

CHILD'S HAWKING AS A COPING STRATEGY AMONGST THE POOR AFRICAN FAMILIES IN NORTH EASTERN NIGERIA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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***Abstract:** Sociologists consider family as one of the five very important social institutions in any society which if affected negatively the whole society suffers. For example, one of the primary functions of the family is to produce and reproduce persons, biologically and socially. Secondly, anthropologists have often supposed that the family in a traditional society forms the primary economic unit. Thus, for the African society to remain healthy and positively functional the family unit must remain appropriately intact. Unfortunately, this very important institution in Africa is facing serious challenges that threaten its existence and therefore the existence of the African societies. It appears that the doom day is being held back only by the resilience of the African families which adopts various coping strategies with their various strengths and weaknesses. For example, one of the serious challenges the African family is facing is poverty. And in north-eastern Nigeria, child hawking, which is a form of child labour, is one of the major coping strategies. This paper therefore examines in an exploratory manner the type, nature, extent and the worthiness or otherwise of child hawking, which is very common in North-eastern Nigeria. It is very clear from our findings in this study that child hawking was being used in north-eastern Nigeria to supplement the incomes of parents and/or guardians of the child hawkers. Child hawking therefore was a form of coping strategy for families of child hawkers involved in it in this study. Notwithstanding its benefits as an income supplementing strategy to families of hawkers, child hawking is not a worthwhile coping strategy for two major reasons found in this study. First, it is a form of child labour, which constitutes a child abuse in itself, and; secondly, it exposes the child hawkers to various child abuses such as beating by bullies, verbal insults from people, sexual harassment, attempted rape and rape, attempted abduction and abduction, etc. We also found that child hawking exposes the child to other dangers such as Traffic accidents and such other bad behaviours as hooliganism, drug abuse, pick pocketing, indiscriminate sex/fornication and prostitutions. The paper then concludes with well informed recommendations on how best to deal with the problem of child hawking generally and in north-eastern Nigeria in particular. The recommendations revolve around poverty eradication and the need to rigorously implement the Child Rights Act and Convention as well as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act.*

Keywords: Hawking, Child Abuse, Coping Strategy

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Abdul-Mumin Sa'ad and Fatimah Abdul-Mumin Sa'ad (2015), Child's Hawking as a Coping Strategy amongst the Poor African Families in North Eastern Nigeria: An Exploratory Study. *J. of Social Sciences and Public Policy*, Vol. 7, Number 1, Pp. 1 – 23.

INTRODUCTION

Sociologists consider family as one of the five very important social institutions in any society, which if affected negatively the whole society suffers. For example, one of the primary functions of the family is to produce and reproduce persons, biologically and socially. Secondly, anthropologists have often supposed that the family in a traditional society forms the primary economic unit. Thus, for the African society to remain healthy and positively functional the family unit must remain appropriately intact. Unfortunately, this very important institution in Africa is facing serious challenges that threaten its existence and therefore the existence of the whole African society. It appears that the doom day is being held back only by the resilience of the African families which adopts various coping strategies with their various strengths and weaknesses. For example, one of the serious challenges the African family is facing is poverty. And in northern Nigeria, child hawking, which is a form of child labour, is one of the major coping strategies, which is not without some major negative consequences that may in turn destroy the family system in northern Nigeria if it is not promptly checked. According to the ILO, 41 per cent of all African children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in some form of economic activity, compared with 21 per cent in Asia and 17 per cent in Latin America. Among girls, the participation rate is also the highest in Africa: 37 per cent in Africa, 20 per cent in Asia and 11 per cent in Latin America. These regional differences are attributed to Africa being the poorest region, with the weakest school systems. And among African children, those from poorer families are said to be far more likely to seek work. This paper therefore examines the type, nature/extent and the worthiness or otherwise of child hawking, which appears to be a very common coping strategy amongst families Northern Nigeria.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objective:

The general objective of this study is to establish in an exploratory manner the extent to which child hawking is a form of coping strategy amongst families engaged in the activity in north-eastern Nigeria

Specific Objectives:

The specific objectives on the other hand include the following:

- a. To identify the type of child hawking in north-eastern Nigeria
- b. To examine the nature of child hawking in north-eastern Nigeria
- c. To analyse the worthiness or otherwise of child hawking in north-eastern Nigeria , and;
- d. To proffer some well informed recommendations on how best to deal with the problem of child hawking generally and in north-eastern Nigeria in particular.

In an empirical study such as this, it is essential to identify and define the key concepts of the study. Thus, in the next section we briefly put in order the meanings of child hawking, child labour and a related concept, child abuse.

