

INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ECONOMIC BACKGROUND ON STREET CHILDREN PHENOMENON IN IBADAN NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OYO STATE

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Abstract

The effect of family economic background in the upbringing of an African child cannot be overemphasized. It permeates all the stratum of the worldview either positively or negatively. This article therefore, focuses on influence of family economic background on street children phenomenon in Ibadan north local government, Oyo state. Two hypotheses were formulated to explore the crucial variables, inherent in this study. Employing the descriptive survey method, a 40 – item questionnaire was used to elicit data for the study which was complemented by the 1995 UNICEF report on street – children and youths in Lagos State. The instrument was complemented with an 8-item oral interview, adopting the anthropocentric research method the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach. The data was collected and analysed and presented using frequency counts, simple percentage (%), chi-square (χ^2) and the co-efficient of correlation – Spearman’s rule (Rank-Order) correlation. In conclusion, the findings indicate that family economic background of the children significantly influences the street children syndrome in Ibadan metropolis, and as such, it was recommended that ultimate responsibility for the wellbeing of citizens, especially young and immature ones, rests with Government; so the Federal Government is called upon to evolve a policy on street children.

Introduction

Throughout the world, there are children who have drifted away from their homes or families of orientation. They are commonly referred to as “runaway” children. Since their usual place of domain is the street, they are also referred to as street children. In the major towns of Nigeria, particularly Ibadan, a cursory glance is sufficient for one to observe a considerable presence of such children. These children are not at school and are separated from the home for the most part of the day with the result that they are deprived of parental care and guidance in their formative years. The consequences are negative social and physical developments for them and the wider society.

Ebele, M. (1990) posits that, childhood is recognized as a period of sensitivity requiring

care and attention. It is to this effect, much attention has been drawn to the major challenges created by the very large proportions of children and young people in the population of a large number of developing countries. The aim is to promote health, well-being and potential of all children, adolescents and youths, to meet their special needs including social, family and community support, as well as access to education, employment, health counselling and high quality reproductive health services and to encourage them to continue their education.

The family and home, which is usually composed of individuals who are emotionally significant to each other, who dwell together within certain physical structures, provide this care. In other words, homes are generally perceived as consisting of persons, and structures in which these persons live as protection against natural elements. The quality of these structures may differ significantly. But whatever their quality, they serve as a rallying point for the inmates and a haven and nest for child rearing. Indeed, the emotional loading of the word “home” includes the warmth of companionship, care and affectionate concern for mutual welfare ranging from provision of food to worries about physical safety. The home where significant other factors play their nurturing role for the developing child is the natural, normal place for children to be born and be brought up. But our main concern here is the street-children and what they are doing on the streets. It would appear this phenomenon thwarts the normal role of the home – a home where the nurturing role of the developing child is played. If not, why do we have this problem on the increase?

From the above analysis, it would be realized that, the family (nuclear or extended) plays a great role in the development of a child. It is worthy also to be mentioned that in our society, the extended family is accorded a lot of recognizance and importance and where the nuclear family fails in its pursuance of its functions; the extended family then renders the necessary support. Thus, before a child takes to the streets, it must have been a failure of the whole family system where they would have been very negligent in their duties. Our traditional African family system has a closely knit network relationship in which one takes care of the other. Thus, where one fails to discharge its functions, the other takes up the challenge. For example, a mother/father may be negligent in performing his/her duties or there may be some strife between the couple and where it affects their children, a member of the extended family might opt to take over while the others will contribute their share of the well-being of such children; thus, making them not to lack necessary affection and attention.

Statement of the Problem

The Puzzling question which arises is; how can a society which claims to have a strong network of extended family support, breed and condone street children? Some of the answers are embedded in the constant marital-instability plaguing our society. It is against this background that, this study will attempt an explanation of the relationship between marital-instability and the street-children phenomenon. Added to this, is the fact that, childhood is seen as a period of carefree innocence, hence the need to protect them as well as accord them special care. So much importance is attached to children because they are seen as God’s gift to humanity. This is seen in (Ps 128:2-4; Prov. 17:6; Gen: 1 27-28 etc.). Their importance is further

Seen in the role they play in according legality or a bond to any marriage – in Africa, any marriage that bears no fruits is not recognized.

Purpose of the Study

1. To examine whether family socio-cultural background of the children significantly influences the street children phenomenon in Ibadan North Local Government.
2. To examine whether family economic background of the children significantly influences the street children phenomenon in Ibadan North Local Government.

Scope of the Study

The study in all intents covers the Ibadan North Local Government Area. It is limited to this area not because it is only here that such children are available but because most of the markets which are safe harbours for these children are located within this Local Government. The markets include; Bodija, Sango, Mokola, Gbaremu, Oje, Opopo Yemoja, Ode-oolo, Nalende and Agbowo Markets. This will enable the researchers make certain generalizations from the sample population that will be collected from all these markets.

