



CHILD DOMESTIC WORKER IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS OF NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: The study examined the history of child domestic worker in rural and urban areas of Nigeria and its implications for national development. Children in Nigeria are engaged in the worst forms of child labour, particularly in domestic service. Sometimes the children placed in this way are seen as family servants, subjected to working long hours cooking, cleaning, tending cattle, and looking after children and elderly people in the family. Some of them are given inadequate food, poor sleeping quarters, and little or no remuneration. Some are subjected to physical and verbal abuse when they are tired and slow or unable to accomplish tasks that are too hard or heavy for them. The study traced some of the reasons why child domestic worker thrive in Nigeria. It is discovered that if the trend continues, the future of Nigerian child will be in jeopardy. The study observed that though substantive legislation against child labour is now in place in Nigeria, legal enforcement remains its biggest challenge. The study recommends that government should enforce legislative and policy action to protect young domestic workers and also introduce appropriate penalties on the defaulters, government should also promote the implementation of Child Labour Convention Nos. 138, 182 and 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers as well as provide child domestic workers with unhindered access to justice and legal redress.

Key words: child domestic worker, child labour, national development, formal education.

Introduction

Child domestic worker is one of the many forms of child labour which is the employment of children in a manner that deprives them of their childhood, and is adjudged as harmful to their physical and mental development. Child labour comes in various forms such as street trading, gardening, child caring, handicrafts, domestic chores, prostitution and trafficking etc. (Nwokolo, 2011). One aspect of child labour which this study is mostly concerned with is child domestic worker. Domestic worker refers to any person engaged in domestic work within an employable relationship (ILO, 2013). ILO Convention No. 189 equally classified domestic work as work performed in or for a household or households. Okeshola Ukimudiare and Ukin Mildiare (1996), sees child domestic worker as a "House-help". In this connection it refers to children who live with a family to whom they are either not related, or only distantly related, and who are engaged to perform a wide range of domestic chores including child minding, working, house cleaning, laundry, shopping, gardening, cooking etc. There is no globally accepted definition of domestic work or workers as it is difficult to classify such based on specific tasks being performed. The ILO Convention No. 189 simply classified domestic workers as those employed by and provides services for, third party private households (ILO, 2012). In this situation, domestic work is performed by children below the statutory required minimum age to work in any sector.

This does not include children performing domestic chores in their own homes as this is viewed as an integral part of preparing the children to be responsible adults (Thorsen, 2012).

The United Nations Organizations Convention of 1989 classified a child as “any person below the age of 18 years”. While the Nigerian Labour Decree of 1974 defines a child as anybody below 15 years of age. Whatever is the contention, the child as used in this study is meant to be a person less than 18 years. In other words, any person who cannot care for himself/herself wholly or depends on others for sustainability is deemed to be a child in this context. Child domestic worker are present both in the rural and urban areas of Nigeria though predominant in the urban areas with rural areas acting as the main supplier. Child domestic worker, whether in the rural or urban environment, are those children who work permanently or temporarily at the homes of a third party. Sometimes, they are paid and sometimes they are not.

Child domestic worker has been a phenomenon in Nigeria since the pre-colonial days, and is still in practice today among the various ethnic nationalities. Child domestic workers in Nigeria were estimated as consisting of 40,000 boys and girls (Oloko, 1992, 1999). According to the study, young children, especially girls aged 10 and above, serves as young domestics who were paid wages in households of mostly highly educated persons. According to ILO, (2013), 17.2 million children are in paid or unpaid domestic work in the home of a third party or employer. The study also revealed that 67.1% of all child domestic workers are girls and that 65.1 % of them are below 14 years. Out of these figures, 7.4 million are aged between 5 and 11 years and 3.8 million are aged between 12 and 14 years. Child domestic work cuts across all regions of the world. It is difficult to say when this practice began in Nigeria. It is postulated that it had been since time immemorial, but its attention was redirected during the colonial and post-colonial days.