DEFINING CHILD HAWKING, CHILD LABOUR AND CHILD ABUSE

First of all to hawk means to engage in selling merchandise on the street or from door to door. Child hawking therefore means the act of selling merchandise on the street or from door to door by a child. Who then is a child? This varies from society to society and from time to time. In Nigeria for example, 51 years ago, a distinction was made between a person who is not yet 14 years and one who is 14 years but not yet above 16 years. The former is a 'child' and the latter a 'young person' (CYPL, 1958). Therefore anybody who was not yet 14 and was engaged in hawking was a child hawker. But going by the Child Right Act (CRA, 2003), the legal age of a child has been extended to anybody who is not yet 18 years old. Therefore a child hawker in current legal dispensation in Nigeria is anybody engaged in hawking and who is not yet 18 years old. This agrees with the ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which define a child as an individual under the age of 18 years. What then is Child labour? Child labour is defined by International Labour Organization (ILO, 2002: 3) "as children's work which is of such a nature or intensity that it is detrimental to their schooling or harmful to their health and development". And it has specified the minimum age of employment as 15 years (ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)). In other words, a child labourer is one who is not yet 15 years and is engaged in harmful work. The ILO is therefore not condemning all types of work by children. Some kind of child work is considered as useful part of socialisation process, viz.:

From a young age, many children help around the home, run errands, or assist their parents in the family farm or business. As they get older they take on light jobs or learn valuable traditional trades. In this way, children acquire the skills and attitudes they will need as future workers and useful members of the community. Light work, carefully monitored, can be an essential part of children's socialization and development process, where they learn to take responsibility, and gain pride in their own accomplishments. Work of this kind is not without risk, but it is not what is generally meant by child labour (ILO, 2002: 3).

Accordingly, not all type of child hawking is child labour. Hawking which is light and carefully monitored without risk can be an essential part of children's socialization and development process as well as an acceptable coping strategy for families. Thus, the concern, according to ILO, is with the children who:

- 1) Are denied their childhood and a future due to work/hawk;
- 2) Work/hawk at too young an age;
- 3) Work/hawk long hours for low wages/income;

- 4) Work/hawk under conditions harmful to their health and to their physical and mental development;
- 5) Are separated from their families due to work/hawking, and;
- 6) Are deprived of education due to work/hawking.

Unfortunately, a large number of children worldwide are engaged in harmful work referred to as child labour here. According to ILO estimates, seven years ago, "about 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are working, mostly in developing countries. Almost half (some 120 million) work fulltime, every day, all year round. *Some 50-60 million are between 5 and 11 years old*" (ILO, 2002: 3). An earlier ILO report focusing on regional differences amongst developing countries shows that 41 per cent of all African children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in some form of economic activity, compared with 21 per cent in Asia and 17 per cent in Latin America. Among girls, the participation rate is also the highest in Africa: 37 per cent in Africa, 20 per cent in Asia and 11 per cent in Latin America

(<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol15no3/153chil4.htm>).

Closely related to child labour and child hawking is child abuse. Both can constitute child abuse in them as well as in their consequences. What is then Child abuse? The World Health Organisation gives a general definition of child abuse as follows:

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power
(<http://www.yesican.org/definitions/WHO.html>, 5th September 2009)

From the WHO's definition above, some major types of child abuse are distinguishable, namely; physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual child abuse and exploitation, and child neglect. Physical abuse is inflicting of physical injury upon a child. This may include burning, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating, or otherwise harming a child. There may be single or repeated incidents. Though the injury is not an accident, the parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child. It may, however, been the result of over-discipline or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age. Emotional abuse is usually defined as an "injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child as evidenced by an observable or substantial change in behavior, emotional response, or cognition," or as evidenced by "anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior." (<http://www.yesican.org/definitions/WHO.html>, 5th September 2009). Sexual abuse and exploitation are two related forms of child abuse. While sexual abuse refers to the inappropriate sexual behaviour with a child, sexual exploitation includes allowing the child to engage in prostitution or in the production of child pornography. The former

includes for example fondling a child's genitals, making the child fondle the adult's genitals, sexual intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism and sexual exploitation.

Neglect is frequently defined in terms of deprivation of adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision. In short, it refers to the failure to provide for the child's basic needs, and thus, it can be physical, educational, or psychological. First, physical neglect can include not providing adequate food or clothing, appropriate medical care, supervision, or proper weather protection (heat or colds). It may include abandonment in which the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left by the parent in circumstances in which the child suffers serious harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or to provide reasonable support for a specified period of time. Secondly, educational neglect includes failure to provide appropriate schooling or special educational needs, allowing excessive truancies. Finally, psychological neglect includes the lack of any emotional support and love, never attending to the child, spousal abuse, drug and alcohol abuse including allowing the child to participate in drug and alcohol use. Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution. It may include child hawking which is the focus of this paper. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

STUDY METHODS

As said earlier on, this study is an exploratory one both in terms of the geographical coverage and the methods adopted for the study. In terms of geographical coverage, we covered only two states (Borno and Adamawa) of Nigeria which constitute only one-third of the six states in northeast state of Nigeria. And in the two sampled states we focused on only two cities, Maiduguri and Yola, which are the states headquarters. In terms of the research method, we relied heavily on only a single method (an In-depth interview) and one target group (the child hawkers themselves), whose sample was limited to only 80 (40 males and 40 females). What is more, the child hawkers were sampled and interviewed using accidental/availability method. The table below provides details of the sample sizes of the target groups by location and gender.

GENDER OF RESPONDENTS	MAIDUGURI, BORNO STATE	YOLA, ADAMAWA STATE	ROW TOTAL
MALE CHILD HAWKERS	20	20	40
FEMALE CHILD HAWKERS	20	20	40
COLUMN TOTAL	40	40	80

Due to exploratory nature of this study whatever conclusions we draw from the study would be tentative but very useful for further research on a wider and extensive scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section of the paper we need to establish the extent to which child hawking is a form of coping strategy amongst families engaged in the activity in the north-eastern Nigeria. We shall do this by looking at the type, nature/features, and reasons of child hawking, as well as looking into how worthwhile is hawking by children in north-eastern Nigeria.

