

WORKING CONDITIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: Nigerian children are working under unhealthy condition due to the necessity that pushes them to labour. Therefore, this paper deals with the causes of child labour, the working hours of working children and the minimum child labour wages in Nigeria. The prevalent and prime reason for child labour in Nigeria is the economic poverty that is seriously confronting the majority of Nigerians to some degree. It is the rate of poverty in Nigeria which leads biological parents and guardians to allow their biological children to work in the streets as hawkers, prostitutes and traffickers. This finding seeks to examine the causes of poverty in Nigeria. The question is, are Nigerians created as a poor people or does the climate render them poor? Why have many Nigerians not benefited from their natural resources? The impact of child labour on children will be discussed in the paper while children's education in Nigeria will be critically studied in the best interests of children. This research further studies how working conditions affect children and the consequences of child labour in Nigeria from the social, economic, ethical, moral, and criminal perspectives. The findings shows that both parents and government contributed to the child labour in Nigeria due to their failure to provide adequate provisions for their children or citizens at large. This paper will explore both qualitative and quantitative methods in the analysis and useful suggestion will be suggested to reduce the rate of child labour and its consequences on Nigerian children as a case study.

Keywords: Economic, Cheap Labor, Crime, Hazardous

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the causes of child labour, the working hours of working children and the minimum child labour wages in Nigeria. The prevalent and prime reason for child labour in Nigeria is the economic poverty that is seriously confronting the majority of Nigerians to some degree. The phenomenon subjects children to labour as a result of their biological parents incapability. It is the rate of poverty in Nigeria which leads biological parents and guardians to allow their biological children to work in the streets as hawkers, prostitutes and traffickers. The phenomenon also permits parents to deny their children compulsory education due to their financial constraints. This chapter seeks also to examine the causes of poverty in Nigeria. The question is, are Nigerians created as a poor people or does the climate render them poor? Why have many Nigerians not benefited from their natural resources? The impact of child labour on children will be discussed in the chapter while children's education in Nigeria will be studied in the best interests of children. In addition, the government's roles to formalize children's education in Nigeria and also, children's discipline will also be included in the analysis.

This chapter further studies how working conditions affect children and the consequences of child labour in Nigeria from the social, economic, ethical, moral, and criminal perspectives. Many children in the world worked and are still working for sixteen [1] hours per day under atrocious conditions just like their adult counterparts in factories, and cotton mills until it was reduced to twelve hours per day in 1802 and 1819. Another reduction of working

hours to ten hours took place in 1831 due to the efforts and contributions of labour groups and associations. Many children started working at the age of five years in the iron and coal mines, gas works, shipyards, construction, match factories, nail factories, and the business of chimney sweeping. Due to extreme child exploitation, children and adults were limited to ten working hours per day in England in 1847. This shows the fact that all developed countries experienced and are still indirectly experiencing child labour because many underdeveloped country's children are labouring in their countries. [2]

Up to now, many children are still working under the atrocious and unhealthy conditions that will affect their physical and mental health. Many Nigerian children are deployed in Europe, America, and some other African countries to work as labourers. This is despite the fact that legal covenants and treaties have been signed by a majority of the members of the United Nations to ensure and assure children's right to survival, full development, and protection from abuse, harm, exploitation and anything that can jeopardise their social rights and cultural life. In Nigeria, there is no specific limited working hours for children. It depends on the nature of the job and job opportunities. The common working day starts from morning till night that is 8:00am to 8:00pm while some bus conductors may work from 6:00am to 12:00pm at night. This situation and condition are unhealthy and severely harmful for children both physically and psychologically. The Nigerian government has failed to put an end to this pathetic and ugly condition of Nigerian child workers.

II. CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR IN NIGERIA

It is globally accepted that low wages, illiteracy, ignorance, unemployment, and social life are the main causes of child labour in the countries concerned. These causes place many children in the labour market as a necessity to raise their biological parents' income and to improve their financial status. [3]

These causes of and reasons for child labour are a result of the ineffectiveness of governments to provide their citizens needs to avert child labour in the country. If the government plays its role and performs its duties as it is supposed to do, there would not be any drastic unemployment and significant illiteracy and ignorance. In a country where the government is less concerned about the adult citizens in terms of reasonable payments or salary, job opportunities, price control, children would be the major victims. The following are the causes of child labour and if they can be well

controlled, child labour will be eradicated and eliminated in Nigeria.

Poverty

Poverty is rife and common in every part of the globe and even in the developed world the lives of children are fraught with deprivation. [4] Poverty can be studied from two approaches; absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty refers to a certain minimal living standard which is specified in terms of nutritional level, clothing, and the income required to support an individual. [5] Relative poverty is interpreted in relation to the prevailing living standard of society, recognizing explicitly the interdependence between the poverty line and the entire income distribution. [6]

Based on the poverty theory, Nigerians are facing both absolute and relative poverty due to the rate of poverty and many of them cannot afford to feed themselves and their families adequately because of their low incomes and the size of the family.

In Nigeria, many children find themselves in a catastrophic situation and condition due to the low income of their parents. The rate of poverty in Nigeria is alarming where many children are not able to eat well. Due to that, children flock into the labour market to survive and also to help their family. The Nigerian government is the root cause of the poverty in Nigeria due to their self interest because there are no concerted efforts to fulfill their promises which they made before they were elected as leaders. The *Shari'ah* does not recognise the wickedness and unkindness of the Nigerian authorities. Leadership is trust (*amanah*) which is questionable and accountable in the hereafter, so, the government should make substantive provisions for the children in the country. Nevertheless, many Nigerian parents cause their own downfall because of their extravagant expenses and too many ceremonies and functions that result in poverty and poverty causes child labour. Nigerian parents should abstain from sending children to the labour market and hard work because sending them is just like injecting slow poison into them, which will ruin their health in the future. Of course, for a child who is not physically and mentally fit because of the labour predicament, the situation will negatively affect his body, brain, and health, and this reflection would be the future consequence on children. Therefore, it has been stated repeatedly in the Holy *Qur'an* that wealth is from Allah and must be spent to relieve those who are in need and suffering because it is a good deed and has advantages for both the recipients and givers. [7]

"That man can have nothing but what he strives for. That (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight". [8]

It is the parent's duty to consciously bring up his children accordingly because he will be held accountable for his character and attitude on doomsday. Unnecessary extravagant spending on ceremonies such as marriage, naming ceremonies, funeral ceremonies, and vocational ceremonies should be controlled and reduced from many parents' lives and they should focus on their children's success in a way that they will invest in the children not in ceremonies or anniversaries. Taking good care of the children is an investment because the child will pay it back marvellously.