There are many reasons why children work such as poverty, social disparity, lack of education, ignorance, gender, ethnic disparity, violence meted out to children in their own homes, rural-urban migration, and loss of parent due to conflict, disease, death or divorce. Among these causes the most visible one is poverty (UNICEF, 2007). Due to poverty, most children work to sustain their families and themselves. Some children are prompted to work by their parents as they see their children’s ability to work as a viable and profitable venture (Lindert, 1976). Other factors such as ignorance, culture, ineffective laws and lack of will to enforce them, are also among the reasons why child domestic worker thrive in Nigeria. In some instances, the child domestic worker may be privileged to combine work with schooling and those not so fortunate to attend school may be subjected to long hours of domestic chores, cooking, cleaning, rearing cattle, looking after children and elderly people. Often the child’s development is endangered in more ways than one by such activities. Some of these children may be forced to perform strenuous tasks with insufficient food or shelter (ILO, 2012). Some are subjected to physical and verbal abuse when they are tired and slow or unable to accomplish tasks that are too hard or heavy for them. In most urban cities both boys and girls of very tender age combine their domestic chores with prowling the streets and high ways hawking when they should be in school. Also in some parts of the country, many of the children are forced to engage in street begging as a means of commercial business, some work in cocoa plantations without protective gears against pesticides or chemicals from fertilizers and sometimes under conditions of forced labour. In yet another parts of the country, children especially boys, are used in cattle herding. Such children are exposed to hazards such as being head butted, gored or trampled to death by animals (UNICEF, 2006). Some children are engaged as mechanics and bus conductors. In some cases, some of these children are abandoned by their parents or relations and do not have places they call their homes. Such children roam about the streets and sleep in uncompleted buildings, market places, under

the bridge or wherever they can find a place to lay down their weary bodies. What can these children give back to the society? Interestingly, child welfare is becoming a global concern to individuals, welfare organizations, nations and international communities in recent times. Concerned individuals, organizations and governments are now taking keen interest in the development and welfare of children, as they are the bedrock of every nation's future human development. The quality of children a nation has, determines to a large extent, the future growth and development of such a nation taking into consideration the type of education, medical care, recreational facilities etc put in place for these children.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) article 32, and ILO conventions 138 and 182 are major instruments recognized by ILO to be priority Conventions that deal with child domestic labour in specific ways. Both instruments are complementary to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which stipulates that children should be protected from economic exploitation and any work that is hazardous, interferes with schooling or harmful to their health and development

History of Child Domestic Worker in Nigeria

The history of child domestic worker would be divided into three parts – pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial Nigeria.

Pre-Colonial

During the pre-colonial days, children were sent out by parents to live with distant relations to either learn an aspect of trade, or just to change the living environment for a while. In other aspects children were forcefully taken as ransom for the sins of their parents, implying that if such children were not killed they were used at homes for various helps. The jobs they were engaged in ranged from fetching of water, gathering firewood for domestic cooking, providing fodders for animals, washing of plates and watching the home when the masters were away (Fafunwa, 1980).

Colonial Period

The advent of colonial masters – missionaries, civil servants, traders etc. ushered in a new dimension on child domestic worker's business. Many missionaries were taking advantage of the surplus labour and drew to themselves as many house helps as they were able to keep. Many civil servants were equally doing the same. It became necessary because in Europe such advantage was not obtainable.

On the other hand, most parents were delighted to give their children to those new comers without a fee because:

- They expected favour from these new rulers, who provided them with gifts from the white man's country not minding the jobs the children were doing.
- It was a pride to most parents to see their children living with the Europeans in reserved areas.
- In some instances some of these Europeans assisted them in the education of the children at least to primary school level.
- It was an aid to relieve them of the burden of caring for the children, among other things (Akpan, 2005).

Post –Colonial

Post-colonial is an extension of the colonial era. With the taking over of the administration from the whites by the indigenous people, and with the acquisition of Western education, there was a new class structure within the Nigerian

society. Secondly, with the improvement in medical facilities coupled with low mortality among children, it became cumbersome for most families to cater or fend for the children. The class structure now has divided the society between the haves and have not's. It should be noted that this class structure was caused by acquisition of western education and western economy. Some ethnic nationalities were ahead of others and domination and control of resources of the nation developed. This uneven distribution of resources created giants and dwarfs within the nation. The giants are well to do and dwarfs are the poor, hence the dwarfs now become the servant serving the giant – the master. And it has since remained so since independence. The poor families become the mill where the poor children are produced (Akpan, 2005) and supplied to the giants for a token.

Types of Child Domestic Workers:

These include such personnel who work in households as:

- house maids,
- cooks,
- waiters,
- valets,
- butlers,
- laundresses,
- gatekeeper,
- babysitters,
- governesses,
- drivers/chauffeurs etc.

The point to be noted here is that they are employed in or by private households rather than focusing on the type of task they perform. This is because many of the occupation listed above can equally be performed outside of the private households.