TYPES

Regarding the types, our observations of child hawking in various parts of northern Nigeria, suggest to us four major types. On the one hand we have Individual/solo mobile child hawking and individual/solo stationary child hawking. On the other hand, you have group mobile child hawking and group stationary child hawking. The solo mobile child hawker (a boy or girl), moves about alone from one place to another hawking his or her wares/merchandise, while the mobile group child hawkers move in groups of at least two children. The solo stationary child hawker stays at designated areas selling his/her wares, while the group stationary child hawkers stay at designated areas in groups of at least two children. Such places could be road junctions, motor parks, commercial motor cycle's parks, mechanic garages, building/constructions sites, etc. An In-depth Interviews (IDI) with the solo child hawkers (both boys and girls), whether mobile or stationary, revealed that they do so to avoid stiff competitions as well as unnecessary misunderstanding/fights with their fellow child hawkers. Other features of the solo child hawkers are that they are more matured age wise and have been long (at least a year) in the business. In other words, due to their relative maturity they are less afraid of hawking alone and, due to their long experience in the business, they do not need any guidance of their fellow hawkers as to the best routes to take their wares with them for sale or station their wares to await prospective customers. All those solo hawkers we have engaged in discussion told us that they practice both mobile and stationary depending on the situation. The mobile solo hawkers move to meet customers and if they could not finish selling off their wares they go and stay at a particular point they expect more customers to come and buy until they are able to sell off all or most of it. Similarly, the stationary solo hawker moves his/her wares to places to meet prospective customers if he/she could not make a good sell where he/she was stationed. As for the group child hawkers, most are gender based, but tend to be mixed age wise. The stationary group child hawkers tend to sell similar wares/merchandise, while the mobile group ones tend to hawk different wares/merchandise to avoid stiff competitions as some of explained.

NATURE OF HAWKING

Another feature of child hawking in Bornu and Adamawa appeared to be that majority of them combined hawking and schooling, though a significant number were also out of school. For example, of the 40 (20 male; 20 females) of them we interacted with in Maiduguri (Borno), 25 of them were combining school going with hawking. In other words, they hawked after school. Of the 15 that were not in school 10 of them were girls.

A similar picture is obtained in Adamawa State. Of the 40 (20 males; 20 females) interviewed in Yola (Adamawa), 28 of them combined hawking and schooling, while 12 (8 of which were girls) of them were engaged fully in hawking. The table below summarized the situation.

TABLE 1: CHILD HAWKING AND SCHOOLING IN MAIDUGURI AND YOLA

DAILY INCOME FROM HAWKING	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		ROW TOTAL & %
	M	F	M	F	
FULL TIME HAWKING	5 3.7 25.0	10 37.0 50.0	4 14.8 20.0	8 29.6 40.0	27 33.8
HAWKING WITH SCHOOLING	15 28.3 75.0	10 18.9 50.0	16 30.9 85.2	12 22.6 70.4	53 66.2
COLUMN TOTAL & %	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	80(100.0)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

We also explored into the daily profits they make from hawking, and majority (53) of them indicated between N50 and N100, which is less than a dollar a day even if we take the upper limit of N100 daily profit.

TABLE 2: DAILY INCOMES OBTAINED FROM CHILD HAWKING IN MAIDUGURI AND YOLA

DAILY INCOME FROM HAWKING	MAIDUGURI	YOLA	ROW TOTAL & %
Less than N50	7 46.7 17.5	8 53.3 20.0	15 18.8
N51 -100	25 47.3 62.5	28 52.8 70.0	53 66.25
N101 – N200	8 66.7 20.0	4 33.3 10.0	12 15.0
COLUMN TOTAL & %	40(50.00)	40(50.0)	80(100.0)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

We then sought to have an idea as to the length of time the child hawkers spend hawking daily, and we found that all of them spent at least 4 hours daily hawking. Those that spent only 4 hours a day hawking were the ones (53 of them) that combine both hawking and

schooling, while majority (18) of those that were in full time hawking spent all the day hawking; 6am – 6pm or beyond as indicated in table 3 below.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT ON HAWKING BY CHILD HAWKERS IN MAIDUGURI AND YOLA

NO. OF HOURS SPENT ON HAWKING DAILY	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		ROW TOTAL & %
	Full Time Hawking	Hawking With Schooling	Full Time Hawking	Hawking With Schooling	
4 Hours	--	25 47.2 100.0	--	28 52.8 100.0	53 66.3
8 Hours	5 55.6 33.3	--	4 44.4 33.3	--	9 11.3
12 Hours	10 55.6 66.7	--	8 44.4 66.7	--	18 22.5
COLUMN TOTAL & %	15(18.8)	25(31.2)	12(15.0)	28(35.0)	80(100.00)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

When we measured the length of time spend in hawking by child hawkers and their ages, we found that almost all of them were involved in some form of child labor going by the minimum age of employment according to the ILO standard, which is 15 years (ILO's Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), because 78 of them were 14 years and below as clearly shown in table 4 below. Again going by Article 3(1) (c) of ILO Convention No. 33, which sets two hours per day, on school days or on holidays, with or without one rest day, as the maximum for permissible light work by persons aged 12 years or above (Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) Convention, 1932 (No. 33), we can still argue that child hawkers in this study were engaged in child labour. This same convention however specified that in countries where no provision exists relating to compulsory school attendance, the time spent on light work shall not exceed four and a half hours per day, and since in Nigeria Primary school education is compulsory, majority of child workers can still be considered to be engaged in child labor.