1) *Lack of Maintenance*

It has been stated that children's life depends on their parents' property and income, so it is the duty of biological parents to make adequate provision for their children's maintenance. If the parents lack resources and are unable to provide for their children due to their financial situation or because of any other reasons, the children will engage in child labour as an alternative to overcome the problem and as a way of survival. There are many reasons why children are neglected in the Nigerian context; it might be because of poverty, unemployment, unclaimed children, death, or divorce. Some wicked fathers neglect their children because of their separation with the child's mother. This can be seen as madness and irrational behaviour because it is like punishing the innocent. Meanwhile, in another situation, children are suffering and maltreated after the death of their biological father because the family takes control of the deceased's estate to satisfy their own personal interests. On other hand, children are abandoned and left unsheltered due to unlawful pregnancy. All these reasons are contrary to the *Shari'ah* because the *Shari'ah* recognises the illegitimate child's rights. Children should not be the victims of divorce and they must be properly taken care of, and also the family should refrain and abstain from misusing an orphan's property. However, many children are abandoned and neglected as a result of being in their mother's custody. In a condition where the mother's income is very scanty, children would be the victims of child labour because they have to work to contribute to the family income, if not as the breadwinner of the house as some parents depend on their child labour wages to survive. This is also contrary to the *Shari'ah* because children should not be punished when under their mother's custody as it is the father's responsibility to care for children regardless of who is the custodian. [9]

2) *Child Abuse*

Child abuse is another factor in child labour because the phenomenon was common in the history of human beings and many parents killed and buried their female children due to ignorance. Hence, Islam

plays a great role in eliminating and prohibiting the heartless attitude and behaviour against children. Killing, buying and selling children are punishable offences that would have to be answered for in front of Allah. There are three reasons why children were killed and buried during the dark age:

Firstly, some people killed their children as a ritual or sacrifice for the gods and goddesses; to their mind, killing children would enable them to have rain, victory in war, and health.

Secondly, they killed their offspring because of their financial constraints and having children would make their lives miserable.

Thirdly, some of them saw female children as a false pride to the non-believers. [10]

All the above mentioned reasons that led to incredible child abuse in the pre-Islamic time still remain in another way because many children are victims of abuse due to their parents' financial constraints and some females are still considered unequal to males as a result of their functions, activities, and achievement. Even some Nigerian Muslims prefer to educate males rather than females. This evil mentality should be totally abolished and eliminated and those who are still living in ignorance should be reoriented to meet the requirements of the standard of life.

3) *Illiteracy and Ignorance*

Illiteracy and ignorance contribute significantly to the causes of child labour in Nigeria due to the attitude of parents towards their children's education because labour deprives their children of educational opportunities simply because of what they will earn from their wages. [11] The reason is that many of these parents are also illiterate and their illiteracy does not give them any insight into or awareness of the importance of education. Their illiteracy also influences their way of life and the number of wives and children they have. A family with a low income and wages should plan the number of children they will have in order to provide adequate maintenance for the children. If the number of children is greater than their income, it will affect the children's maintenance, especially in a country where the government is less mindful of its citizens.

4) *Child Labour is Cheap*

It has become the culture and attitude of employers to gain huge profits at a low cost. According to Jerome Davis, employers prefer to employ children in large numbers to labour for them in place of adults for an excessive numbers of hours. This causes many children to work under unhealthy conditions with low payment because adult wages are higher than a child's wages. [12]The Indian situation also similar

with Nigerian employer who preferred children employee at the cheaper and low cost in order to gain huge profit. In support of his argument, Jerome Davis said:

“Besides the compulsory of poverty with the family, is the stimulus of the manufacturer who desires to secure cheap labour and more profit”. [13]

This comment indicates that a family’s low income paves the way for the employer to exploit the children who are working for them for their own gain and personal interest. It is the duty of labour associations to fight for the interests of children in order to eliminate such abuse and exploitation.

5) Low Family Allowance

In Nigeria, as a case study, the allowance for many families as their salary or daily income from their business or petty trade is very low and this always attracts child labour. The amount given to the pensioners is also insufficient to maintain their large family without the children’s contribution. If the allowances and salaries are increased and there is no inflation in the nation, child labour will be reduced and many children will not work under hazardous conditions and abandon their education. [14] There is a plethora problems facing Nigerian pensioners which also cause many family financial problems due to the pensioners’ inhuman treatment at the hand of their employers or the government. According to a signed letter dated 28th March 2008 by the pensioners’ club president Patrick Tablom to the Nigerian president, for 4,000 pensioners of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) the Apex Bank refused to comply with the Federal Government policy on pensions. It was stated in the letter that over 100 pensioners had lost their lives without receiving their pensions. [15] Many Nigerian pensioners have not been paid or received their arrears, gratuity, and pensions for the past 65 months, which is 5 years and 5 months. [16]

Many of them went through hell to get their pension and their situation needs urgent action and a solution in the best interest of their children. [17] The pensioners’ condition and situation in Nigeria in getting their entitlement will affect the life of children of such pensioners and it might force their children into labour because their parents’ entitlement has been castrated by their employers. So, failure to pay the pensioners’ entitlement will negatively reflect on their children both mentally and physically. Furthermore, the Nigerian Union of Teachers and the Nigerian government have been at loggerheads on the increment on the Teacher’s Salary Scale that has caused teachers to strike all the time and that strike has affected the Nigerian educational system and the lives of students who have been staying at home with nothing to do.

6) Polygamy

Polygamy has been practised since the pre-Islamic age and it is legally permitted under the one the condition of being able to maintain the wives and their children. The marriage might be unlawful, if the husband is incapable of properly taking care of his wife and also children unless the government or family gives monetary assistance to the spouses in order to relieve and ease their expenses. However, many Nigerian men go beyond their capacity and limits because they are just practising polygamy without following the rules and regulations covering the phenomenon. [18] In such a situation or in any sudden natural death or disaster, children are facing many problems because there is nobody there to look after them. Due to individual responsibilities and limited income many families are less concerned about such children. This is a place and situation where the government needs to strive to assist children by providing free education, shelter, food, and stipends for the children. This will impact and inculcate good ethics in the assisted children’s souls. [19]

7) Death

Death can also be visualized as one of the causes of child labour in some countries such as Nigeria. After the death of a biological parent, the father or mother, in some cases both at the same time. In such a situation, children find themselves helpless organs in the family; due to the wickedness of those who are left in charge of their parents’ estates. This ugly and unkind practice is rampant in some families due to their greed and the poverty which they are fighting. It has been stated repeatedly in the Holy *Qur’an* that orphans should be helped and respected. “*Then such is the (man) who repulses the orphan (with harshness). And encourages not the feeding of the indigent*”. [20]

Feeding the orphan children with love and affection is a noble form of virtue which is beyond the reach of men who are so callous as even to discourage or forbid and look down upon the virtue of charity and kindness in others. [21]

Another verse refers to being caring and kind to needy people such as children.

