry and that 70% of child sex trafficking survivors surveyed were at some point sold online.

However, international child trafficking has been recognized as a serious crime that exist in every region of the world and which has human implications. A variety of potential solutions has been suggested and implemented which could be categorized as four types of actions:- broad protection, prevention, law enforcement and victim assistance.

The Child First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children (CFNGWC 2011) sees a child as a person under the age of 18 years excluding a person who has been married. The United Nations Center for Human Rights (UNCHR) and World Health Organization (WHO 1999) defined a child as a person under 18 years. Hence, a person under the age of 18 years therefore is a minor. In any culture, a minor is given special protection. Childhood thus is a stage every child goes through in life, regarded as not able to make serious decisions and legally under the care of a responsible adult.

Piaget 1952 theory of cognitive development described childhood as consisting of two stages – preparatory stage and concrete operational stage. Also in developmental psychology, childhood is divided up into the developmental stages of toddlerhood (learning to walk), early childhood (play age), middle, childhood (school age) and adolescence (puberty through post puberty). All these various childhood stages could affect a child's attitude formation.

The term child trafficking is therefore anything which individuals and institutions do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harm children or damage their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood (Wambui 2000). Baldry (2003) noted that child trafficking is the physical or mental injury done to a child which may include beating that is physical harm done to a child who has no control of his own. It includes any act of misuse of a child in any form such as physical and mental torture.

Neglect is an act of inhibiting the child from obtaining essential needs for a normal life which may include food, shelter, clothing, education and protection from danger. Carrel and Hoekstra (2010) postulated that neglect is when children do not receive adequate food or shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to such an extent that their development is damaged or injured. Neglects such as leaving a child alone without appropriate supervision, not ensuring that the child attends school or not enrolling the child at school, having infection because of poor hygiene or lack of medication, not giving the child medical help when required.

Department of Children and Family (2013) classified neglect into two; physical neglect and moral neglect. Physical neglect includes failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing appropriate to the climate and environmental condition. Medical neglect is failure to provide whether intentional or otherwise medical care to the child at the appropriate time. Emotional neglect is denial of proper care and attention to the child.

The genesis of child trafficking was born in Europe in 1975, which sixth international conference held in Enugu titled child trafficking in Africa. Its main purpose was to facilitate the exchange of information and exercise between people from many countries whenever an effort is made to combat the growing tragedy of child abuse. In 1984 therefore the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Trafficking (ANPPCAN) was born in Montreal at the 5th International Congress on prevention of child trafficking where a number of African countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, Togo, and Tunisia gathered to form a task force to set up an African Network to look into the area of child trafficking as it concerns Africa (Berger 2008). World Health Organization (WHO 2009) affirmed that child trafficking and maltreatment are all forms of physical and emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses the term child maltreatment to refer to both acts of commission (abuse) which include words or overt action that causes harm, potential harm or threat of harm to a child and acts of omission (neglect) meaning the failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional or educational needs or to protect a child from harm or potential harm.

Education is crucial to human development and capital development on the basis that education improves the quality of labour force hence, the quality of labour input in the production process. Education and training not only plays a central role in developing the youths, also in human capital formation. Thus education is a crucial engine in the growth of man and of the economy as well as in educational development of the youths.

The theory of human capital by Schultz (1961) and relative deprivation theory by Gurr (1970) were considered appropriate for this study because of the fact that education is used to develop human capital and if it is used to develop human capital the better for the economy. Child trafficking causes youths to drop out of schools meaning their resourcefulness as human capital is diminished with limited education and without skills and training. Schooling also provides youths the ability to manage and to penetrate the labour market and to require increased literacy, more education, enhanced skills and lifelong learning that comes at tertiary levels.

The relative deprivation theory laid credence to conflict handling in the home. The relative deprivation theory refers to perceived discrepancy between value expectation (resources to which one feels entitled) and value capabilities (resources which one feels capable of acquiring and keeping). The greater the average degree of perceived discrepancy between expected and value capabilities, the greater the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of same collectively and the greater the potential for collective violence. He further stated that violence (a manifestation of conflict with physical, psychological or structural hurt), in this situation occurs when an individual or group makes a comparison with others (perceived to be the same class or status with them), and they feel less measurable, due to deprivation of opportunities or resources they are equally entitled to within the system. When their attempts to meet up are thwarted, frustration sets in and they are most likely to strike at the source of frustration (Gurr 1970). When parents or couples are divorced, researches have shown that the children are inclined to live with any of the parents or at times shared among the couples. The resultant effect is that the children from earlier ages are subjected to all forms of abuse. They are exposed to child trafficking, hawking and domestic violence.

James (2016) renews the factors that lead to child trafficking in secondary schools in Enugu Education zone. The study revealed that poor parental background can lead to abuse and reduces pupils interest towards education and lead to bad behaviors.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of child trafficking on the educational development of the youths in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What practices constitutes child trafficking in Aba, Abia State?
2. How does child trafficking affect the educational development of the child in Aba Abia State?
3. What are the measures for controlling child trafficking in Aba, Abia State?

Method

A survey research design was used for the study with a self structured questionnaire designed by the researcher to collect data for the study. The study was done in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. The study used 100 teachers through the use of simple random sampling technique.