Significance of the Study

The findings will enable us highlight the values that are to be taught within the family, so they will lead to the balanced, healthy, psychological and emotional development of the child. It will also awaken parents primarily to their responsibilities towards their children while bringing out the effect of their disharmony on the children. Parents would be made to understand that, when a child feels loved, and secure – not financially secure but emotionally secure, the needs that may drive him to the street often vanish. The findings will also prove to the society the in-depth negative effects of marital instability on the children. From the findings, people will be encouraged to champion or advocate for children's rights, as well as support organizations that are into protecting the children and promoting their welfare. Above all, it will prove to the society that, despite the psychological, social and emotional damage bestowed on these children, they still stand a chance of being rehabilitated using the proper and adequate rehabilitative measures that will give them hope and future.

Research Question

1. Does family socio-cultural background of the children significantly influence the street children phenomenon in Ibadan North Local Government?
2. Does family economic background of the children significantly influence the street children phenomenon in Ibadan North Local Government?

Hypotheses of the Study

Ho₁: The family socio-cultural background of the children does not significantly influence the street children phenomenon in Ibadan North Local Government.

Ho₂: The family economic background of the children does not significantly influence the street children phenomenon in Ibadan North Local Government.

Theoretical Framework

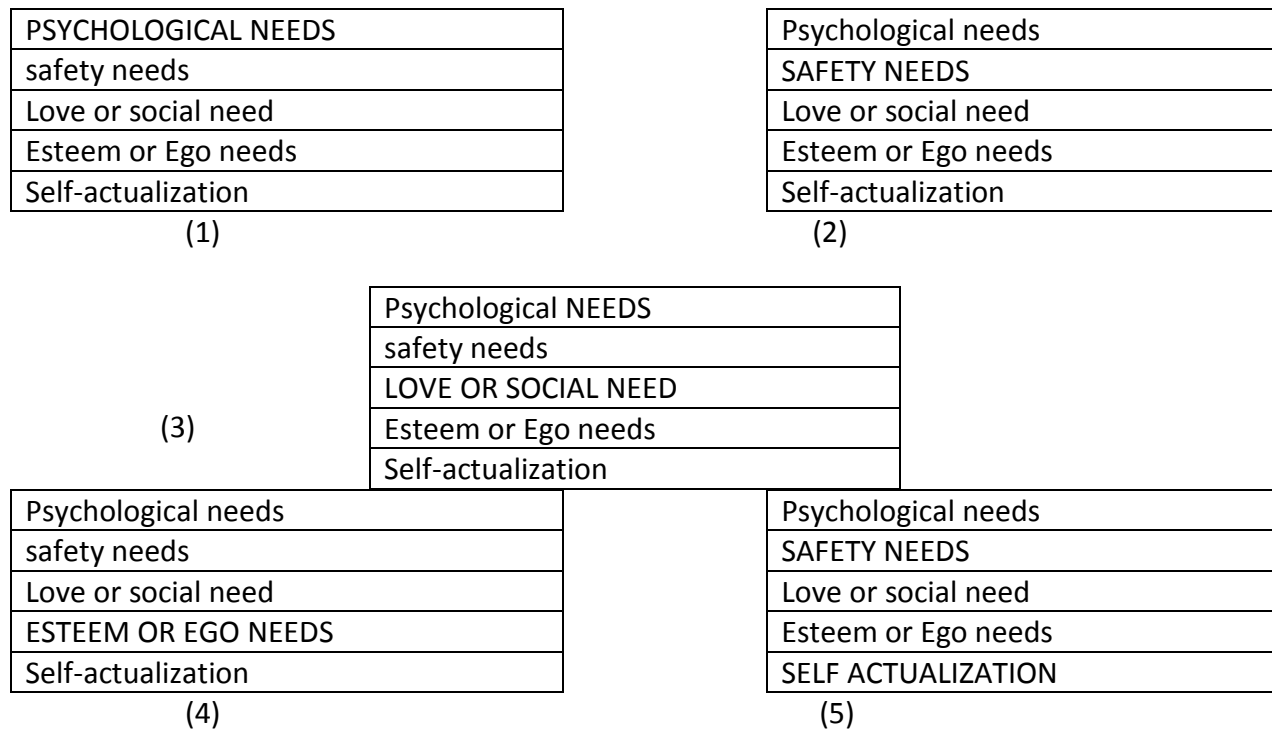
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

This theory was formulated by Maslow. A. H. (1943). In it, he postulated that, a person has at least five sets of basic needs: Physiological, Safety, Love or Social, Self-esteem and Self-actualization. These needs he says can be ranked in the order of priority with the physiological needs first and the self-actualization one last. As one set of needs is satisfied, the next ranking one predominates. Consequently, man tends to be a “perpetually wanting animal”. In addition to these basic needs, a person is also motivated, according to Maslow, by the desire to achieve or, in other words, to maintain the various conditions which permit fulfilment of the basic needs. He further classified human needs into five sets of needs appearing in a hierarchical order. These needs emerge in a given sequence at different stages in a person’s physical and mental growth. Consequently, different needs appear to be predominant at different stages.