Nay, nay! but ye honour not the orphans! ‘Nor do ye encourage one another to feed the poor’ ‘And ye devour inheritance all with greed’ ‘And ye love wealth with inordinate love!’ [22]

Presently, many people in control of the disposition of a deceased's estate, especially the most wicked and heartless within the family, prefer to ignore the fatherless children and are ready to embezzle the helpless orphan's inheritance because of their selfishness instead of supplying the children's need. Because of the hardheartedness of bad eggs in some families they forget the springs of charity, kindness, and generosity which are the standard of humanitarian service. Inheritance is abused in such a way that the guardians and trustees of the inheritance of minors are unable to care for and look after the minor's interests but are more concerned about their own personal interests. Some people are not using and spending the inherited property in a proper and useful way which goes contrary to objective of the inheritance which is to eradicate poverty. [23]

It is also quoted in another verse that:

"And in their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy) him who asked, and him who (for some reason) was prevented (from asking)" [24]

Charity is incumbent on those who are in possession of wealth to render assistance to the needy such as children and poor people. There are various reasons that prevent some people from asking for help from the rich people. They may be ashamed to ask, honour may prevent them from asking, due to great ideas, they may even not know that the rich man is in possession of wealth, and also they may be dumb and helpless creatures. So, the philanthropists should not wait until the needy come to them for help since they are also assisting others to enable them get rewards from Allah. Immediately they notice or are informed that someone is in need, charity should be extended to them to ease their problems. Many children are now in a state of helplessness and no one is ready to help them in terms of education, feeding, hospital, and accommodation, and the condition forces them into child labour in order to survive. [25]

Children should be treated wisely, kindly, and justly in the disposition of inheritance by giving them their prescribed portion according to the *Qur'an*. Doing this will ease and reduce their liabilities on the family and society, especially those who have huge and costly property to be shared. If the deceased leaves an unsustainable property for the children and family, it is the duty and task of the immediate family to respond to their needs positively. However, it is the duty of the government to take care of citizens' welfare in providing for their daily needs and necessities. Doing this, would limit and reduce the percentage of child labourers in society.

According to Sahl ibn Sa'd: The Prophet (s.a.w) said:

"I am the person who looks after an orphan and provides for him, will be in paradise like this, ' putting his index and middle fingers together." [26]

Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with them) reported Allah's Messenger (s.a.w) as saying :

"Give the shares to those who are entitled to them, and what remains over goes to the nearest male heir." [27]

III. WORKING HOURS

Before discussing child working hours in the working place, it is better first to discuss the nature of the contract between the employer and employee and whether it is a legal or an illegal contract.

It is a legal right that for any agreement between the two parties concerning employment, there must be a written agreement that will indicate the type of job or work, time, location period of completion and the manner the contract may be terminated by both employer and employee. This situation is totally different in the case of child labour due to the lack of any agreement between the employer and the child and all the other procedures being overlooked and violated by the contracting parties. Section 7 subsections (1), (2), (3), and (4) of the Federation of Nigeria Labour Act 1990, Chapter 198 cover the procedure of the formation of a contract between the employer and employee. This section is mainly for those who are legally eligible and competent to make a contract between the two parties.

Section 7 subsection 1 to 6 provides that within the period of three months of the beginning of the employee's employment, the terms of the contract, conditions, and duration of the contract should be in a written form in the best interests of both parties. In case of any changes, the employer should inform the employee within the period of not more than one month. [28]

The above stated section spells out the conditions and terms of employment which both parties must legally abide by and which states and requires the names of both parties, the address of the employer and employee, the place and nature of the work, the date of engagement and expiry date of the contract, hours of work, holiday, wages, and changes of contract if there are any circumstances that call for them. This requirement is not applicable to a child who is labouring under the employer due to the lack of a valid contract between the child and the employer.

According to section 59 of the Nigerian Labour Act 1990, no young person under fifteen years of age shall be employed to work underground or on a machine or in any work that will injure the child. It is further stated that no employer shall

continue to employ any child under sixteen years of age after receiving an oral or written warning from the parent or guardians. [29]

This provision prohibits children from any deteriorative work that can harm the child's physical health and mental capacity. Yet, a huge number of Nigerian children who are under fifteen are lifting heavy loads and luggage as carriers in the market for their survival. They are also involved in unhealthy jobs and labour due to their situation. Children are entering the job market because of financial constraints or the poverty that is confronting them. In such conditions, many employers used the opportunity to exploit the children who are working for them. However, many Nigerian children are working in another state which is very far from their state and it is not possible for them to return home daily, so, they are dwelling in any place they think is safe for them. Furthermore, the financial conditions and rate of poverty make this provision unimplementable and moribund. The rate and percentage of child labour in Nigeria shows proof that this provision cannot be fully implemented until the causes of child labour are completely controlled by the Nigerian government. [30]

IV. MINIMUM CHILD LABOUR WAGES

Section 59 subsection (3) provides that a young person of fourteen years may be employed on a daily wage or day to day basis provided that child returns to his or her parents' residence after the work. [31]

There is no legal provision for minimum wages for any child who is under fourteen years because it is illegal for him or her to work under the Nigerian Labour Act. So, only fourteen- year old children are legally permitted to work on daily wages or when both contracting parties agree. This situation forces many children in Nigeria into labour so the wages that Nigerian children under the age of fourteen are earning daily or monthly vary due to the nature of the job and the working place. The wages of those who are working or labouring in commercial and industrial states are quite different from those who are labouring in remote states. But all working and labouring children have the same goal and objective which is to find ways to survive and contribute to their parents' income. This research finds that no amount of wages children are earning daily, weekly, and monthly can solve the root cause of child labour. It is much better to address and fight the root cause of child labour and find a solution to the initial and primary source of children's problems in the present and the future. [32]

V. WORKING CONDITION OF CHILD LABOUR

The total population of children in Nigeria is 60,391, 320 and 39% of the population are working under the age of 4years to 5years which is equal to 15,484.95. [33] Many children are working in high temperatures, in the rain, in unhealthy, contaminated spaces with polluted ventilation, constant exposure to dust, risk of death, and for long hours. The conditions under which Nigerian labouring children work are not healthy due to the bad conditions of their work which is harmful to them. [34]

Section 59 subsection (6) states that no young person shall be employed in any employment which is injurious to his health, dangerous or immoral; and where an employer is notified in writing by the Minister (either generally or in any particular case) that the kind of work in which a young person is employed is injurious to the young person's health, dangerous, immoral or otherwise unsuitable, the employer shall discontinue the employment, without prejudice to the young person to be paid such wages as he may have earned up to the date of discontinuance. [35]

8) Health

The healthy development of children is very crucial to the future well-being of any society. Children's welfare and well- being should prevail over any activities that could endanger the child's health such as diseases, malnutrition, and poverty that threaten the future of children and the nation at large. [36] Health problems are one of the major problems that are seriously and significantly affecting Nigerian children. Inadequate health facilities lead to insufficient and inadequate medicine, inadequate medical equipment, lack of standard hospitals, and insufficient qualified medical doctors in public hospitals. [37]

Nigerian children lack health provision due to the bad governance that Nigerians have been experiencing for many years now. Many qualified and expert Nigerian doctors are employed abroad as a result of the low standard of medical facilities and equipment, and the poor salary scale. This ugly development in the nation has affected children's health and causes diseases such as malaria, measles, guinea worm, coughs, and diarrhoea which are preventable and curable but which continue to kill the children and no credible action has been taken by the government to overcome the health problem. Many steps and efforts have been made by the committee on the rights of the child in Nigeria that requested the Nigerian government to seriously combat the rate of illness confronting many Nigeria children and give a permanent solution to the rate of child mortality in Nigeria. [38]

Numbers 48 and 49 of the concluding observation of the Committee on the rights of child in Nigeria acknowledged and addressed the high mortality rates among infants, children, and mothers in Nigeria. They also emphasis immunization programmes for children and mothers and to ensure that all appropriate measures would be taken to improve the health infrastrure in rural areas in order to provide adequate basic health care for children and their mothers. The committee also recognized the need to make drinking water and sanitation services adequate, sufficient, and accessible for children and their mothers. [39]