Causes of Child Domestic Work

Poverty:

Omoni, G. E. & Ijeh, S. U. (2010) are of the view that poverty is one of the major reasons of child domestic work in Nigeria. The common practice is that children from poor economic background end up as domestic workers to affluent people. Fatusi et al (2002), supports this claim. According to them, economic hardships force some parents and guardians to sell or barter their children or abandon them. They contend that these children are put into various income-generating activities for survival. Poverty is undoubtedly the major cause for child domestic work as parents of lower socioeconomic status expect an economic contribution from their children's work. In this way, the child supports his/her family financially. Lindert (1976), also shares the same view. He opines that most children work to ensure the survival of their families and themselves. Though majority of these children are not well paid, still their meagre earnings serve as financial relief to their families.

Lack of access to education/ignorance

According to Adegoke (2003), many adolescents and young people start their working life too early and are unable to go to school. He explains that they suffer from fatigue and a higher accident rate than adult workers. He concludes that these young people encounter new cultural patterns and hostile environments leading to mental/behavioural problems. Lack of access to education equally prompts children to seek employment in private homes. Family background and income also determines school attendance by children (Ilon and Moock, (1991)). Girls are usually pushed into domestic work due to ignorance and lack of access to education. Also with the concept of male

inheritance or heir to the family among many ethnic groups in Nigeria, women become the worse off. Girls typically migrate from villages to work as domestics in urban areas after they have been forced or cajoled to abandon their schooling. The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that girls under sixteen years make up the largest number of domestic workers in the world (ILO/UNICEF/World Bank (2004)).

Settlement of Parents debt or bonding

Some children are forcefully taken as ransom for the debts or sins of their parents. Such children may be killed or used at home as domestic worker in various areas. In some cases, some parents may borrow money and deposit their child as collateral the lender puts the child into bonded labour until the debt is paid (The state of World's Children, 1997).

Broken homes

Divorce or separation of spouses is very traumatic on children. The step parent may be very hostile or indifferent to the children while paying good attention to his/her biological children. Such children may be subjected to worst form of child domestic work or sent out to live with other families. Some of these children may even run away from home and prefer to fend for themselves due to the hostility of the step parent.

Major Suppliers of Domestic Workers

Since the pre-colonial era, many ethnic nationalities are still engaged in receiving and supplying of child domestic workers. But it would appear that child domestic workers are rooted in Akwa Ibom State. In other words Akwa Ibom State, where the Ibibios live, is the major donor of the child domestic workers in Nigeria (Akpan, 2004). Before now a lot of children were sent to Cross River particularly to Calabar as domestic workers. They lived especially with Calabar women doing the menial jobs at home. They had intermediaries who acted as agents for the would-be receiver of the child, either for a fee or some other reward. One is not certain what gave rise to this phenomenon but it still anchors on poverty. As civilization or changes in Nigeria become real, and as some people become poorer and poorer, the shift changed. A good number of child workers shifted their attention to the big cities in Nigeria where it is believed that the 'Naira grows on trees'. In spite of the fact that Akwa Ibom is oil producing state, poverty is still a major problem especially in the rural areas of the state. Poverty is so glaring and starring in people's faces so much so that most homes hardly eat two square meals a day. The major cities of abode for these immigrant children include Port Harcourt, Warri, Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna and Ibadan etc. Among the Igbos, Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba and other major and minor groups, child domestic workers live and work with their kit and kin. Among the Ibibios of Akwa Ibom State, some parents and individuals prefer to send their children to other cities instead of being at home. There are hundreds of child domestic workers in rural and urban areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Effects of Child Domestic Worker in Nigerian Society

Negative Effect:

The frequently identified hazards of child domestic labour includes domestic accidents that sometimes lead to death or permanent deformity, physical and emotional assault, sexual harassment, overwork, inadequate rest pauses, little or no remuneration as well as severe exploitation and drifting into delinquent gangs.

Physical and health consequences of child domestic labour include stunting (both in growth and creativity), breathing problems owing to exposure to toxic substances, accidents, contamination of cuts and festering wounds.

Cognitive problems include, not attending schools, class retention, and high dropout rate and achievement deficits. Social and psychological consequences include isolation of domestic working children from their families and peer-groups, stigmatization of work by peers, lowering self-esteem of children and perception of relative deprivation.