For an individual who’s very basic physiological needs remain unsatisfied, safety, love, self-esteem and self-actualization needs will assume a secondary importance. Below, in Fig: 1 is a diagrammatic representation indicating how different needs predominate at different stages in a person’s growth. As one set of needs in largely satisfied, the next one in the need hierarchy becomes the most powerful. This process continues until the person reaches self-actualization.

FIG 1

A diagrammatic representation of the five hierarchical levels level of human needs.



SOURCE: Adapted from Anwar and Archer (1983:36)

1. Physiological Needs: Lowest. These represent the most basic human needs relating to one’s survival. Since one must receive an adequate supply of food, water and air in

Order to stay alive, then an individual's primary needs for food, shelter, and clothing must be satisfied before the emergence of other social and egoistic needs.

2. Safety needs: These refer to an individual's desire for security. Maslow, here talks of the need of a relatively stable environment which is relatively free of threats. It means individuals must have territories in which they feel safe since these two lower needs are necessary for survival; they tend to be proponents over the higher needs. Thus, Maslow describes these two stages as "Basic Needs". Thus, these basic needs must be met before a person thinks of higher goals.
3. Love or social Needs. These concerns man's desire to be loved, to belong and be accepted. Young people desire to be incorporated into their social environment to greater extent, however, where they are rebuffed and denied the camaraderie and support from family members and immediate societal network; they tend to develop deviant behaviours/attitudes and may want to alienate themselves from such environments. This they will do by accepting the goals of the Social system but denying the means of attainment or by outright rejection of the society and designing other alternatives for themselves for which taking to the street is not far-fetched.
4. Esteem or Ego Needs:- Involves a high self-concept, self-recognition, respect and admiration from others, recognition and acceptability to others, earned prestige and status. Where these desires are frustrated, it leads to helplessness, weakness and feelings of inferiority.
5. Self-Actualization Needs (the highest) is concerned with the development and realization of one's full potential, creativity, originality and good perception or reality. Here, it is worthy of mention that certain things in us all strive for fulfilment and gives us a sense of greater identity. At this level, it means growing beyond all basic needs and learning to get along, socially striving for independence and autonomy on realization of one's inner potential.

In sum, the last two hierarchies of need provide growth for an individual whereas the first three are foundation for an individual's survival and comfort in the world. Non-satisfaction of these needs predisposes children to seeking alternatives and anti-social means of status attainment and survival. One of the basic obstacles to social and national development in Nigeria is that, the basic needs of hunger, thirst, clothing, shelter have not been adequately satisfied in more than 75% of the people. In order for most families to meet up and survive, they resort to various forms of child labour, neglect and abuse.

Another theorist who is of the same opinion with Maslow is Malinowski who in his theories of need provide a link between the various human needs with the factors of their satisfaction. He stipulated that, the cultural responses to the basic needs lead to the emergence of institutions such as economic, social control, education and political organizations. However, the inability of a human individual or groups of such individuals to satisfy the above needs would lead to such human problems as physical defects, psychological difficulties, social and mental deprivation. On the whole, the various types of social problems caused by the three factors mentioned above would include the following: Poverty, over-population, urbanization and excessive migration, unemployment, physical and mental disorders, delinquency and

crime, malnutrition and poor health condition, family conflicts and mal-adjustments, divorce, prostitution, poor housing, illiteracy, drug addiction, destitution and a host of others. These constitute the fundamental evidence of the incidence of personal and social disorganization in a complex and changing world.

Literature Review

Social work in child welfare was commenced by some friendly visitors (Bartlett 1970:21ff). Social work practitioners were only trained to take over from the visitors in 1900. Family and child welfare was the first among other fields of practice. From then on, significant improvements have been made in the area of child welfare. There are other disciplines that have shown considerable interests in child-related issues. In order to put this study into a clearer perspective, the available literature concerning child-welfare will be reviewed. The review will be undertaken along the following areas.

1. Family Structure/Cohesion.
2. Societal Cohesion.

Family Structure/Cohesion

There is no definition that is comprehensive enough to describe all known forms of family relationship. But within the context of Nigeria for instance, the family should be defined as a kinship group linked by blood and marriage and occupying a common household.

Ekong (1988) perceives the family as a social group, therefore, is made up of man, his wife or wives and children living under a common roof, interacting and influencing the behaviours of each other in a more intimate manner than with others who do not belong. The family as a social institution involves formalized, regular and patterned processes. In the family, we have various network status and roles or social relationships. For example the husband provides and protects the family, the wife bears children, provides love; socializes the children; children uphold the family identity and perpetuate the family name and relatives provide affection and mutual support. The puzzling issue is why has such families disintegrate to a pointy where children will prefer the streets to any other family member?