Most Nigerian children are victims of health problems in rural and urban areas while the children of government officials are enjoying an extravagant life style and benefiting solely from the nation's resources. The question is why are Nigerian leaders heartless? Are they born heartless? Why is it so cumbersome and awkward for them to distribute the resources equitably to all citizens? [40]

This research finds that the selfishness and greed of most Nigerian leaders have dominated and overwhelmed their minds and they do not think of the hereafter when they do what they are doing. The greedy and uncaring attitude of the majority of them has diverted their awareness of the advisability of disseminating Nigerian resources for the benefit of all Nigerians. The rate of corruption is seriously affecting the nation. [41] So, the lives of many Nigerian children are wantonly destroyed which is unfortunate and indefensible in any context. Nothing really happens to the country itself but the leaders are very wicked and an enemy of new procreation. The few resources Nigeria is endowed with, all the Nigerian citizens should enjoy and benefit from as the sons of the soil. On the Calvary, the citizens are seriously and pathetically left behind and children are the major victims.

VI. EFFECTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR IN NIGERIA

It is an inevitable and unarguable fact that uncontrolled children who are not under parental care and supervision easily emulate bad people in society. Under-aged working children are prevented from preparing for future adult responsibilities due to the lack of sound education and formal training. Many of them are involved in drug trading and many other illegal activities because of their relationship with adult drug gangs. [42]

It has also been stated in previous pages that child labour has manifold repercussions on the children who are working under hazardous and unhealthy conditions. Since they are working when they are supposed to be learning and also working

and studying at the same time, it is onerous for children to cope with two different things in their childhood. This is the reason why they are working at an inappropriate period and time because the time he or she is working is the time for studying school. So, since the system is upside down, there would be negative consequences for such labour. Child labour affects children health and children's improper physical development as a result of different kinds of illness as a result of the types of food they are eating. The phenomenon also causes physical deformities, damage to the central nervous system, lack of capacity to adjust with other persons in their company or society and the inability to express their feelings and opinions against and in support of any action. [43]

9) Social Problem such as Drug Addiction, and Sexual Exploitation

Many children are involved in smoking, drugs, and sexual exploitation which is the consequence of child labour in society. Many Nigerian child labourers are smoking and dealing in drugs, either selling or consuming drugs, which is very risky to their health and life. Such habits and attitudes are a threat to society and the community because if the child becomes intoxicated he or she can cause harm to himself or another victim. Likewise, he or she may influence badly other children in society. [44] Child labour causes social problems to the child and society in many ways such as the lack of capacity to communicate with other persons in society. Children are not capable of working out or adjusting to their problems within a short period of time because they are still under age. So, they should be expected to act and behave like a child due to the lack of capacity. On the other hand, children also lack the ability to express their feelings because it will be very difficult for them to express their views to their employer due to their informal job and fear. If a child is cheated or treated badly, it will be difficult for them to express their views against or in support of what their employer does. However, the employer will not welcome and accommodate their views and opinions as relevant and useful views because of their age. In such a situation, children will not be happy and this might trigger a misunderstanding among the children who will become annoyed without any reason and this is a problem for society. What happens if a working child becomes disabled due to accident or physically deformed because of harmful attacks against the children in their hidden places or on the road where he is working? For a serious accident, the child would not be able to use his or her body systematically and functionally which will turn the victim into someone dependent on society by way of begging on the streets. In addition, educational backwardness is another factor.

Employment of child labour significantly affects the child's education as a result of the hours which labour consumes. The early age that many children are supposed to be in the school acquiring knowledge that will stimulate and prepare them for the future will be spent working in horrible conditions. Many children drop out from school and many are not well committed and dedicated to their education due to work. In this situation, large numbers of the future Nigerian generation are carelessly abandoned in terms of providing them with a sound education with educational facilities and this carelessness and negligence drive children into labour. Lack of a sound education for the new generation has a negative impact on the country concerned and on the children themselves because they will be a threat and problem to society. Although it is not only working children who are facing the educational predicament, as it is a general problem in the Nigerian system of education, working children are subjected to the major effects. So, this is a problem for society because if the number of elite and educated people is smaller compared to the number of illiterates, society will be in disorder and lawlessness will be aggravated day and night.

VII. ECONOMIC PROBLEM

There are many problems related to the Nigeria economy that also influence child labour in the nation such as:

a) *Socio-Economic Problem of Nigerian Working Children's Parents*

The economic standard of the working children's families in Nigeria is very low because their parents are the poorest of the Nigerian poor people. Those who are working under the government or in the private sector are employed at a very low salary or wages based on their qualifications. There is no direct support from any people or the government to empower them and they are denied social facilities and amenities by the Nigerian government due to the ruling leaders' greed and selfishness. The victimised parents' low incomes cause their children's present situation and conditions which turn them into family breadwinners. Children are actually looking after their family from the little wages they are earning. [45]

b) *Economic Sector*

Many Nigerian children are labouring on farms, hunting, forestry, and also fishing in different places in the nation. Children are engaged in hazardous places as a necessity and because of their parents' low income who enrol them into unconditional labour in and outside the country. Some of the poor children

are working in industries like road construction, building construction and some are working as service attendants in the wholesale and retail trade, restaurants, canteens, social and personal services, hotels, and transport. [46] There are a number of reasons why employers prefer child workers over adult workers. These reasons were reported in the Report of the Committee of Child Labour in 1980. The committee reported that the following reasons are the major reasons why employers preferred children rather than adults:

1-Less developed ego and status consciousness, less affliction by feelings of guilt and shame, no hesitation to do non-status, even demanding jobs, activeness, agility and quickness and less feeling of tiredness, greater discipline and control, and less expensive to maintain. It is also superior adaptive abilities, lack of organisation, moral consideration of the employers to help and to provide succour to the destitute and forsaken children, and acquisition of fitness through initiation at an early age. [47]

The above mentioned reasons are also applicable to the reason while employers prefer child employees to adult employees in Nigeria. Although poverty is the prime reason that forces children into labour; it is also indicated from the report that children are abused by paying them meagre wages, child exploitation by the employer, discipline and lack of organisations that are fighting for child rights. Despite all the above reasons and malicious treatment, children are still working seriously in Nigeria for their survival. To this researcher, it is not necessary to wait for an organization that will fight for children's rights before their rights can be assured. If there is no child labour organization, there are rules governing the methods of employment and the same rules can be amended to secure a child's rights in the best interests of children. In a country where adults are unemployed because their jobs are taken by children such a country's economy will be seriously affected because children lack experience, they are not trained workers, they lack the capacity to work effectively, and lack the education to fit the job.