These children are often separated from their families for long periods. Such separation denies them of the parental love and care. Often times, they suffer psychologically and emotionally and this may lead to emotional stress or depression. Majority of them are abused in various forms such as sexual, confinement, prohibition from socializing with peers, and food deprivation. This may have long-term physical and psychological consequences for the child. It was also discovered that child domestic workers sometimes remained at work for long hours, with sub-standard sleeping places, sub-standard meals or deprived of food, verbal or physical abuse, and little or no time to rest (Apt, 2005, Castel et al. 2003, Human Rights Watch, 2007 in UNICEF, 2012). Some of them can be on call 24 hours a day and may be awakened during the middle of the night to tend to the needs of their employers. In some instances, the recruiters in order to encourage parents to allow their children to work have to pay cash advances to these parents. These children then find themselves in a situation of bonded labour where they are forced to endure exploitative work conditions because of the debts owed by their parents or guardians

Moreover, many child domestic workers are denied access to formal education. ILO (2005), reported that about 6 million Nigerian children do not go to school at all. In the current conditions, these children do not have the time, energy or resources to go to school. For instance, there are many families that are living below the poverty line owing to one problem or another, hence such condition increases the likelihood that children will be sent to work to augment the family income. School fees and related costs of schooling such as uniforms, textbooks, transportation often put education beyond the reach of the poor in Nigeria. In some cultures, girls are pulled out of school because of cultural biases against girls attending school. These young girls are then sent out to work to help pay for the education of the male child. Denying the girl the right to education is to deny her the right to participate fully in society and exercise her rights. This is not to say that boys are not affected by these denials. Good education for a child is the basic way to productive life. Also denying children access to formal education has a negative impact on the labour market as it contributes to an irretrievable loss of manpower (Okereke, et al 2002). Article 32 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 15 of the OAU Charter on the Rights of the Child, shares similar views on the right of proper education to the child; it states that State parties are to:

Recognise the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous as to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Article 4 of the CRC and Article 1 of the OAU charter require state parties to undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for implementation of the rights recognized in these conventions. State parties are to also provide minimum age for admission to employment, appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment and appropriate sanctions to ensure effective enforcement of the conventions.

It is interesting to note that most of the victims are ignorant of their rights and even the few who may be aware may encounter problems in enforcing such. Apart from ignorance, other obstacles to the ability of persons to demand their rights can be traced to illiteracy and poverty. Also litigation is expensive in Nigeria and involves delays and unpredictable outcome. These, according to UNICEF and FGN report (2001), inhibit its pursuance even by people who know their rights.

Positive Effects of Child Domestic Workers

Child domestic workers do not present only the negative effects to the society. Actually there is nothing wrong with work as our people use to say that work does not kill. Crusador (1998) also share this view but posit that “what is wrong is the way the children are exploited, beaten and sexually abused”. Gill (1990) is against total eradication of child labour worldwide stressing the contributions of these children to both the livelihood and income of their families. Often a number of domestic workers assist in raising some families that were down economically by making financial returns to feed the rest of the family members. Apart from feeding, the girl child worker aids the parents to pay the school fees of the boy sibling from her wages. International Labour Organisation posit that parents of these children are often unemployed or underemployed and their children’s added incomes help relieve them of untold hardship. Child domestic work gives the children an opportunity of acquiring skills in various areas thus making them more self-reliant, self-sufficient and responsible adults. Those of them who worked for affluent people will not have any difficulty in home management of any caliber.

Also in poor homes where the family keeps on increasing owing to lack of birth control, most parents force their children out to give room for the maintenance and care of the younger ones. In other words, it lessens the rigour of searching for money to care for every member of the household in distressed economy such as Nigeria.

Implications of child domestic workers on Development

The implications of child domestic workers in Nigeria society are worrisome. Depending on where the child finds himself and the extent of abuse, devastating effect such as stress, fatigue, depressions do result. This, in effect, affects the child’s health and psyche. There is a high correlation between good health and human development, and because that aspect is lacking such a child develops at nothing and invariably cannot add positively to national development.

Secondly, because the child has been denied the love and care of the parents, it may lead to depression, isolation, fear, anger and violence. A combination of these variables would always encourage unsafe society, because such children see themselves as failures they may want to alter the normal run of events in the society – insecurity of lives and properties, chaos of all kinds, creation of tension and lawlessness in the society.

Thirdly, depriving the children access to qualitative education is very dangerous. Good education brings the light to the society. A country with an ineffective batch of educated people is as poor in manpower as a country that lacks physical self, community and national development. A child deprived of education and other basic things of life will lack trust and self-confidence. He or she will grow up with bottled aggression at his/her family or the society and this is inimical to national development.