Despite the varying existing family types; trustee family which is regarded as a patriarchal family in which the father as the head is essentially a trustee who is responsible to his lineage; the domestic family, where we have greater dependence from blood ties or a closely knit extended family; and the atomistic family type which is unstable and basically individualistic in its approach. In Africa, we operate better using the domestic family type in which intimate family ties are emphasized. There is a narrower family loyalty; concern for child-bearing and a sacramental conception of the marriage bond which tends to minimize family instability. One then continues to wonder why in a situation where there is no cordiality in a marriage, it will extend to members of the extended family.

Goode (1987) observes that the family is disintegrating. He reiterates that, reports have shown that the family no longer performs tasks once entrusted to its production, education, protection, etc. He maintains that it is within the family that the child is first socialized before he moves into the society. Hence, the family is a unit of the society.

The family is seen as significantly important in that, it is the only social institution other than religion that is formally developed in all societies. A specific social agency is in charge of a great variety of social behaviours and activities. No matter the technological level, kinship statuses and their responsibilities are the objects of both formal and informal attention in societies – legal aspects of action, economic aspects and political dynamics. Family duties are the direct role responsibility of everyone in the society with rare exceptions.

All family types are attractive because they offer continuity. That is to say, each member supports the other at different points of different needs knowing that in the long run, this will not be a loss; the other person will remain longer enough to reciprocate at the same point, or better still, another member will offer help at a later time. Then, what is the cause of the recent disintegration of such a system?

Goode (1987) goes on to say that children reared in happy homes are more likely to grow up happy and psychologically healthy while those reared in “empty shell” homes will grow up unhappy and psychologically imbalanced and unhealthy. This is because members of the family fail in their emotional obligations to one another. Child development analysts have argued that, warmth, nurturance and love are necessary for adequate socialization.

Studies have shown that juvenile delinquency is associated with “broken homes”, most of them of course broken by divorce. This finding remains unshaken, but now, we find that juvenile delinquency is associated with class position with higher rates towards the lower social strata. Studies have also shown that, children who grow in homes where parents avoid divorce but continue fighting have more emotional problems than those who experience a divorce. It is said that, the quality of parent-child relationship has a lot of consequences. Thus, hostility, anger, coldness and withdrawal are likely to have destructive effects on children than the simple absence of one parent.

Fayeye (1994) further affirms that strained and weakened parent-child relationship and absence of family cohesion are responsible for the development of delinquent behaviours among which we have the street children.

Societal Cohesion

Human beings usually live together in a society or community. The distinction between these two concepts depends on the degree of organization and the level of consciousness of the social mode of life of the people. The term “society” can be generally used to denote whole range of social network of relationships. We can refer to society using Collingwood’s (1942) definition as a group of socially conscious people in terms of the mode of life, who are bounded together by common interests, aims and values such as sharing a common government, land area, set of social relationship. Collingwood also refers to a group (adults and children), social and non-social living in a territory where though, they all share a mode of life are not conscious of its organization and purpose as a community.

This means that there is non-social part of the community/society such as little children and mentally retarded who is not conscious of the way of life of their society and of their rights and obligations. Such persons are not seen as members of the society but of the community. Ottaway (1953) opines that members of the society are those who operate at the level of the

“cultural universals”. Since the special nature of any society is judged by the behaviour of its socially conscious members. The non-conscious members such as children need to be socialized or educated to make them become socially conscious members of the society. Is this not done, it may lead to a state of anomie.

Since the society is also seen as one of the socializing agents of a developing child, it has to perform its function particularly in situations where the family has failed.

Goode (1987) holds that it is the family that make up the family; hence, family duties are the direct role responsibility of everyone in the society with rare expectations. Almost everyone is both born into a family and founds one of his/her own. Each individual is akin to many others. Although the family is seen or usually thought of as an expressive or emotional social unit, it serves as an instrumental agency for the larger social structure, and all other institutions and agencies depending upon its contributions for example, the role behaviour learned within the family becomes the model or prototype for behaviour required in other segments of the society. Hence, the family makes the individual and eventually the society. It is also obvious that the society makes the individual. Thus, where the family fails to performs its functions, it affects the individual as well as the general society and vice versa.

Formerly, there was a commonness/oneness in the way things were being done, whereby each person sees the other's burden as his own, and comes to his aid when necessary, there was no abandonment of children to the tide. But nowadays, the societal cohesion has witted down because of social change, economic downturn, etc., and we find children abandoned here and there.

Cohen (1969), in his mal-integration theory, concluded that; the society needs to survive as an organism. Thus, it has to properly maintain its members to prevent lawlessness and disintegration.

Ebele (1990) is of the opinion that, street children in general are the responsibility of the whole society because, since they are immature, adults and not children have determined the circumstance (policies inclusive) which made them what they are. The same society continues to exploit them. Here, he demonstrates the degradation of the entire society and how its cohesiveness is failing. According to Ebele (1990), where there is cohesiveness within society members, the phenomenon of street children and other delinquent behaviours will be averted.

Empirical Studies

We shall now undertake and examine some empirical studies in street-children. This will enable us situate this study within existing empirical work in the area.