The questionnaire employed was divided into two parts. Part one was about the demographic data of the research respondents – their age, gender, school and location. The second part contains the variables in the study with a four point rating scale. Data was analyzed with the aid of mean statistics to answer the research questions. A mean of 2.50 was accepted while a mean of less than 2.50 was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1:

What practices constitute child trafficking in Aba, Abia State

Table 1: Mean response on practices that constitute child trafficking

| S/N | Item statements | SA | A | D | SD | N | Efx | X | Remark |
|-----|------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|------|--------|
| 1 | Inadequate care | 30 | 50 | 10 | 10 | 100 | 300 | 3.00 | Agreed |
| 2 | Any kind of hawking | 40 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 100 | 295 | 2.95 | Agreed |
| 3 | Inflicting injury on a child | 45 | 35 | 10 | 10 | 100 | 315 | 3.15 | Agreed |
| 4 | Inadequate feeding | 35 | 35 | 20 | 10 | 100 | 295 | 2.95 | Agreed |
| 5 | Bullying | 50 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 357 | 3.57 | Agreed |
| 6 | Any kind of child neglect | 40 | 35 | 10 | 15 | 100 | 296 | 2.96 | Agreed |
| | Total | | | | | | | 3.09 | |

Table one shows that the total ground mean was 3.09 which indicates that the items in one to six above were above the cut- off point of 2.5, therefore agreeing on the practices that constitutes child trafficking in Aba, Abia State.

Research Question 2

How does child trafficking affect educational development of youths in Aba, State?

Table 2: Mean response of effect of child trafficking on educational development of the youths in Aba, Abia State:

| S/N | Item statements | SA | A | D | SD | N | Efx | X | Remark |
|-----|-------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|------|--------|
| 7 | Prostitution | 40 | 40 | 10 | 10 | 100 | 319 | 3.19 | Agreed |
| 8 | Indulging in stealing | 30 | 40 | 15 | 15 | 100 | 280 | 2.80 | Agreed |
| 9 | Joining cultism | 50 | 30 | 5 | 15 | 100 | 316 | 3.16 | Agreed |
| 10 | Having low self-esteem | 40 | 30 | 10 | 20 | 100 | 293 | 2.93 | Agreed |
| 11 | Involving in exam malpractice | 35 | 30 | 15 | 20 | 100 | 282 | 2.82 | Agreed |
| 12 | Truancy | 45 | 30 | 15 | 10 | 100 | 312 | 3.12 | Agreed |
| | Total | | | | | | | 2.96 | |

Table 2 shows that the total mean was 2.96 which indicates that items 7 to 12 were above the cut-off point of 2.5 therefore agreeing on the effects of child trafficking on the educational development of the youths in Aba, Abia State.

Research Question 3

What are the measures for controlling child trafficking in Aba, Abia State?

Table 3: Mean response of measures to control child trafficking

| S/N | Item statements | SA | A | D | SD | N | Efx | X | Remark |
|-----|--|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|------|--------|
| 13 | Through public enlightenment programmes | 50 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 350 | 3.50 | Agreed |
| 14 | By not bullying children at home and in the school | 35 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 100 | 275 | 2.75 | Agreed |
| 15 | By caring for the children | 38 | 33 | 12 | 17 | 100 | 292 | 2.92 | Agreed |
| 16. | Adequate guidance and counseling services in the schools | 40 | 35 | 15 | 10 | 100 | 305 | 3.05 | Agreed |
| 17 | Intense awareness created among people about what constitute child abuse and trafficking | 45 | 25 | 5 | 25 | 100 | 290 | 2.90 | Agreed |
| 18 | There should be sanctions for those who abuse and neglect children and youths | 48 | 28 | 10 | 14 | 100 | 310 | 3.10 | Agreed |
| | Total | | | | | | | 3.04 | |

Table 3 shows that items 13 to 18 were all above the cut-off point of 2.5, therefore agreeing on how child trafficking should be controlled in Aba, Abia State.

2. DISCUSSION

The study revealed that inadequate care, hawking, inadequate feeding and inflicting injury on a child are forms of child trafficking and neglect. Supporting this assertion is Straus as cited in Nnanna (2019) that corporal punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing bodily pain, but not injury for the purpose of correction or control. In Nigeria, corporal punishment is held in high esteem as a way of correcting and instilling discipline in young children. Though sparking is culturally approved for correcting, most times teachers and parents do this in anger and in the process the child is left injured and physically inflicted with bruises and pains.

The study revealed that child trafficking leads to prostitution, addiction, cultism, low self esteem and involvement in truancy. In schools, some form of neglect can be identified which can have damaging effect on the educational development of a child. In terms of physical neglect, some schools fail to provide adequate supervision, safety and hygiene for their school children (Agulanna as cited in Nnanna 2019). Children study under shades of trees or on every dilapidated classroom blocks (Nnanna 2019). He argues that these reasons gives room for children to play truant ultimately having very serious effect on their learning ability.

The study also revealed that there should be public enlightenment programmes to combat mass ignorance and public awareness on the right to freedom from all forms of child abuse. Agulanna therefore suggests that schools should appropriate school needs for the children such as good seating arrangements, enough classrooms, writing boards and other school materials. Collaboration to this idea is Gaudin as cited in Nnanna (2019) that neglected children have the worst delays in language comprehension and expression while psychological neglected children score lowest in intelligence quotient tests. Enlightenment programmes therefore is very necessary to enable teachers, parents and school authorities pay attention to the needs of each and every child in the classrooms in order to encourage learning.

3. CONCLUSION

The study has shown that child trafficking is a global problem that takes place in many settings especially in the school. Child trafficking has serious educational implications as it presents serious drawn back on the child educational development and thus hinders societal growth and development. The problem of child trafficking in the educational requires adequate and efficient handling by all in order to improve the educational development of the youth in Aba, Abia State.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following from the study:

1. There should be provision of nurturing and supportive child friendly school, learning environment free from noise, distractions, discriminations and abuse of any kind.
2. All forms of abuse should be exposed to this class teachers or care givers so as to draw their attention to some of the unintentional acts that bother on child abuse.
3. Intense awareness should be created among teachers and school managers using seminars, workshops and training programmes about what constitutes child abuse or trafficking.

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