10) *Ethical and Moral Decline in Society*

Moral deterioration is another effect of child labour in society because a child develops the bad habits and behaviour he or she has learnt from the master who employed them. [48] Since the master lacks morals and good conduct in his way of dealing with the children under his charge, it is easy for the children to emulate and copy their master's attitude and behaviour as an example for them. A master who engages in monotonous, low pay, ill-treatment and corruption will also influence the lives of child employees. So, children will develop immoral and

uncultured characters such as cigarette smoking, gambling, drinking, theft, female abuse, and violence in society. [49] In order to avert and eradicate children's moral deterioration, legal action should be taken against employers provided that there would be no negative consequences on the child for not being employed. This is because of lesser evil is better and also one evil is better than two evils, if there is no provision for a child's education and maintenance in the schools and employment for the adults, children need to work as a necessity for themselves and their parents to survive.

It is the duty and responsibility of the biological parents to display good ethics and morals in the presence of their children for them to emulate. Since children are the young generation and representatives of the new generation, for that matter, many parents are always conscious about their behaviour and also their children's character because he or she will be their family ambassador in society. In Nigeria, there are exotic cultures, customs, ethics, and morals. Nigerian parents always inculcate good morals and respect in their biological children as society's norms and culture dictate. [50]

If children display any unacceptable behaviour and attitude in society and the community, it will reflect on their parents and family. As a result of the children's exposure to crime, immoral mixing with drug addicts under the net of labour, the ethics and morals are steadily declining as a result of child labour. Those children, who are working on the streets or out of their parents' supervision, frequently engage in smoking, drug addiction, fornication, drinking alcohol, and theft. Presently in Nigeria, the philosophy of parenthood is sharply declining and missing in many families because of the inability of the biological parents to take care of their children properly. For that reason, children are working on the streets and in many working places to earn a means of survival for themselves and their immediate family. Rationally and legally, children should firstly depend on their parents for maintenance but it is the opposite situation now with many parents depending on their working children. [51] The level of poverty and financial strife overwhelms the minds of many working children's parents from taking action to correct their children's immorality and bad ethics which they are obviously displaying.

11) Religious Decline

The concerned street working children are lacking in religious practices because they are taking care of themselves while they should be under their parents' guidance. So, nobody will ask them to go to the mosque or church because they are always at work and there are no good role models in their surroundings.

12) Health Problem

Child labour has a physical health impact on children who are working in factories, small workshops, on the roads, streets, in mining, and construction sites because they are engaging in hazardous work and risk their lives that can endanger their health. [52] Children's development and physical ability are not suitable to work excessive hours under any circumstances because working under unhealthy and hazardous conditions results in different kinds of sickness and illness for children. Children's biological characteristics make them more susceptible to work in hazardous environments and unhealthy atmospheres. Children will be more exposed to accidents, diseases, and ergonomic hazards. [53]

Some children are also exposed to chemicals, heavy machinery, noisy environments, and hard physical work. [54] In many cases, children have minor injuries and cuts that need professional medical treatment, and stitches, to dry the wound quickly. Due to the informal job they are engaging in, it will be difficult to provide professional medical doctors and if a medical doctor is provided, children may not follow medical instructions as their main concern is making money. Too much squatting and bending of the back and legs when working also affects a child's health and lack of medical attention and treatment will worsen the child's physical condition in the future. [55]

In conditions where children are always sick, it will cause improper development for the child due to lack of nutrition and a conducive environment where children are dwelling. [56] Malnutrition and diseases cause physical deformities in many children that lead to their death. The number of children also suffering from a lack of protein and energy increased from 150 million children in 1975 to 160 million in 1984. Over 80 percent of these malnourished children live in Asia and 12 percent in Sub-Saharan African and Nigeria is included in Africa. [57]

Child labour causes health problems for the children due to the lack of a conducive environment, nutrition, clean water, and hygienic accommodation for the children who sleep in any place or in congested places, especially Nigerian children. So, any children who are the victims of child labour will face health problems due to their risky life and the inadequate maintenance given by their employer. Similarly, child labourers will also face growth, anthropometric measurement, breast development, and genital problems. [58]

This can affect the female child who is living with male children in the same place and touching sensitive places of the female child may cause quick breast development and also if the female child does not wash her food it will also

influence and attract fast and fat body development of working children. The Emotional health can also be affected in working children because working children wish to be in school to learn like their peers who are in school when they are labouring under hazardous and unfit conditions. Children are not really happy with their conditions because they are excluded from school which will give them a better chance in the future because necessity makes them work in hot and cold weather which will damage their health. [59]

13) *Child's Psychological Effects after Working*

Children can develop psychological effects because of labour due to sexual abuse, and the deleterious impact of child labour on the child's physical and emotional wellbeing. Children also suffer from a lack of freedom of movement, physical battering that causes multiple bone fractures or skull fractures because of road accidents, and child abandonment. [60]

Working children are exhausted, hungry, and anxious because labour causes them many disadvantages at school compared with their non-working counterparts. [61] As a result of child labour many children, especially female children, are abused sexually and the traces of sexual assault will remain in their minds forever. This will have psychological effects that might disturb sexual abuse victims. [62]

Child sexual abuse is a crime under the Nigerian Child Act that carries life imprisonment against the violators of the section provided that the violator is above eighteen years of age. [63]

Presently, many children experience sexual intercourse with their peers or under aged children freely and by mutual consent. There is no provision for punishment against a child who violates section 31 which is totally repugnant and contrary to the *Shari'ah* and culture. Light punishment should be included in the provision as a deterrent and a lesson for the violator and other children. In addition, many children are hawking on the road and they may be hit by motors or vehicles and they may suffer injuries that may affect them for life. Long-term impacts still affect working children because many of them are not well trained and skilful in their work and their job is not permanent. Since their job is not permanent work, there would be frequent changes of working place and types of job. These changes would continue till the age of responsibility without any specific job training or apprenticeship. This negative impact will persist in the child's life from childhood to adulthood and it will also reflect on the child after becoming a married and responsible person in the future in the context of his family. [64]

VIII. CHILDREN AND CRIME IN NIGERIA

Many children in Nigeria who are working and are out of parental control, are involved in one crime or another due to the lack of adequate monitoring and maintenance by the biological parents, family, and government. Some are influenced and induced by adult criminals to commit crimes such as armed break-ins, road block robberies, burglary, armed mugging, and carjacking. They are also involved in under age sex, abuse, rape, abortion, carrying sharp weapon, and HIV/AIDS. Labouring children are used to act as beggars or pretenders while the boss or adult criminal will take the opportunity to commit a robbery. These children are involved in crimes such as the following:

14) *Prostitution*

As a matter of fact, many children are abused sexually globally especially female children who experience early intercourse due to one reason or another. Prostitution is common and rampant among school going females as a result of the child labour that children find themselves in. [65]

This is because of their financial condition and situation. The employer takes advantage of them by using them as prostitutes in the employer's personal interest. Some females are exported to other countries for prostitution as a means of generating income. Both employers and those who are committing illicit intercourse with underaged school females are very wicked and seen as incompassionate. This attitude connotes madness because neither would allow their female daughters to be used and sexually exploited. Some Nigerian children also engage in the production of pornography or pornographic performances, although no Nigerian laws have rationalized or accepted this kind of illicit act. Parents who deliberately introduce their daughter into prostitution, the employer, and the main criminal should solely be responsible for their voluntary act and liable to punishment unless it is otherwise proved. The Nigerian government is capable of freeing Nigerian female children from the scourge and worst forms of child prostitution which is stunting the lives of many Nigerian girls and boys. Under the net of labour, Nigerian boys and girls experience early sexual intercourse due to the lack of proper care. However, many male employers also take advantage of female children who are labouring under them by having sexual intercourse with them and later threatening them with loss of their job if they report the case to anybody or the police. This indicates the state of Nigerian security and the level of Nigerian religious roles in eradicating and preventing close proximity in the nation. The question is where is the Nigerian security? Are they sleeping or have they lost their consciousness? The