Ojesina (1995) did a study of three hundred and eighty (380) delinquent boys and girls in Bodija Market Ibadan, Oyo State. He observed that adverse home environment is a contributory factor to the delinquent state of the children. Many of the respondents had little or no education. They inhabit poor housing in slum areas which are often crowded. Many of them hail from polygamous homes. They frequently commit deviant acts like begging, stealing, gambling or minor misdemeanours. The study establishes that the area of high juvenile delinquency tends to coincide with subnormal housing conditions. Many of the parents of the respondents belong to the low socio-economic stratum of the society which shows evidence of

Poverty. Fayeye (1994) studied the effects of home experiences resulting from parent-child relationship on the behaviour and attitude of delinquency and the process of re-socialisation. Besides, his observation of the inmates of the Remand home, he undertakes a statistical survey of fifty-seven (57) inmates and seventy-two (72) relations of inmates.

The study tries specifically to assess the problems that usually face the child at home, and how such problems are resolved. It was also aimed at indicating the effectiveness of the family in controlling or affecting the behaviour of the child. It then looked at the correctional measures for re-socialisation the deviant juvenile and how the significant others participate in that process. The study recognises that four (4) problems are peculiar to the juvenile covered by the study. They are: failure to meet expectations set for the child at home; emotional problems with the parents; problems of identity; and insufficient finance for sustenance. The respondents pointed out that they rely on themselves, their parents and peers to solve emerging life problems. Their peer group influence is said to carry more weight than that of the parents. It could not, therefore be assumed that the respondents are closely knit with their families of orientation. The fact that the children find themselves committed to a correctional home is indicative of the parent's acceptance of their own inability to bring their children to conform to social norms. Nonetheless, they prefer correction to punishment for the deviant children. The study establishes that the significant others within the family settings are functional in reintegrating the children into the society.

Aderinto (1996:1997) carried out studies on street-children in which he compared the situation in Lagos with that of Ibadan. He also enumerated the health hazards that street children face. His studies did not involve those groups of street juveniles who return home at the end of each day. He attests to the fact that child labour can result into dire consequences for the mental, psychological and physical well-being of the child (see Nangia 1989). Aderinto further postulates that children are not suited for long hours of hazardous work and that their bodies suffer the effects of exertion too quickly. He identified three major economic activities of street children – bus conducting, human porter age and car washing. He also notes that the fact that a child succeeds in being employed on any day, does not guarantee that he could perform the task on subsequent days. He also explains the difficulty in getting a bus to conduct and also highlights the underlying dangers of falling off the bus or being molested. Those who engage in carrying load for people in market places are said to suffer the weight of what they carry. They are susceptible to all kinds of body aches. Those washing cars are prone to accusations of theft by the car owners. In general, he pinpoints the possibility of getting infectious disease by these children. He found out that 15.8 percent of the respondents said they had tried hard drugs ranging from marijuana, glue, cocaine to cigarettes.

The study of Isaiah (1997) is based on street-children engaged in hawking. His analysis of the national situation shows that the standard of living of Nigerians has deteriorated as a result of “the twin evils of devaluation and inflation” which followed SAP. He notes that this situation has affected poor families very much. One of the ways of coping with this condition is the engagement of children in some income generating ventures. He thus, sets out to establish the role working children play in the adaptation of their families. He also intends to find out why the children work prematurely, the objective states under which they operate and the

outcomes derivable from such engagements. His study was located at the Ibadan toll gate end of the Lagos-Ibadan expressway. He interviewed all the 262 children found there over a period of two and a half weeks. He found out that there were more boys and that a substantial proportion of the range are children between the ages of 7 and 15 years. Some younger children accompany some older parents, looking around like apprentices. Over 70 percent of the children are still schooling. Most of them come from large families. The parents are mainly traders, farmers, artisans and drivers operating mostly in the informal sector. The child makes some reasonable profits. Many of them claim they do not like street hawking – why then do they stay on the streets? Isaiah then underlined the problems of risks, fatigue and exploitation. The tendency of being abused and exposed to a deviant sub-culture is also noted.

Gbefwi (1994) undertook a study on the socio-economic dimension of the labour exploitation of children as apprentices in a mechanic village, Farin Gada, Jos. A total number of ten (10) children within the range of 13 to 16 were randomly selected. Twenty (20) fixed questions were filed on each child on certain issues. The owners of the workshops had different set of questions to answer. The individuals within the sample are people who occupied the lower socio-economic stratum of the society; the respondents belonged to families of large sizes. Each apprentice signs a contract to learn the work between 4-5 years and pays ₦3000 fee. The trainees have to understudy 'senior' apprentices. They earn very little amount daily. Their feeding is somehow irregular. They confess to have had injuries on the job. No special time was slated for leisure because the schedule was usually tight. The master of the workshop is regarded as a father figure by the trainees.