TABLE 4: AGE OF CHILDHAWKERS AND NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT ON HAWKING DAILY

AGE OF CHILD HAWKERS	MAIDUGURI			YOLA			ROW TOTAL & %
	No. Of Hours Spent On Hawking Daily			No. Of Hours Spent On Hawking Daily			
	4 Hrs.	8 Hrs	12 Hrs	4 Hrs	8 Hrs	12 Hrs	
11 yrs and below	11 57.9 44.0	--	--	8 42.1 28.6	--	--	19 23.8
12 – 14 Yrs.	12 20.3 48.0	5 8.5 100.0	10 19.9 100.0	20 33.9 71.4	4 6.8 100.0	8 13.6 100.0	59 73.7
15yrs. And Above	2 100.0	--	--	--	--	--	2 2.5
COLUMN TOTAL & %	25(31.2)	5(6.2)	10(12.5)	28(35.0)	4(5.0)	8(10.0)	80(100.0)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

REASONS FOR CHILD HAWKING

Now, why are children in our study made to hawk for long hours amounting to child labour? Majority (41 of them) of the child hawkers said they needed to raise some money for their parents/guardians to help feed their respective families and meet other petty domestic needs of their parents/guardians. Another significant number (24 of them) spoke of raising money to finance their schooling such as transportation, uniforms and writing materials. A significant number amongst the female (15 out of 40) also indicated raising money for their wedding requirements, meaning that they needed money to buy such things like room furniture, cooking utensils, wedding uniform, etc. We sought to find out why they had to engage in child hawking to be able to meet those financial necessities instead of their parents/guardians providing for their family members needs. All respondents indicated, in their own different ways, that their parents/guardians were poor. As table 6 below clearly shows, although they hawked for various reasons, all the reasons can be summed up as economic.

TABLE 5: REASONS FOR CHILD HAWKING IN MAIDUGURI AND YOLA

REASONS FOR HAWKING	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		ROW TOTAL & %
	M	F	M	F	
To help feed the family	10 34.5 50.0	4 13.8 20.0	12 41.4 60.0	3 10.3 15.0	29 36.2
To meet other petty domestic needs of the family	2 16.7 10.0	6 50.0 30.0	1 8.3 5.0	3 25.0 15.0	12 15.0
To buy school uniforms, writing materials, etc	8 33.3 40.0	2 8.3 10.0	7 29.1 35.0	7 29.1 35.0	24 30.0
To help buy room furniture, cooking utensils, etc	—	8 53.3	—	7 46.7	15 18.8
COLUMN TOTAL & %	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	80(100.0)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

TABLE 6: REASONS PARENTS/GUARDIANS CANNOT PROVIDE FOR THE FAMILY NEEDS OF CHILD HAWKERS IN MAIDUGURI AND YOLA

REASONS PARENTS/GUARDIANS CANNOT PROVIDE FOR THE FAMILY NEEDS	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		ROW TOTAL & %
	M	F	M	F	
My father/Guardian is a small farmer	7 25.0 35.0	6 21.4 30.5	8 28.6 40.0	7 25.0 35.0	28 35.5
My father/Guardian is a small trader	4 36.4 20.0	3 27.2 15.0	2 18.2 10.0	2 18.2 10.0	11 13.7
My father/Guardian is a laborer	5 31.2 25.0	4 25.0 10.0	5 31.3 25.0	2 12.5 5.0	16 20.0
We are too many in the family	2 18.2 10.0	3 27.2 15.0	3 27.2 15.0	3 15.0 15.0	11 13.7
My mother is alone, with no support	2 14.3 10.0	4 28.6 20.0	2 14.3 10.0	6 42.9 30.0	14 17.5
COLUMN TOTAL & %	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	80(100.0)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

How Worthwhile Is Child Hawking As A Coping Strategy?

It is very clear from the above reasons for hawking given by our respondents that hawking is a form of coping strategy by poor families in this study. The next vital question is how worthwhile is it? We shall do so by analyzing child hawking vis-à-vis child abuse. We have elsewhere defined child abuse and described the major types of child abuse which broadly include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, and child neglect. If child hawking in Borno and Adamawa states constituted child abuse in itself and/or in its consequences, then it was not a worthwhile coping strategy that families would adopt. It is in this light that we collected and analysed the data presented in this section of this paper.

