

**ERADICATION OF CHILD ABUSE IN NIGERIA
THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

BY

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Abstract

This work was executed to proffer solutions to myriads challenges confronting child abuse in Nigeria for possible remedy. The research highlighted the problems faced by Nigeria child which have remained intractable in Nigeria community. The research enumerated the obvious causative factors to this occurrence; and designed Educational and Social Work gadgets system revanging menace in the society.

Keywords: child abuse, labour, educational institution and social work gadgets.

Introduction

Child abuse refers to all sorts of negative and cruel acts perpetrated against children by adults. It is any form of maltreatment or neglect of a child resulting in non-accidental harm or injury which cannot be reasonably explaining (Axmaker, 2004).

Child abuse is a social phenomenon which cuts across developing and developed nations of the world especially Nigeria. According to the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPA, 2000) annual fifth state survey, (2004) posited that nobody can deny that he has never suffer any form of abuse or the other as a child and that this has, of course, made him to wonder why anyone in the present time, would want to maltreat or harm a child.

The indices or parameter of child abuse

Child abuse is a term used to refer to four types of child maltreatment which include: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and child neglect or rejection or abandonment. All these above mentioned categories of child abuse, the most easily identifies, recognized and easily discovered that can be death with physical abuse.

Physical abuse refers to non-evidential infliction of physical injury on a child. Such injury could be as a result of beating, biting, punching, pinching, burning, kicking and a host of others. Children suffer abuse at homes, salon offices, and workplace and in schools. The beating of children is commonly and culturally acceptable in many Nigerian communities and homes, just as the use of corporal punishment in the educational institution reinforces the notion that physical aggression is an acceptable and effective means of eliminating unwanted behaviors in children and teachers.

Beating the children by parents, teachers and elderly one is believed to be a way of instilling discipline and that it is applied for almost any type of misbehavior. Some form of corporal punishment meted to children are extremely harsh and are both physically and emotionally dangerous, example of such include making the erring child to carry heavy object, beating with horse whip, using the razor blade or knife to cut the child and adding pepper and salt to the cut.

The practice of female mutilation (circumcision) which is culturally acceptable in many parts Nigeria especially in the South South region and South East. This is one of the most serious form of child abuse female genital mutilation as it is called has been defined as all procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genital organs whether for cultural or any other non-therapeutic reasons. A lot of children have lost their lives during the process. Whereas those who survived it, live to regret the denial of sexual pleasures (Frigidity and Orgasmic Dysfunction).

Another physical abuse related to female genital mutilation is the culture and practice of putting tribal marks on the children faces by their parents. Children who had the marks are subjected to ridicules and psychosocial problems as they are called different names by their peers. These children with tribal marks are exposed to health hazard or infections such as HIV transmission, excess bleeding, and tetanus (Oguntola, 2000). In recent time, the argument that facial marks are for traditional identification purposes is baseless. It is rather seen as dehumanizing and barbaric, hence refers to as child abuse.

Child labour and child trafficking are also considered as physical child abuse, child labour meant work that is exploitative and injurious to the physical, social cognitive and moral development of the child (Hodges, 2001). Hawking on the streets and highways by children is a common practice in Nigeria. A good number of children have lost their lives in the hands of hit and run drivers, others have suffered broken limbs.

Child trafficking refers to the act of trading young children for the purpose of domestic services or for prostitution. It may be referred to as modern slave trade. Many children especially girls and young women are always victims.

Sexual Abuse

This refers to as any activity with a child before the age of legal consent that is for sexual gratification of an adult or a sufficiently older child which include among other things, touching,

fondling or caressing a child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, persuading a child to expose his or sexual organs, allowing a child to watch pornography etc. Sexual abuse is common among men. Although there are now women sexual abusers than previously believed.

Sexual abusers gain sexual access to their victims through education or enticement. The abusers are parents male especially family members, caretaker such as teachers, strangers etc. Olarjemi (2004) opined that it should be mentioned that recognizing the sign of sexual abuse in children is more difficult than physical abuse and that it is the under reported form of child abuse or maltreatment because of the sexually or conspiracy of silence.