Research Design and Methodology

Population and Size

The Ibadan North Local Government was chosen because of its large concentration of markets which are safe harbours for these children. A non-probability sampling method was used. As there was no information on the frame from which sample street children were to be selected, it was initially decided to take a sample of 100 street children. The sample was purposefully selected taking into consideration their haphazard distribution throughout the place. The sample size was not statistically determined for the same reason that a purposive sample selection was made. The street children were generally interviewed in the market where they were mostly found.

An additional 30 non-street children were purposively selected from schools within the local government and interviewed. The inclusion of this population in the sample was based on the assumption that benefits enjoyed by these children through their parents financial and emotional investments, it was unlikely that they would want to leave their homes permanently. These children constituted a control group in determining the extent to which marital instability can cause children taking to the streets.

Instrumentation

The structured questionnaire complemented by the 1995 reports on the street children and youths in Lagos State was the main instrument used. The questionnaire approach was also integrated with the anthropocentric research method i.e. the Focus Group Discussion

(FGD) approach. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section "A" contained the demographic data of the respondents. Section "B" contained causes, attitude and possible rehabilitation process (see appendix (i). There was also another set of eight (8) questions that was used for the Focus Group Discussion (see appendix (ii).

Collection of Data

Research assistants were trained for a period of two weeks on the problem of the study, its objectives and what it seeks to contribute to knowledge. They were armed with all necessary details - how to identify the street children, how to approach them, talk to them encouragingly, etc. The research assistants were later on given the questionnaire for onward administration. They were also given note pads, tape recorder to record the discussion of the Focus Group Discussion. With all these set, the assistants together with the researcher went out to collect the data which was later on analysed. For the FGD, the respondents were divided into groups of eight (8) and each given equal opportunity to speak.

Validity and Reliability

The questions were constructed following available information in the literature reviewed to locate the type of instruments used by previous researchers. The questions were also constructed in line with the hypotheses formulated from the research questions which were also in consonance with the objectives of the study. Discussions and consultations were held with senior colleagues as well as the researcher's supervisor. Various criticisms and corrections were made on the different items contained in the questionnaire. The validity and reliability of an instrument are essential so that correct inferences can be drawn from the results of the data collected. After critically vetting the instruments, the researcher's supervisor finally approved the questionnaire for onward administration. Going through this process, both content and face validity of the instrument were established.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the different reports and the responses to the items in the questionnaire as well as the interview schedule form the basis for coding. The data collected were analysed using frequencies and percentages (%). The research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance using the inferential statistics of Chi-square to determine whether to reject or accept the hypothesis. The coefficient of correlation i.e. Spearman's – Rule (Rank-order) was also used to determine whether to accept the hypothesis or not. The information recorded with tape recorder and notes taken during the FGD were also interpreted and used in compliance with the data analysed.

Analysis of Findings and Discussion

The researchers shall present below the analysis and discussion under each table. Section "A" was analysed using frequency distribution of percentages and Section "B" using chi-square (χ^2) and co-efficient correlation using Spearman's Rule (Rank Order) correlation. They are presented under the hypotheses. The observations and finding from the FGD were used to substantiate the discussion in areas where the questionnaire was found wanting.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Age

| AGE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------|-----------|------------|
| 6-9 | 11 | 8.5% |
| 10-12 | 32 | 24.6% |
| 13-15 | 54 | 41.5% |
| 16-18 | 33 | 25.4% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

The table above revealed that 11 or 8.5% of the respondents are between 6-9 years old, 32 or 24.6% are between 10-12 years, 54 or 41.5% are between 13-15 years and 33 or 25.4% are between 16-18 years.

The analysis revealed that the maximum number of respondents were in the age-group of 10-18 years. The mean age was 14 years. These results were in the line with a number of researches including Cowie (1968), Pillai and Kapedia (1971), Ojesina (1995), West (1967) who has termed the 14th year as peak "Vagrancy age". Some respondents were no doubt above 18 years and this was due to other considerations.

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Sex

| SEX | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| MALE | 87 | 66.9% |
| FEMALE | 43 | 33.1% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

Table 2, above shows that 87 or 66.9% represents the male population of the respondents while 43 or 33.1% were females. This shows that there are more males found in the streets than females. This may be because they are more prone to sexual abuse. This result supports the views of Adebayo and Aminu (1990).

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Religion

| RELIGION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Christianity | 41 | 31.5% |
| Islam | 65 | 50.0% |
| Others | 24 | 18.5% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

The table (3) above indicates that 41 or 31.5% of the respondents are Christians, 65 or 50.0% are Muslims while 24 or 18.5% belong to other religious sects.

From the analysis, it could be observed that, more Muslims could be found on the streets than Christians though there are children from other religions – African religion, etc. or did not belong to any.

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Respondents by their Educational Background

| EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF CHILDREN | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| No Formal Education | 19 | 14.6% |
| Primary School Early Leaver | 54 | 41.5% |
| Primary School | 30 | 23.1% |
| Secondary School Leaver | 21 | 16.2% |
| Secondary School | 6 | 4.6% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

This table reveals that 19 or 14.6% had no formal education, 54 or 41.5% were primary school early leavers, 30 or 23.1% were either still in primary school or had completed 21 or 16.2% were secondary schools early leavers while only 6 or 4.6% were still in secondary schools.