TABLE 7: PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY CHILDHAWKERS WHILE HAWKING IN MAIDUGURI AND YOLA

PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY CHILDHAWKERS	NUMBER OF TIMES IT IS EXPERIENCED				ROW TOTAL & %
	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		
	M	F	M	F	
Beating by bullies	16	12	8	8	44
	36.4	27.3	18.9	18.9	20.7
	28.6	23.1	16.6	14.3	
Verbal Insults from people	28	24	32	28	112
	25.0	21.4	28.6	25.0	52.8
	50.0	46.1	66.6	50.0	
Sexual harassment	4	5	2	5	16
	25.0	31.3	12.5	31.2	7.5
	7.1	9.6	4.1	8.9	
Attempted rape	6	8	3	12	29
	20.7	27.6	10.3	41.4	13.8
	10.7	15.4	6.3	21.4	
Attempted abduction	2	3	3	3	11
	18.2	27.3	27.3	27.3	5.2
	3.6	5.6	6.3	5.3	
COLUMN TOTAL & %	56(26.4)	52(24.5)	48(22.6)	56(26.5)	212(100)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

In regard to whether hawking is a worthwhile coping strategy, the first questions we sought answers to from child hawkers is whether they ever experienced such problems as beating by bullies, verbal insults from people, sexual harassment, attempted rape and/or rape, attempted abduction and/or abduction, etc. As table 7 above shows, all admitted having experienced at least one of the above problems except rape and abduction. Insults and beating by bullies were the most frequently mentioned by respondents – 156 cases out of 212 total abuse cases. Attempted rape and sexual harassments were highest

amongst the females than amongst the males – 30 female cases as against 15 male cases. We then asked respondents what they heard or knew had happened to hawkers of their gender other than them. Here, both rape and abductions featured, though rape featured most frequently than abduction – 47 cases as against 11. It is clear from tables 7 above and 8 below that child hawkers suffered all sorts of abuses while hawking whose effects could be negative enough to cancel out whatever economic benefits parents/guardians derive from it to help them cope with financial needs of their respective families.

TABLE 8: PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY OTHER CHILDHAWKERS WHILE HAWKING IN MAIDUGURI AND YOLA

PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY OTHER CHILDHAWKERS	NUMBER OF TIMES IT IS EXPERIENCED				ROW TOTAL & %
	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		
	M	F	M	F	
Beating by bullies	31 36.9 23.3	23 27.4 17.0	15 17.4 12.0	15 17.4 13.3	84 16.9
Insults from people	53 25.3 39.8	46 22.0 34.0	64 30.6 51.6	46 22.0 40.7	209 42.2
Sexual harassment	15 25.4 11.0	18 30.5 13.3	12 20.3 9.7	14 23.7 12.3	59 11.9
Attempted rape	18 26.0 13.5	24 34.7 17.7	9 13.0 7.2	18 26.0 15.9	69 13.9
Rape	12 25.5 9.0	15 31.9 11.1	6 12.7 4.8	14 29.8 12.3	47 9.5
Attempted abduction	2 12.5 1.5	6 37.5 4.4	5 31.2 4.0	3 18.8 2.6	16 3.2
Abduction	2 18.1 1.5	3 27.2 2.2	3 27.2 2.4	3 27.2 2.6	11 2.2
COLUMN TOTAL & %	133(26.9)	135(26.7)	124(27.2)	113(22.8)	495(100)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

We then examined other dangers hawkers were exposed to, such as traffic accidents and other bad behaviors they are likely to pick up as a results of the economic activity of hawking. Regarding traffic accidents, the number seems very high going by the responses

of the child hawkers as indicated in Table 9 and 10 below. An overwhelming majority (71 out of 80 of them) witnessed at least one accident involving other child hawkers in at least every two weeks or less. The results are as indicated in table 9 below:

TABLE 9: NUMBER OF TIMES CHILD HAWKERS SAW TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS INVOLVING OTHER CHILD HAWKERS IN MAIDUGURI AND YOLA

NUMBER OF TIMES CHILD HAWKERS SAW TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS INVOLVING OTHER CHILD HAWKERS	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		ROW TOTAL & %
	M	F	M	F	
At least once a day	2 16.7 10.0	3 25.0 15.0	3 25.0 15.0	4 33.3 20.0	12 15.0
At least once a week	7 25 35.0	8 28.6 40	7 25 35.0	6 21.4 30.0	28 35.0
At least once in every two weeks	7 22.6 35.0	6 19.4 30.0	8 25.8 40	10 32.2	31 38.8
At least once in every month	4 44.4 20.0	3 33.3 15.0	2 22.2 10.0	--	9 11.2
COLUMN TOTAL & %	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	80(100)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

TABLE 10: NUMBER OF TIMES CHILD HAWKERS WERE INVOLVED IN ANY TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS WHILE HAWKING

NUMBER OF TIMES CHILD HAWKERS INVOLVED IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		ROW TOTAL & %
	M	F	M	F	
Had once	6 24.0 30.0	5 20.0 25.0	7 28.0 35.0	7 28.0 35.0	25 31.3
Had twice	8 26.7 40.0	9 30.0 45.0	6 20.0 30.0	7 23.3 35.0	30 37.5
Had thrice	4 20.0 20.0	5 25.0 25.0	6 30.0 30.0	5 25.0 25.0	20 25.0
Had four times	2 40.0 10.0	1 20.0 5.0	1 20.0 5.0	1 20.0 5.0	5 6.2
COLUMN TOTAL & %	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	80(100)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

On whether any of the respondents (the child hawkers) themselves ever had traffic accidents while hawking, we found that all the respondents had at least one traffic accident, while a significant number (55 out of 80 of them) had at least two and above number of traffic accidents, as table 10 indicates. Regarding bad behaviors child hawkers of their gender are likely to pick up as a result of the economic activity of hawking, a number were mentioned by our child hawker respondents, namely: hooliganism, drug abuse, pick pocketing, indiscriminate sex/fornication and prostitutions. These are indicated in table 11 below. As we can see in the table below (Table 11), a variety of bad behaviors are likely to be picked up by child hawker. Sex-related bad behaviors were mentioned by more than half of the child hawkers interviewed (45 out of 80 of them), which is a very terrible situation; given the existence of HIV and AIDS pandemic in Nigeria.