The Right of the Child

Nigeria joined other nations of the world to sign and ratify the convention on the rights of the child in 1989 and 1991 in Geneva though she is very slow in implementing the rights of the child as stipulated under that convention.

The rights of the child as stated in the United Nations’ convention as follows:

Rights to Survive:

- Articles 9 and 18 states that: Every child has a right to live with his/her parents, be brought up by both of them or guardian and should not be separated from them unless in the child’s best interest. If a child is separated from his/her parents, he/she has the right to be in contact with them.

- Article 23 states that: Physically and mentally disabled children have the right to special unrestrained care (health, education and recreation).
- Article 24 states that: Every child has the right to good health and health care. To ensure that this is achieved, government must do the following:
 - Fight the rate at which babies, children die,
 - Provide good medical and health care services to prevent death from childhood related diseases,
 - Fight diseases and malnutrition,
 - Ensure good ante –natal and post-natal care for mothers,
 - Develop preventive health care systems,
 - Ban traditional harmful practices.
- Article 25 states that: Disabled children placed under protection, care or treatment has the right to a regular review of their placement.
- Article 26 states that: Children have the right to state maintenance (food, clothing, and housing) where their parents/guardians are unable to do so.

Rights to Develop:

The following articles in the convention speak about children's right to develop.

- Article 7 states that: Every child at birth is entitled to a name, nationality and is cared for.
- Article 8 states that: Every child has a right to maintain his or her identity and this should not be kept secret from him/her.
- Article 10 states that: Children have the right to enter or leave a country in order to reunite or have personal or direct contact with their families.
- Article 21 states that: It is the right of every child that his/her best interest must be considered during adoption. Everyone involved in the adoption including both old and new parents, and the child (if he/she is old enough) must be spoken to by the court before adoption is finalized.
- Articles 28 & 29 states that: All children have the right to education that would help develop their personality and talents; respect for human rights, their parents, culture and language.
- Article 31 states that: Children have the right to participate in cultural activities.

Rights to Protection:

Every child has the right to be protected from different forms of abuse. This is mentioned in the following articles in the convention.

Article 2: All children, no matter their sex, tribe, colour and religion should be protected from discrimination of any kind.

Article 11: Children have the right to be protected from kidnapers and smugglers who would take them across the borders.

Article 19: Every child has the right to be protected from abuse and neglect while in the care of anyone responsible for them (parents, guardian, etc).

Article 20: A child deprived of a family environment must be specifically protected and assisted by the state. Alternative family or institutional care must be provided for him/her.

Article 22: Every child who is a refugee or seeking refugee status is entitled to special protection and assistance from the government of the country they live in.

Article 32: All children have the right to be protected from economic exploitation and any work that is a danger to their educational and health development.

Article 33: All children have the right to be protected from being sold, trafficked in and abducted.

Article 38: Every child below the age of fifteen must be protected from directly participating in wars and armed conflicts. They should not be recruited in the army.

Efforts made by the Nigerian government to eliminate Child domestic labour

The Federal government has contributed to several regional projects to combat the menace of child labour (which child domestic labour is one of its many forms). Since the Federal Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ILO on August 2000, there has been increased commitment to implement programmes aimed at eliminating child labour in Nigeria. In 2012, Nigeria joined other 15 ECOWAS countries to adopt a regional action plan on child labour, especially in its worst forms. Their goal is to eliminate the worst form of child labour in West Africa by 2015. The government also ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). This was also aimed at helping member countries reduce the worst form of child labour. This took off in December, 2012. Government has equally adopted several policies and legal measures aimed at improving the welfare of children by reducing the problems associated with child labour. These policies and programmes cover a wide range of subjects including education, health, social development, child welfare and youth (UNICEF, 2001), which if implemented would have positive impact on the child labour problem in Nigeria. Unfortunately, some of these legal measures and policies have not been implemented by the stakeholders.

Nigeria is also a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The implication of this is that Nigeria has an indirect policy on child labour.

The Federal government's ratification of several ILO Conventions, which have bearing on child domestic labour, is an indication of its commitment to eradicate or reduce the problems of child domestic labour. From previous studies made on the subject, it is observed that out of 30 ratified ILO conventions, five specifically relate to child labour and three out of these have direct bearing to child domestic labour. These are:

- Convention 15 on Minimum Age (Trimmer and Stokers, 1921)
- Convention 16 on Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea, 1921)
- Convention 59 on Minimum Age (industry, revised 1937).

Studies also revealed that these conventions are violated in varying degrees in the semi-formal and informal sectors of Nigeria but same is not the case in the public or formal sector.