Nigerian police could not be responsible for their ineffective duties because they do not have access to modern weapons that can be used to protect them from any harm. Nevertheless, the rate of bribery in Nigeria makes many police and other security officers often lose their code of ethics in their respective work regardless of their rank and post. [66]

If the Nigerian government provides the needed weapons for the officers, there would be no credible reasons for them to fail in their functions and activities. In any government, the weakness and incompetence of the head would always affect the nation. If the head is well disciplined, dedicated, and committed, all the citizens will benefit from his administration regardless of the citizen's status and gender. If otherwise proved by the leaders, the citizens will definitely be the victims and suffer. This is the root cause of Nigerian children's labour because they lack good heads and that is the reason why adults are suffering which causes their children to labour in the streets and other places locally and internationally instead of being in school. [67]

This can be seen in case of *AGF v Effiong Effiong (M)*, the accused person was charged to High Court Uyo for wilful procuring a 16 year old girl for prostitution. *Effiong Effiong* who is 26 year old at the time prosecution pleaded guilty to the 3 counts charge. The learned judge in person of Justice E.S Chukwu convicted accused person to 2 years imprisonment without given him fine opportunity. The judgment was delivered on the 28th of May 2009. [68]

In another case of *AGF v (1) Elele Biloko (F) (2) Joshua Eborod (M) (3) Helen Oni (F)*. All the three accused person was charged for procuring unde aged girls for prostitution. The accused persons taken the victim illegally from her lawful guardianship and keeping brothel. The three accused brought before the Justice Tijjani Abubakar of Federal High Court, Lagos, and the judgment was delivered by learned judge by sending all into 2 years imprisonment without fine option opportunity for all accused persons. [69]

All the cited prostitute cases were so pathetic and the sentence of the accused person into 2 years imprisonment is not really serve the deterrence and lesson purpose compared with *Shari'ah* ruling on such case because under the *Shari'ah* rulings, the accused would be sentenced to death because of his unlawful and wilful act. Although, the case was presided under the Civil Court not under *Shari'ah* Court. Nevertheless, the judgment is also serving a little deterrence especially when the accused person denied the fine option. Because if the accused is allowed to pay fine, it will

be easily for him to pay any fine and the crime would be increased in the society.

15) Abuse

As a result of child labour, male and female children may commit offensive abuse by way of committing physical abuse on a child or inflicting injuries to another child. However, abuse might also be in the form of sexual abuse between the children by touching breasts, genitals, and buttocks, either in a dressed or undressed state. [70]

16) Under Aged Sex

Any sexual relations with a person under the age of consent is a criminal offence that carries a punishment of a fine or life imprisonment. The main moral philosophy behind the age of consent for sexual intercourse is to protect minors from sexual abuse and harassment by adults or other minors. Close proximity and closeness between Nigerian labouring children influences and causes sexual relationships which are a crime under the law and immoral and an abomination for their culture and customs. [71]

In the case of *AGF v. Ganiyu Ishola(M) before Ilorin High Court*, Kwara State. This is case between 13 year old pupil and Ganiyu Ishola who is herbalist by profession. The accused illegally and unlawfully detained the victim who is female for 40 days and the victim was sexually abused resulting to her getting pregnant. The initially tried by Ilorin High Court and later assigned to another judge. The prosecution called 4 witnesses and the Defence called 2 witnesses. The presiding judge in person of Justice M.O Adewara of High Court N3 delivered judgment on 28th of May, 2008 and the accused was convicted and sentenced to 2 years imprisonment on the 9 counts to run his sentence concurrently without any fine option. [72]

17) Rape

Rape is one of the heinous and abhorrent crimes in society and in order to fight and eliminate rape as a social illness, the causes of rape should be well understood in terms of who commits the crime and why the crime is committed. [73] Rape mainly refers to coercive and forceful attempts to have intercourse with a member of the opposite gender without statutory consent.¹ [74] The phenomenon is seriously affecting Nigerian children as rape victims especially those who are labouring who have been raped by adults. Some are sleeping with men purposely to get a little money to survive and to support their family as a way of contributing to the family income. [75]

In order to curb and put an end to this disheartening crime against Nigerian children, the causes of the crime should be identified by the Nigerian government to allow for proper action and solutions. This research disagrees with the view that sex between one child and another child should not be considered as abusive because it is a peer relationship, children are at the same level and there is no element of power abuse. [76] This is a fallacy that lacks any moral or religious background and one which undermines society. It can be argued that a child lacks legal capacity and cannot be guilty of such a crime due to his age under the positive law. But in the public interest, a child should be lightly disciplined as a deterrent to others if it is possible. This is because many rape cases go unreported due to fear, humiliation, defamation, pain, and shyness. [77]

If children are allowed to commit rape on other children without proper checking, the situation will be aggravated and the victims traumatized in the future. Even the accused will become a rapist in the future. However, long-term devastation, emotional problems, lack of sexual enjoyment, traumatic problems and psychological problem will be caused for the rape victims. [78] If adult rape victims experience the negative effects of rape aftermath, children will suffer even more.

18) Abortion

Underage sex, rape, and underage consensual intercourse between minors or minors and adults are all common, and rampant among Nigerian minors and adults ranging from primary school to higher institutions and also at vocational level and within the street working children. [79]

Many children who are labouring are involved in fornication because of improper control, adequate monitoring by their parents and the Nigerian government, and lack of religious and moral guidance. So, they engage in sexual intercourse for pleasure. In a situation where pregnancy occurs, children deliberately terminate the pregnancy by following induced abortion procedures in order to cleanse the womb which is very risky to a girl's health and her womb. This is common among those who are sexually active. [80]

19) Immoral Attitude

The lives of children who are working have been polluted and adulterated by impure, harmful, unfit, and dangerous adults in the nation due to child labour and lack of proper maintenance. Their relationship contaminates their behaviour, morals, religion, and character in society. They will be introduced to negative, immoral, unreligious, and bad habits which will have a distasteful impact on their future. Many labouring children in Nigeria are living

in impure conditions, characterized by defilement, dirtiness, foulness, and unwholesomeness. [81]

20) Spread of HIV/AIDS

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is one of the most devastating public health problems around the globe. So, many children are at the greatest risk of having sexual intercourse with HIV/AIDS positive persons. In a situation where a female child is raped by an HIV/AIDS patient, the victim will be infected. As the working children are free and independent the spreading of contagious diseases would very easy and quickly wide spread among them and this may cost them their lives. [82]

21) Weapon Control

As a consequence of child labour in Nigeria, many children have access to dangerous weapons that can create havoc and injuries to others' lives. There is a high risk of death among the children in possession of weapons such as knives, cutlasses, iron, wood, and others. The possession of weapons is very risky for children because weapons may be used when there is a misunderstanding between them in the absence of sensible and respectable elders who can quickly intervene between the two combatants for reconciliation. [83]