TABLE 11: BAD THINGS, CHILD HAWKERS CAN PICK UP FROM CHILD HAWKING IN MAIDUGURI AND YOLA

BAD THINGS CHILD HAWKER CAN PICK WHILE HAWKING	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		ROW TOTAL & %
	M	F	M	F	
Hooliganism	7 43.7 35.0	--	9 66.3 45.0	--	16 20.0
Indiscriminate sex/fornication	3 10.4 15.0	10 34.4 50.0	4 13.8 20	12 41.3 60.0	29 36.2
Prostitutions	--	9 57.1 45.0	--	7 42.9 35.0	16 20.0
Petty theft such as pick pocketing	8 57.1 40.0	--	6 42.9 30.0	--	14 17.5
Drug abuse	2 40.0 10.0	1 20.0 5.0	1 20.0 5.0	1 20.0 5.0	5 6.3
COLUMN TOTAL & %	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	80(100)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

In regard to child hawkers' preferences regarding hawking and going to school, we asked our respondents what they would rather do - hawk than go to school, or go to school than hawk, or combine hawking and schooling? The results are presented in Table 12 below. Majority of the child hawkers (53 out of 80) preferred going to school to hawking. Only a few, 9 out of 27 of those involved in full time hawking would prefer hawking to going to school while majority of those in full time hawking (18 out of the 27) would prefer combining hawking with going to school. All those who preferred going to school to hawking are those that were combining hawking with going to school. The reason they preferred full time schooling than combining it with hawking was because hawking, according to them, is not allowing them to focus on schooling which is affecting their performances in their respective schools. This means that majority of child hawkers were involved in hawking by compulsion rather than by desire/choice. Thus, not only child hawking was a form of child labour in Borno and Adamawa states, it was also a form of forced labour.

TABLE 12: CHILD HAWKERS' PREFERENCES REGARDING HAWKING AND GOING TO SCHOOL IN BORNO AND ADAMAWA STATES

CHILD HAWKERS PREFERENCES	MAIDUGURI		YOLA		ROW TOTAL & %
	Full Time Hawking	Hawking With Schooling	Full Time Hawking	Hawking With Schooling	
Prefer going to school to hawking	--	25 47.2 100.0	--	28 52.8 100.0	53 66.2
Prefer hawking to going to school	5 55.6 33.3	--	4 44.4 33.3	--	9 11.3
Prefer combining hawking and school	10 55.6 66.7	--	8 44.4 66.7	--	18 22.5
COLUMN TOTAL & %	15(18.7)	25(31.3)	12(15.0)	28(35.0)	80(100)

NOTE: The **top** figure in a cell is the cell count; the **middle** the row percent and **bottom** the column percent.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

In this paper we analyzed the data collected from child hawkers themselves regarding the following broad areas: type of hawking, nature of hawking, reasons for hawking and the worthiness or otherwise of child hawking as a family coping strategy. The summary of our major findings on each of these broad areas are provided in the paragraphs that follow.

Type of Hawking: Three types of hawking were identified, which were solo stationary, solo mobile, group mobile and group stationary.

Nature of Hawking: Under nature of hawking, we firstly found that one of the major features of child hawking in Borno and Adamawa was that majority of them combined hawking and schooling, though a significant number were also out of school.

A second major feature was that majority (53) of child hawkers made very meager profits of between N50 and N100, which was less than a dollar a day even if we considered only the upper limit of N100 daily profit. A third major feature of child hawking in Borno and Adamawa was the fact that all of them spent at least 4 hours daily in hawking. When we measured the length of time spent in hawking by child hawkers and their ages, we found that almost all of them were involved in some form of child labour going by the

minimum age of employment according to the ILO standard, which is 15 years (ILO's Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Nigerian Universal Basic Education legislation (UBE Act) of 2004 on free and compulsory basic education.

Reasons for Child Hawking: Several reasons were given by child hawkers why they hawk, all of which boiled down to poverty. They had to hawk to supplement their parents/guardians' meager incomes to meet such needs as feeding the family, financing the purchase of school uniforms and writing materials, meeting the wedding requirements of their children (daughters especially), etc.

How Worthwhile Is Child Hawking As A Coping Strategy? In this study we found that child hawking, though was being used as a coping strategy by parents of the child hawkers, it was akin to child abuse both in itself and in its consequences. It was a child abuse in itself because it was a form of child labour as outlawed by the ILO and the policy of compulsory primary education in Nigeria. It was a child abuse in its consequences because child hawkers experienced several forms of abuses while conducting their hawking activities. Such abuses included beating by bullies, verbal insults from people, sexual harassment, attempted rape and rape, attempted abduction and abduction.