The analysis revealed that most of the children found in the street are either illiterates or have poor educational background. Even those who are in secondary schools are still in JSS I or JSS II or as revealed in the findings. This finding was in consonance with the work of Campbell and Ntasbane (1995).

Table 5

Frequency Distribution on Respondents' Reason for Leaving School

| REASONS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Financial Constraints | 51 | 39.2% |
| Academic Failure | 34 | 26.2% |
| Parents Wish | 30 | 23.1% |
| Prefer to trade/learn a trade | 15 | 11.5% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

Table 5 above revealed that 51 or 39.2% of the respondents left school because of financial constraints, 34 or 26.2% due to academic failure, 30 or 23.1% did not complete their education because of their parents wish while 15 or 11.5% prefer to trade or learn a trade. It can be seen that all the above reasons proffered by the children could be traced to family instability which no doubt will affect a child's performance and such low performance will not motivate the child to continue school as he sees nothing good in it. He will thus seek out a ready solution; hence the streets.

Table 6
Frequency Distribution of Respondent son their Place of Abode/Living

| PLACE OF ABODE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| With Parents | 12 | 9.25% |
| With Friends | 18 | 13.8% |
| In Parks/Garages | 25 | 19.2% |
| Mosque/Church | 17 | 13.1% |
| In Bus stops | 28 | 21.5% |
| On Corners/Over-head bridge | 30 | 23.1% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

This table revealed that of the total number of respondents, only 12 or 9.2% live with their parents, 18 or 13.8% with friends, 25 or 19.2% live in parks/garages, 17 or 13.1% in Mosque/Churches, 28 or 21.5% in bus stops and 30 or 23.1% in street corners/over-head bridges.

It was observed that these children, because of their living pattern were usually unkempt, dirty and often barefooted.

Table 7
Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Reasons for Leaving Home

| REASONS FOR LEAVING HOME | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Death of parent(s) | 66 | 50.8% |
| Afraid of punishment | 21 | 16.2% |
| Maltreatment | 33 | 25.4% |
| Quest for independence | 10 | 7.6% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

Table 7 above shows that 66 or 50.8% of the respondents left home because of the death of a parent or both, 21 or 16.2% because of the fear of punishment, 33 or 25.4% as a result of maltreatment while 10 or 7.6% in search of independence. Observations showed that, once there is instability in the home, the child is open to all forms of deviance – street children inclusive. The maltreatment, according to the respondents came from step parents who do not see them as their own.

Table 8
Frequency Distribution of Occupation/Activities of Respondents

| Occupation/activities of children | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Learning a Trade | 10 | 7.7% |
| Schooling | 30 | 23.1% |
| Begging | 8 | 6.2% |
| Petty Trading | 52 | 40.0% |
| Porter | 25 | 19.2% |
| Bus Conductor | 5 | 3.8% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

This table contains the occupation and activities of respondents which reveal that 10 or 7.7% are learning a trade, 30 or 23.1% are still in school, 8 or 6.2% earn a living in begging, while 52 or 40.0% are doing petty trading, 25 or 19.2% are porters, and 5 or 3.8% are bus conductors.

Table 9
Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Parents Occupation

| OCCUPATION OF PARENTS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Business | 9 | 6.9% |
| Civil Service | 4 | 3.1% |
| Farming | 69 | 53.1% |
| Teaching | 8 | 6.2% |
| Trading | 31 | 23.8% |
| Nothing | 6 | 4.6% |
| Others | 3 | 2.3% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

The above table reveals that 9 or 6.9% of the parents are into business, 4 or 3.1% in the Civil Service, 69 or 53.1% are farming, 8 or 6.2% are teaching, 31 or 23.8% are trading, 6 or 4.6% are doing nothing while 3 or 2.3% are into various occupations.

This revealed the poor economic background of the parents and that most parents of respondents are low income earners, a situation if not properly handled leads to marital instability and its accruing consequences.

Table 10
Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Parents Educational Background

| PARENTS EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| No Formal Education | 71 | 54.6% |
| Primary School Education | 35 | 26.9% |
| Modern School Education | 14 | 10.8% |
| GCE/SSCE/WAEC | 7 | 5.4% |
| NCE Education | 2 | 2.3% |
| TOTAL | 130 | 100% |

This table reveals that 71 or 54.6% had no formal education, 35 or 26.9% had primary school education, 14 or 10.8% had modern school education, 7 or 5.4% had up to GCE/SSCE/WAEC and only 2 or 2.3% had NCE education or its equivalence.

This analysis shows that, most of the parents are illiterates and not enlightened. This finding goes in line with Ojesina (1995).