22) Theft

Child labour is the root of all the crime and immoral acts many children are engaged in around the globe and in Nigeria specifically. It is a child's right to be well maintained and properly provided for with all his or her needs that will help to prevent him or her from committing any kind of crime in society. As a result of child labour, many Nigerian children resort to theft and crime directly or are so induced by the adults with whom they mix. [84]

Education

As a result of child labour in Nigeria, children's education has been truncated and working children are lagging behind their peers educationally due to their being at work during school hours. Many working children do not know their rights, whom to go to for assistance, and if they are labouring till adulthood, there is a possibility that they will not be productive for Nigerian society unless a solution emerges in the interests of working children and the nation. [85] The Nigerian government needs to organize development programmes for working children after they have regained their entry into school to complete their primary and secondary education. The development programmes should focus on and address the social, emotional, cognitive development of young children, and physical training that will enable them to adjust themselves

and be fully prepared for the future challenges. So, these programmes will prevent drop-outs from school and keep them within the school premises for learning purposes. [86]

In order to pay and give more attention to the condition of experienced working children in school, the educational programme structure, the content of the curriculum and syllabus, teaching approaches and methods applied in the schools should include relevant, useful knowledge and skills that will prepare children to be more responsible adults in the future. This programme will help them to engage in decent work with reasonable wages that will be sufficient for their immediate family. [87]

It has been said that inserting former working children directly into formal school is not possible and difficult because of their age, experience, and because they are not used to the system and learning environment. Many efforts have been made in recent years to adapt educational programmes and make experienced working children more suitable for and open to formal educational. [88]

This research also agrees that there are difficulties in bringing former working children into formal education because of the said reasons, yet they can go into the system but not in the same class as non-working children to avoid negative influences from the former working children on non-working children. All former working children can be registered in the same class because they have similar experiences and they can share them. Their reasoning and thinking are similar and they are under educational rehabilitation for their own good. After they have become used to the system and improved significantly, then they can join normal classes with their peers to avoid feeling discriminated against and suffering from inferiority complexes.

1) Government's Roles to Formalize Child's Education in Nigeria

It has been analyzed in the previous lines that education plays an important role in the eradication of child labour in any concerned society and environment. It is the Nigerian government's duty and responsibility to formalize the education system in Nigeria starting from primary school up to the university level. The Nigerian government documented unprecedented growth at all levels of education between 1976 and 1980 at the primary, secondary, and university levels. [89]

The present situation of education in Nigeria is far detached and cannot be compared with the situation in 1976 to 1980. So, the education system should be made free to all citizens regardless of their status and financial capacity. If the Ministry of Education removes all their defects by providing free education as a universal compulsory basic education

for all, adequate educational provision for rural and urban areas, adequate trained teachers, facilities, and free food for the needy and free stationery for poor students, child labour will be controlled in the interests of the children and the nation at large. If the government could fully implement those methods of child education, it would attract and retain children in schools. If children work at all, it will be after school hours. Gradually, child labour would be eradicated and working children would be well educated and able to fight for their rights and be more responsible. [90]

Pre-school education should be strengthened by the Federal and State Ministry of education in Nigeria, in particular, to incorporate drop out children and working children into schools. The project will give more enthusiasm for an interest in school among working children, their parents, and teachers. It is the government's duty to provide early free childhood education and children should be taught about their rights and duties to themselves and the nation throughout their curriculum and syllabus. [91]

This project and programmes could not materialize in Nigeria unless those who are in charge of education at the state and national levels are well disciplined, honest, committed, and sincere. With the situation in Nigeria in particular, discipline, honesty, commitment, and sincerity are lacking in the nation. [92]

So, the government should appoint someone who possesses the qualities to hold the post of Minister of Education and Commissioner of Education at the state level to ensure that all children are schooling in Nigerian public schools.

IX. ANALYSIS ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Five tables were used to explain the situation and condition Nigerian Children due to the lack of adequate provision and the consequences of the lack of child maintenance across the nation; child income, parental income and occupational status, child health, and the consequences of child labour.

X. RESULTS OF DATA ON CHILD CONDITION IN NIGERIA

As shown in Table 1, a significant percentage of the working children are male based on the survey. The majority of working children are Yoruba 70.7% (n=895) followed by Hausa 16% (n=202) and by Igbo 13.3% (n=169) children. The survey indicates that the number or percentage of Muslim working children is very high 58.1% (n=736) followed by Christian children 40.9% (n=518) and few traditionalist children due to the small percentage of traditionalists in the Nigerian population .9% (n=12).

According to the data, the majority of interviewed children started work between 12-15 years which is 41.2% (n=522) followed by 9-11 years which is 37.4% (n=473) while 14.8% (n=188) of children were between 7 - 8 years old when they started their labour and finally some children workers were between 5 -6 years of age when they started work which is 6.6% (n=83) of the survey. The present age of the working children at the time of the survey was between 14 and 17 years old which was significantly higher than other ages representing 72.2% (n=914) of the total number of the survey followed by 10-13 years old which is 26.3% (n=333) and 6-9 years old with 1.5% (n=19) of the total number of the survey. Regarding the gender, the data shows that 59.5% (n=753) of the respondents were male while 40.5% (n=513) were female. The majority of respondents were from South East Nigeria 70.4% (n=891) followed by Northern Nigeria 17% (n=215) and the last group came from South West Nigeria 12.6% (n=160).

Table 1:
Child Demographic Variable.

| Demographic variable | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 753 | 59.5 |
| Female | 513 | 40.5 |
| Tribe | | |
| Hausa | 202 | 16.0 |
| Yoruba | 895 | 70.7 |
| Igbo | 169 | 13.3 |
| Religion | | |
| Islam | 736 | 58.1 |
| Christianity | 518 | 40.9 |
| Traditional | 12 | .9 |
| Previous Age | | |
| 5-6 | 83 | 6.6 |
| 7-8 | 188 | 14.8 |
| 9-11 | 473 | 37.4 |
| 12-15 | 522 | 41.2 |
| Present Age | | |
| 6-9 | 19 | 1.5 |
| 10-13 | 333 | 26.3 |
| 14-17 | 914 | 72.2 |
| Place of Birth | | |
| North | | |
| South East | 215 | 17.0 |
| South West | 891 | 70.4 |
| | 160 | 12.6 |

In Table 2, the data indicates that an overwhelming number 69% (n= 873) of working children secured their jobs with the help of their parents, sister, uncle, brother, family friends or relatives while 20.9% (n=265) of working children were assisted by their friends and the rest of the 10.1% (n=128) secured their jobs by themselves without anybody's intervention and assistance. Concerning the purpose of their working, 63.6% (n=805) of them are seriously working across the nation in order to survive and to have a means of survival due to the lack of help from within or outside the family. Meanwhile, 21.4% (n=271) are also engaged in labour in order to prepare and empower themselves for future purposes. They are working for future purposes to buy vocational equipment for their job training, for further studies, and to start or establish themselves in a business or trade. The last 15% (n=190) of working children are working across the nation to contribute to their family income or to assist their family in order to reduce their parents' financial constraints. The majority 70.5% (n=892) of the interviewed working children are working on a full-time basis which is equivalent to 16-17 hours per-day while a smaller number 29.5% (n=374) are working part-time which is equivalent to 7-8 hours daily based on their agreement, especially for those who are still schooling. Overwhelmingly 55.1% (n=697) of the Nigerian working children participate and engage in sales, selling pure water, hawking on the road for different edible items, or work as shoemakers, shoe polishers, and also newspaper vendors. Meanwhile 44.9% (n=569) engage in services, as house helps, conductors, servants, shop attendants, labourers, apprentices, loaders, and load carriers, kerosene sellers, petrol attendants etc. It also shows in the survey the daily, weekly or monthly wages the working children are receiving as in return for their labour 52.1% (n=660) earn N3000-N4999 25.4% (n=321) earn N1000-N2999, followed by N5000-N6999 16.3% (n=206) of the total wages and the remaining 6.2% (n=79) are working without any wages but get payment in kind.