In this study we have also examined other dangers hawkers were exposed to, such as traffic accidents and other bad behaviors they were likely to pick up as a results of the economic activity of hawking. Regarding traffic accidents, the number was very high. All the respondents had at least one traffic accidents, while a significant number had at least two and above number of traffic accidents. Regarding bad behaviors child hawkers were likely to pick up as a result of the economic activity of hawking, quite a number were mentioned by the child hawkers, namely hooliganism, drug abuse, pick pocketing, indiscriminate sex/fornication and prostitutions.

CONCLUSION

It is very clear from our findings in this study that child hawkers were being used to supplement the incomes of their parents and/or guardians, and therefore hawking was a form of coping strategy for families of child hawkers involved in it in this study. Notwithstanding its benefits as an income supplementing strategy to families of hawkers, child hawking as practiced by our target population was not a worthwhile coping strategy for two major reasons. First, it was a form of child labour, which constituted a child abuse in itself, and; secondly, it exposed the child hawkers to various child abuses and other dangers as we have seen. Moreover, majority of the child hawkers (53 out of 80 of them) prefer going to school to hawking. Only a very few of those involved in full time hawking would prefer hawking to going to school (9 out of 27 of them), while a majority of even those in full time hawking (18 out of the 27) would prefer combining hawking with going to school. Thus, not only child hawking was a form of child labour in Borno and Adamawa states, it was also a form of forced labour. It is therefore very urgent and

important for parents and the governments of Bornu and Adamawa in particular and Nigeria in general to find more viable coping strategies for poor families in place of child hawking, because it is a serious abuse of child rights and is doing more harm than good to the children, their parents and the society in general.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The negative consequences of child hawking is already recognised by the Federal government of Nigeria and it has sought to deal with the problem through law. For example, a wide-ranging Child Rights Bill that was signed into law by President Olusegun Obasanjo in July 2003 (the Child Rights Act), contains some provisions which seek to check child hawking by prescribing penalties for the parents and guardians who allow children on to the streets. Among other things, it states that no child should be subjected to any forced or exploitative labour or employed to work in any capacity except where children are employed by members of their family on light work of an agricultural, horticultural or domestic character. People who contravene this provision risk being fined up to about \$500, or imprisoned for a five-year term or both ([http:// /article/2004-06-04-nigerian-govt-seeks-to-stop-child-hawking](http://article/2004-06-04-nigerian-govt-seeks-to-stop-child-hawking)). However, the law has yet to be properly implemented. In both Borno and Adamawa, the Child Rights Act has not been passed by their respective legislatures. There is therefore the need to properly implement this law especially the provisions derived from articles 26, 27 and 28 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989.

Articles 26, 27 and 28 of the UNCRC are very important and relevant to the eradication of child hawking because they deal with the issue of poverty/deprivation which is the root cause of child hawking as we have found in this study. Sections 1 and 2 of article 26, for example, provide thus:

1. States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.
2. The benefits should, where appropriate, be granted, taking into account the resources and the circumstances of the child and persons having responsibility for the maintenance of the child, as well as any other consideration relevant to an application for benefits made by or on behalf of the child.

The two sections above emphasize the responsibility of the Nigerian government to provide for the needs of the child and even those of his/her parents and/or guardians if the parents/guardians are poor. If these provisions are properly implemented, poverty should not be an excuse for child hawking at all.

Sections 1–4 of Article 27 further emphasized the rights of the child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development and the joint responsibilities of government and parents/guardians in providing the requisite standard of living. In other words, the sections demands that parents must provide an adequate standard of living for their children, and where they cannot afford to do so, the government should assist such parents/guardians provide the adequate standard of living for their children through material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing. Again, if these provisions were implemented, poverty would not be an excuse or reason for hawking.

We have also found in this study that many children were hawking to enable them help their parents finance their studies. Also, majority of the child hawkers combined hawking and schooling, while some dropped out of school completely to hawk because of poverty. If all sections of Article 28 were to be fully implemented, each of these problems would be a forgotten problem. For examples, section 1 urges the government to make primary education compulsory and available free to all. Section 2 talks about encouraging the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, making them available and accessible to every child, and taking appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need. Section 4 dwells on making educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children. And section 5 calls upon the government to take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates. Undoubtedly, Universal access to education has been prime target for Nigeria in the last four decades and Nigeria is a signatory of World Declaration/Convention on Education for All (WCEFA, 1990). Consequently, and in keeping with Section 18(1) and (3) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which enjoined the government to provide Free and Compulsory Basic Education amongst other education objectives, President Olusegun Obasanjo assented to the UBE Bill on the 26th May, 2004 titled: “An ACT to Provide for Compulsory Free, Universal Basic Education and other related matters”. As contained in the official Reference of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Gazette (2004), the act provides for compulsory universal basic education and stipulates penalties for parents who fail to comply with the provision. Unfortunately, the impact of the UBE is yet to be felt. A recent survey showed that Government policy on enforcing attendance at the UBE programme has not been implemented as majority of parents are still involved in keeping their children and wards behind, and only a small group (17.8%) of respondents agreed that government was taking care of all their school needs whereas majority (82.2%) claim that their parents were largely involved in funding their school expenses (<http://uaps2007.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=708>). There is therefore the need for the government at all levels to show more commitment in implementing the UBE.