Emotionally Abuse

This refers to as the rejection, ignoring, criticizing, isolation or terrorizing of children all of which have the effect of eroding the victim's self-esteem, Antifayan (2004) opined that emotional abuse is the most difficult to discern as the evidence of extreme emotional deprivation is not always apparent to the untrained eye.

Child Neglect

Child neglect falls into three categories physical, educational and emotional physically, child neglect featured refusal or delay in seeking health care, abandonment, expulsion from the home. Educational neglect on the other hand features the child chronic training failure to enrol a child that reach mandatory school age or failure to attend special educational need of the disabled.

Causes of Child Abuse and its Attendance Effects

Children from unsuitable family environment or home where there is inadequate supervision are vulnerable to advances of sexual abuses. Children from single parents and those who are not given enough loves and affection of home are all susceptible to sexual abuse (Ordu, 2006).

Poverty is another causes of child abuse such factors live broken homes, promiscuity, ignorance, child labours and trafficking are direct

consequences of poverty in homes. Effects of child abuse are multifarious. The long term effects include fear, anxiety depression, anger, hostility, inappropriate sexual behaviour poor self-esteem, tendency towards substances abuse and difficult, with close relationship (Browne and Finkelhor, 1986) children who have been abused in one way or the other tend to have poor self-image and low esteem of themselves. Those who have been abused sexually, often find it difficult to derive satisfactory sexual relationship when they become adults.

Using Educational Institution to Eradicate Child Abuse

Educational institution like the school is an agent of socialization that helps to shape or mould the personality of the child. As children begin school, they are exposed to many things as they interact in the new environment. They develop to acquire new ideas, pattern, attitude and reaction to his colleagues and pupils are observed by the children. If the attitude and behaviour of the portray love, friendliness, warmth, empathy and co-operation as well as obedient to rules and regulation, the children will imitate him and adopt his personality (Ordu, 2009).

The institutions are channels for storing, retrieving and disseminating information if appropriate information is given through the educational institution, child abuse can be reduced in our society if not totally eradicated. Child welfare services programme should be included in our educational curriculum to enhance proper awareness and eradication of child abuse.

Awareness programmes campaign through seminars, workshop and conferences should be organized, parents, caretakers, strangers and children of various sorts should be encouraged to attend.

Children should be encouraged to watch television programme on the evil of child abuse. This will help in no small measure to stop them involving in any act of child abuse. Radio and television jingles that condemn child abuse can also be aired; parents and children should also listen to such programme.

The Perspective of Social Workers as Social Control

Social Workers should conduct and maintain a database of all case of Child Abuse in every State of Nigeria. They should undertake Advocate to sensitize the public on the emotional and traumatic consequential effect on the life of the child. Relevant Institutions such like NGO's Governmental Agencies and Charity Organization can take up this challenge to mitigate these abuses.

Social Workers can initiate viable legislations against child abuse in our society. They can even undertake social action against the government to come to the aid of the parents in order to reduce the incidence.

Conclusion

Based on the issues highlighted on different forms of child abuse causes and their effects on innocent children and the role of educational institutions towards eradication of child abuse. The fight against this scourge called child abuse in Nigeria should be made a concerted effort to be fought by all agencies of education including the home, special welfare institution, the church/mosque it must take a holistic approach.

As the whole nation intensifies the campaign against HIV/AIDS using varies of media, so should it be done for child abuse. Helpless children should not be left to suffer unjustly in the hands of criminal adults. Child abusers should be dealt with according to the law.

Recommendation

Government should get involved to drastically reduce child abuse practice. Child abuse implementation committee should be set up in all the States of Federation to enforce relevant cure.

Children should be encouraged to attend schools where they can be taught skills. Government should provide jobs to people in order to reduce unemployment and poverty in the country.

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