**Table 2:
Child Demographic Variable.**

| Demographic variable | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| Who assisted you to get the job? | | |
| Parent/relative | 873 | 69.0 |
| Friend | 265 | 20.9 |
| Myself | 128 | 10.1 |
| Reason for work | | |
| To contribute to family income | | |
| To survive/earn means for future purpose | 190 | 15.0 |
| | 805 | 63.6 |
| | 271 | 21.4 |
| Nature of work | | |
| Full time | 891 | 70.5 |
| Part time | 374 | 29.5 |

In Table 3, the data reveals that 81% (n=1026) of working children's parents in Nigeria are still alive but they are unable to maintain and properly take care of their family due to the obvious reasons which are poverty and financial constraints. On the other hand, 11% (n=139) of working children's parents had already died which forces the children to work in order to survive while 8% (n=101) of the interviewed working children had lost one of their parents either father or mother. For those parents who are still alive 40.4% (n=512) are engaged in business such as buying and selling, as drivers, traders, meat sellers, and others. Meanwhile, 20.4% (n=258) are engaged in vocational business such as mechanics, tailors, carpenters, plumbers, and others while 22.7% (n=288) of parents are farmers. The percentage of civil servants is 5.8% (n=74) and the rest 10.6% (n=134), either father or mother, were dead. The last part of the table contains the number of children in the household according to which 2-4 children in the household of respondents is 20.1% (n=255), followed by 5-7 children in the household of respondents with 46.3% (n=586), while families with 8-10 children are 22.9% (n=290) and the last is 11-14 children in household which is 10.7% (n=135). The data reveal the inability of parents to provide adequate maintenance for their children despite the little money they are earning daily or monthly.

**Table 3:
Child Demographic Variable.**

| Demographic variable | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Are your parents alive? | | |
| Both alive | 1026 | 81.0 |
| Both died | 139 | 11.0 |
| One of them died (father/mother) | 101 | 8.0 |
| Parental occupation | | |
| Vocational job | 258 | 20.4 |
| Farmer | 288 | 22.7 |
| Business/trade | 512 | 40.4 |
| Civil servant | 74 | 5.8 |
| Died | 134 | 10.6 |
| Number of children in family | | |
| 2-4 | 255 | 20.1 |
| 5-7 | 586 | 46.3 |
| 8-10 | 290 | 22.9 |
| 11-14 | 135 | 10.7 |

Table 4, the author of this thesis exploited the survey to reveal the working children's past education and the present educational level they are in at the time of working and their interest in furthering their education in the future if there are ample opportunities for them to do so. At the time of the survey, some of the respondents were at primary school level with 32.8% (n=415) followed by SSS with 20.8% (n=263) and the last is JSS with 46.4% (n=588) of the whole data. Working children were asked whether they would like to go back and further their studies. Based on the respondents, 75.4% (n=955) wished to go back to school if they had opportunities and adequate provisions while 24.6% (n=311) declined to go back to school due to lack of interest in education and lack of someone to sponsor their study.

Table 4:
Child Demographic Variable.

| Demographic variable | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Have you been to school? | | |
| Primary | 415 | 32.8 |
| JSS | 588 | 46.4 |
| SSS | 263 | 20.8 |
| Would you like to go back to school? | | |
| Yes | 955 | 75.4 |
| No | 311 | 24.6 |

Table 5, the frequency shows that 68.8% (n=871) of Nigerian children suffer from malaria, fever, and typhoid due to the hazardous conditions and unhealthy environment they are working in. Furthermore, 28.3% (n=358) of those children have pains, headache, cholera, and coughs and 2.9% (n=37) experiences accident and other illnesses during their labour. It is also revealed from the frequency that 58.5% (n=740) received the treatment from chemists where they can buy medicine to cure their sickness, 30.9% (n=391) were taken for hospital treatment for their sickness and the last 10.7% (n=135) of working children could not afford either a chemist or hospital treatment so they used local and traditional medicine to cure their illness. In terms of payment, 19.8% (n=251) of working children paid their medical treatment by themselves, while 57.9% (n=733) of them were paid by their parents or relatives and the remaining of 22.3% (n=282) were paid by their boss or friend. Finally, Table 5 also indicates that 33.9% (=429) were sexually abused or sexually harassed by adults or working children of the same age while the 66.1% (n=837) were not abused sexually.

Table5
Child Demographic Variable.

| Demographic variable | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| Types of sickness | | |
| Malaria/fever | 871 | 68.8 |
| Pains/cholera/headache | 358 | 28.3 |
| Accident and other illness | 37 | 2.9 |
| Where did you go for treatment? | | |
| Hospital | 391 | 30.9 |
| Chemist | 740 | 58.5 |
| Local treatment | 135 | 10.7 |
| Who paid your treatment bill? | | |
| Parent | 733 | 57.9 |
| Boss/friend | 282 | 22.3 |
| Myself | 251 | 19.8 |
| Have you ever been harassed sexually? | | |
| Yes | 429 | 33.9 |
| No | 837 | 66.1 |

XI. CONCLUSION

It can also be concluded that poverty is the prime factor and major cause of child labour in Nigeria. The low income of working children's parents worsens the children's conditions and forces them into the labour force. Government ineffectiveness is another cause of child labour for their failure to provide the basic needs of the citizens. However, child labour cannot be eradicated until the Nigerian government appoints or elects honest, committed, disciplined, and pious people to office. The children of leaders should study in Nigerian public schools and go to public hospitals for treatment. The Nigerian government also needs to return child drop-outs into school in order to have access to education for all. Indeed, many Nigerian children are working more than reasonable hours in detrimental conditions. Under the Nigerian Labour Act, there are no specific wages for under-aged child because it is illegal for a child under fourteen years old to work, perhaps, the persisting conditions cause many child to flock into the labour market in order to survive. However, many Nigerian working children are becoming nuisances to society because of their involvement in crime and immoral behaviour and dysfunctional attitudes against themselves and other genders. Child labour has a great impact on the nation concerned both

socially and economically while working children are suffering psychological problems. Discipline and caning should not be considered as child abuse unless they are applied illegally, irrationally, and unjustifiably. If discipline is exercised for the purpose of changing and correction, it should be considered as one of the child's rights.

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