Since poverty of parents/guardians appeared to be a key reason for hawking by our respondents in this study, it follows that we should recommend that the government at all levels should do something to alleviate, if not eradicate, the poverty of parents/guardians of child hawkers in particular and the poor Nigerian citizens in general. Are we then saying that Nigeria has not been doing anything against poverty all this while? The answer is no. As rightly observed by Obađan (2002) various National Development Plans over the years (1962-85) have shown concern for poverty reduction even though poverty alleviation objectives were tangential and not explicit objectives of all the plans. It was as a result of the continuous deterioration of living conditions in the late 1980s that several poverty alleviation programmes designed to impact positively on the poor came on board. And by the end of 1998, Obađan observed further that there were sixteen poverty alleviation institutions in the country (2002: 3) covering almost all social, health and economic sectors of the society. Some of the more relevant programmes as far as our paper is concerned include the following:

- **Multi-sectoral Programmes** such as the National Directorate of Employment, consisting of four main programmes (the Vocational Skills Development Programme, the Special Public Works Programme, the Small Scale Enterprises Programme, and the Agriculture Employment Programme); the Better Life Programme consisting of a variety of programmes targeted at women in the areas of agriculture and extension services, education and vocational training, cottage industries and food processing, primary health care delivery and enlightenment/awareness and cooperatives; the Family Support Programme, which replaced the Better Life Programme, and; lastly Family Economic Advancement Programme which sought to operate credit facilities for women and family units for the promotion of family enterprises.
- **Agriculture Sector Programmes** such as the Strategic grains Reserves Programme, the Programme for Accelerated Wheat Production, and the development of artisanal fishery, small ruminant production, pasture and grazing reserves projects. Included in these sectors were also food programmes such as the General Gowon's "National Accelerated Food Production Programme"; the General Murtala/Obasanjo's regime's "Operation Feed the Nation"; the Shehu Shagari's "Green Revolution", and the Gen. Buhari's "Go Back to Land".
- **Education Sector programmes** such as the Nomadic Education Programme and Mass literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education programmes.
- **Transport Sector programmes** such as **Federal** Urban Mass Transit Program established at the federal level in 1988 and the states mass transits programmes established in various states subsequently.
- **Financial Sector Programmes** such as the National Economic Reconstruction Fund which was to provide long-term loans at concessionary interest rates to promote small and medium scale industrial projects; the People's Bank of Nigeria which was expected to extend credit to the poor who could not have access to the credit facilities available in the commercial and merchant banks; and the Community

Banking Scheme which should provide credit to small scale producers on their own personal recognition.

- **Nutrition-Related Programmes** consisting of programmes aimed at improving food security, prevention of micro-nutrient deficiencies in children and women, promotion of exclusive breast-feeding, de-worming of school children and promotion of food quality and safety.
- **Manufacturing Sector Programme consisting of Small-Scale Enterprises Programmes** designed to promote the growth of small-scale enterprises in Nigeria through easier access to bank credit, artisan technology and the provision of appropriate infrastructural facilities.

For a more detailed assessment of some of these programmes especially as they relate to women and children, see Sa'ad (2001: 81-85). Despite all the above programmes implemented or are being implemented through Ministries and the Government established Agencies to fight poverty, the incidence and scourge of poverty have continued to increase over the years. The official reasons for the low impact or total failure of these structures include: Poor coordination of activities and absence of effective continuous policy formulation; Lack of sustainability of programme and projects; Absence of achievable target setting; Absence of monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment; Absence of effective coordination, collaboration and complementation between the agencies and among the three tiers of Governments; and Duplication of functions with a resulting unnecessary rivalry among institutions, hence the current programme, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), introduced early in 2001 by President Obasanjo to address all the problems identified above (FRN, 2001:3).

NAPEP is at least eight years old and poverty level in Nigeria is still high. What is the matter? Is poverty in Nigeria insurmountable? We believe strongly that eradication of poverty is possible in Nigeria. In this regard, we find the recommendations contained in Obadan's paper on *Poverty Reduction in Nigeria: the Way Forward* (2002: 20 – 26) germane. These recommendations are summarised in his conclusion of the paper (Obadan, 2002: 26-27), viz.:

1. "There is the need for an agreed poverty reduction agenda that can be used by all stakeholders – Federal Government, State Government, Local Governments, NGOs and the International Donor Community.
2. "There is also the need for strong political commitment to the poverty reduction goal, as well as a depoliticisation of poverty alleviation programmes and projects.
3. "Very importantly, in order to make a meaningful dent on poverty it is crucial for poverty reduction programmes and measures to be implemented within the framework of rapid broad-based economic growth with equity, controlled population growth, sound economic management and good governance, among others.

4. "Finally, it is important to give expression to poverty alleviation objectives in national development plans with the strategies and measures integrated into the country's overall development/policy management framework".

Our final recommendation is that in carrying out all the Obađan's recommendations above, we should not lose sight of the need to rigorously implement the Child Rights Act and Convention as well as the VBE Act. In this regard, NGOs, International Donor Organisations, philanthropists and activists in the areas of development and human rights have the onerous job or responsibility of ensuring that this holistic approach to dealing with child hawking is pursued successfully.

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