The Social Development Policy for Nigeria (1989) and the National Programme for the Survival, Protection and Development of the Nigerian Child adopted in 1992 in response to the goals set by the World Summit for Children (UNICEF, 2001), are indirectly aimed at reducing the problems of child labour. Also out of the 17 objectives in the section of family and social welfare of the Social Development Policy for Nigeria (1989), three addresses the problem of Child labour. These are to:

- ensure healthy development of the total personality of every Nigerian child given adequate opportunity to participate in social and cultural activities;
- reduce the incidence of the various forms of child abuse prevalent in the society with a view to eliminate them; and
- reduce the incidence of various forms of neglect either by parents or guardians.

The Nigerian constitution also made provisions in Chapter IV, sections 33 to 46 of its 1999 Constitution which contains fundamental rights that are justiciable. For instance, section 34 (1) states that “Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person and accordingly;

- (a) no person shall be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment,
- (b) no person shall be held in slavery or servitude, and
- (c) no person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour”.

Some other actions taken by government agencies on the elimination of child domestic labour are as follows:

Education for working children:

Universal access to free basic education is a key element of the rights of the children as embodied in Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which prescribes that “the child has a right to attend school and the state’s duty is to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory” (UNICEF/FGN, 2001).

Universal Primary Education (UPE) was launched in Nigeria in 1976. Statistics from the Federal Ministry of Education indicate that there was a sharp rise in schools. As a follow up, the government also introduced Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1999. One of the benefits which these children derive from attending school is reduction in their working hours. According to Oloko (1992), in his study of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC), it was discovered that domestic working children allocate about 9 – 12 hours daily to work, while those who combined schooling with domestic work devote 6 – 8 hours only before and after school hours. Another benefit is that education will impact their skills as they will become employable. Schooling also increases children’s awareness of their rights and enables them benefit directly from the work they do.

The Nomadic Education Programme

The National Commission for Nomadic Education promulgated by Decree 41 of 1989 is one of the major programmes that have been established for children who have never attended school. It was established in recognition of the fact that the migratory nature of pastoral nomads and migrant fisher-men, made it difficult for the children (most of whom work with their parents) to be enrolled in formal education.

The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS)

Established under the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986 was another programme established for unemployed children who have completed primary education or dropped out from secondary school. The apprentices in the scheme are attached to government or private trainer organizations and to local craftsmen and women to acquire skills for one or two years depending on the particular trade, the educational qualification and experience of apprentices (ILO, 2001).

Many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are also involved in the bid to eliminate or eradicate the problems of child labour/child domestic worker in Nigeria. One of such organisation is Women Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON).

This is a Non-Governmental Organisation that focuses on the withdrawal and re-integration of children in prostitution and child domestic workers in Lagos, Nigeria. According to ILO (2001), the organization succeeded in withdrawing 261 working children, which include 37 child prostitutes and 224 domestic workers.

The Nigerian labour law also made provision in its labour code on child labour. But interestingly, no provision in the labour code protects young domestic workers. It merely states that the commissioner may make laws, which might address the problems.

Conclusion

The paper has attempted to justify the fact that child domestic workers are on the increase and a bane to development. It x-rays the history of child domestic worker, types and causes, rights of the child, as well as major suppliers of child domestic worker. It is discovered that poverty is the major cause of child domestic labour, that other causes are just peripheral. The government has a major role to play by making life meaningful to all. It is the main process through which the ugly phenomenon may be reduced.

Recommendations:

The solution to child domestic worker requires cooperation and deep commitment from different domains such as government, parents and guardians, media, employers of child domestic worker etc. The paper recommends that the following should be done:

- Every child of school age should enjoy the right to free and compulsory basic education;
- Government should assist and introduce the social security scheme among the unemployed class;
- the issue of poverty should be tackled in all fronts especially in rural areas;
- promoting the ratification and implementation of the child labour Conventions No.138, No. 182 and of Convention No.189 concerning decent work for domestic workers and minimum age of admission to employment;
- regulating the working and living conditions of domestic workers, with special attention to their needs, hours of work, prohibition of night work, restrictions on work that is excessively demanding, and monitoring mechanisms on their working and living conditions;
- adoption of appropriate penalties on the defaulters;

- facilitation of access to justice and legal redress;
- effective labour inspection that is authorized by law to enter premises in order to enforce provisions applicable to domestic work;
- enforcement of the rights of the child should be mandatory and inculcated in our national policy.

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