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

The family Socio-cultural background of the children would not significantly influence the street children syndrome in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Table 11

X² contingency table on family socio-economic background and street children syndrome

| Ho | X ² Calculated Value | df | Table Value | P |
|----|---------------------------------|----|-------------|------|
| 1 | 139.17 | 6 | 12.59 | 0.05 |

Decision Rule:

Reject Ho if X²calculated > Table value at 0.05 alpha level of significance and if otherwise accept Ho.

Findings:

Since the X²calculated value of 139.17 is greater than the table value of 12.59 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with degree of freedom of 6, it shows that the null hypothesis stated above is rejected and an alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted.

This table was specifically designed to test the above hypothesis with seven items to validate or reject the hypothesis likewise the question for the FGD. As already seen above, the hypothesis is rejected. The implication here is that the family socio-cultural background would to a greater extent influence the street children syndrome in Ibadan metropolis. This finding was further confirmed from the observations of the FGD, questions – i.e. (see appendix ii) in which the respondents revealed that, their parents were either divorced/separated, some were dead; some said they had no contact with any of their parents. They also revealed that while still living with their parents, they were usually being rejected and teased from one parent to the other yet achieving nothing from either side. This finding is in tune with Ojesina's (1995) view on socio-cultural factors in adolescent delinquency of the street. This study emphasized on the improvement of the poor socio-economic and family background by the use of family planning methods and the need for parents to cater for their children.

Hypothesis Two

The family economic background of the children would not significantly influence the street children syndrome in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Table 12

X² contingency table on family economic background and street children syndrome

| Ho | X ² Calculated Value | df | Table Value | P |
|----|---------------------------------|----|-------------|------|
| 2 | 140.25 | 4 | 9.49 | 0.05 |

Decision Rule:

Reject Ho if X²calculated > table value at 0.05 alpha level of significance and if otherwise accept Ho.

Findings:

Observably, the table showed that the X²calculated value of 140.25 is significantly greater than the table value of 9.49 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with degree of freedom of 4. This means that hypothesis is rejected and an alternative will be accepted. As a result of this rejection, another alternative hypothesis was sort; hence it implies that the family economic background would significantly influence the street children syndrome in Ibadan North Local

Government Area. From the questions put forward during the FGD, (see appendix ii), it was observed that the FGD reports revealed the same results as respondents greatly complained about their inability to eat three times as home because of the large size of the family and the fact that their parents are poor and had a lot of other commitments and responsibilities hence to get all the kind of things they want, they have to work. They then peg all their predicaments on their parents' poverty. This study thus represents a step further from the findings of Ebele (1990) on the factors that facilitate "street children".

Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations

Summary

This study examined marital instability as a predisposing factor to the street children syndrome. Knowledge of such influences has been enriched but the search for responsible factors to street children continues. This research was predicated on the alarming rate of street children and the claim which the society has as having a strong network of extending family system. The finding of the study enabled the researchers to highlight the values of family life and also awaken parents primarily to their responsibilities towards their children. This was so, because the findings proved that the family background be it socio-cultural, economic, social etc. has a lot to play in the formation of a child's behavioural pattern.

Conclusion

The family which is seen as the first agent of socialization has a role to play in the formation of a child's behavioural pattern. The street-children syndrome is not solely attributed to the family socio-cultural background because they are also non-street children from exactly the same background or worse ones. But then it should be noted that, the family condition has a lot to offer. In fact, the poor economic background, the polygamous nature of the family and constant marital strife are all very unstable, unsatisfactory conditions that if not properly handled will cause a lot of chaotic situations. From the study, majority of the respondents came from poor, illiterate family background. Hence where there is no harmony particularly within the family, there is bound to be anomie. Again, parents are often seen as role models in which once they fail, the whole system (family) will fail.

Recommendations

Approaches must address fundamental issues such as how to prevent street children and how to ameliorate already existing situations. The researchers believe that legislation, rules and regulations can be passed and accepted by nations as well as individual citizens, but then their implementation and execution become impossible mainly because of the human factor. It is against this that, the researchers subscribe to the approach that individuals as persons should be convinced about the effects and problems of street children in our society so that they themselves may become advocates for the cause of children. It is in the light of all these that the following recommendations are made.

1. Parent education in the form of making information available regarding the needs of children and the responsibility of parents must be stepped in. Many poorly educated parents are truly ignorant and are eager to be informed. Law courts must find effective

means of forcing parents especially some irresponsible fathers to take responsibility of the family. When things become too bad economically, some fathers abandon their families.

2. Public gatherings specific to parents should be held with advocates at every opportunity; such gatherings include P.T.A. especially of primary schools, women's gathering, town unions and meetings and social or service clubs such as Rotary.
3. National Day and Children's Day, Family Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day should all be seen as opportunities during the various activities to present information about the incidence of abuse and neglect of children.
4. Churches, Mosques and other places of worship where opportunities for addressing the public and enlightening them, advocates should be planted to work into their addresses and sermons on the problems of child abuse.
5. Children themselves can be taught songs which extol the tenets of positive child behaviour while discouraging negative ones.

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