

PARENTS/GUARDIANS'ROLE AND MODERN DAY CHILD SLAVERY AMONG THE AKWA IBOM PEOPLE

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Abstract

This research work examined the roles of parents/guardians in perpetuating modern day child slavery in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The research made use of absolute deprivation theory as a framework. Non-probability sampling technique was adopted with purposive, snowballing and accidental techniques for selection of respondents for interview within the streets of Uyo metropolis. Big-net sampling technique by Fatterman (2010) was used to determine the study participants who were engaged in interviews. Findings of the study were analyzed qualitatively in thematic, contextual and content analysis with excerpts (verbatim reports) from emic responses of the people. *Findings of the study revealed that factors like parents' influence, cultural practice "Akod adu Ubook" (a child is to grow and take care of his/her parents), and poverty play key role in promoting parents/guardians' perpetuation of modern day child slavery in form of street hawking among children in Uyo metropolis. It was recommended that Government should ban street hawking by children under the age of 18 years old and teenage girls from hawking on the street of Uyo metropolis due to the impacts of this social menace. Also the cultural ideology of "AkodaduUbook" should be abolished among Akwa Ibom people in order to raise a sense of responsibility among parents across Akwa Ibom State.*

Keywords: Slavery, Parental Influence, "Akod adu Ubook", Poverty, and culture

Introduction

Slavery has taken new dimensions which affect the children more than any other age group in the world. Slavery is thus not only a memory of the past, but also a cruel reality of modern times that affects the most vulnerable members of our society and precludes them from a life of freedom and dignity (United Nation, 2016). The passing of the Slave Trade Act on 25 March, 1807, led to the eventual abolition of transatlantic slavery. The Act has been hailed as an international victory for humanity (Anti-Slavery International 2017). Yet, while the world celebrates its anniversary, there are still millions of children currently held as slaves, forced to work long hours for no or little pay and left vulnerable to extreme harm, violence and rape (Save the Children, 2007). If slavery is so morally deplorable that it has been outlawed in every country and in international agreements again and again, why are

there millions of enslaved people today? Why are children so often the victims? Why are children and youths being used as disposable resources in agriculture, manufacturing, sports, domestic service, combat, the sex industry, and illicit activities? (Upchurch, 2002). Despite the fact that many people believe that slavery no longer exists, the International Labour Organization (ILO, cited in Amnesty International, 2017) estimated that there are some 5.5 million children in slavery across the world.

Modern day slavery takes many forms which include: forced labour, sexual slavery, child labour, bonded labour, forced marriage, and descent-based slavery (Amnesty International, 2017). One of the disturbing forms of modern day slavery is child labour. An estimated 246 million children are engaged in child labour. Nearly 70 per cent (171 million) of these children work in hazardous conditions – including working in mines, working with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or with dangerous machinery (Amnesty International 2008). They are everywhere, but invisible, toiling as domestic servants in homes, labouring behind the walls of workshops. Children are trafficked (1.2 million), forced into debt bondage or other forms of slavery (5.7 million), forced into prostitution and/or pornography (1.8 million) or recruited as child soldiers in armed conflict (300,000) (UNICEF, 2016).

Children are especially susceptible to becoming victims of modern slavery, including domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, forced child begging, trafficking, early marriage, forced recruitment of child soldiers, and employment in hazardous conditions (United Nation, 2016). Child labour is a problem we all either know much of or have heard much about and many are daily working on it; while some are trying to help eradicate this social menace, others are making money (directly or indirectly) from it (Osita-Oloribe, 2006). Child labour as a form of slavery has been a visible characteristic in the Nigerian society. Child labour which is hazardous to the physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development of children in Nigeria can interfere with their education (Okeshola and Adenugba, 2018). Child labour is infringement to human rights of the Nigerian children who are expected to acquire free and compulsory primary education at the expense of various Federal/State Governments in Nigeria (Adesina, 2014). The number of child labour is increasing in Nigeria, and about 15 million children in Nigeria engaged in child labour (Adesina, 2014).

Child labour is a serious problem and a challenge for many developing countries especially in Nigeria. It affects the future generation of the nation, as these children are psychologically affected due to the kind of work, condition of work, and working environment they found themselves (Brown *et al.*, 2002). The type or qualities of work amounts to child labour if it is exploitative and/or injurious to any aspect of the developing personality of the child, and the impact of child labour on a child varies from work to work. Child labour is a form of slavery in which a child work under such situation/s that are dehumanized to him/her and generate a sense of loss of right and self-dignity (Nwazuoke and Igwe, 2016). Children are exposed to hazardous health condition in child labour, a situation that is similar to the Atlantic slave trade conditions which many Africans were transported to Europe and America under hazardous health condition through which thousands of them couldn't make the journey to the end.

Today children in Nigeria are forced to work in similar conditions, and are treated as slaves in their working conditions. These children are vulnerable to diseases and they

struggle with long-term physical and psychological pain (Osment, 2014). Many children are exposed to long hours of work in dangerous and unhealthy environments, carrying too much responsibility for their age. The fact that these children are working in these hazardous conditions with little food, small pay, no education and no medical care, establishing a cycle of child rights violations (UNICEF, 2006).

The slavery nature of child labour is what is calling for concerns from all relevant parties. This is because the rights of children are violated everyday on the streets, homes, industries, and schools. Children are abused and used by adults for selfish purposes and earnings. In Akwalbom State, the child right Act which was adopted and signed into law are abused day in day out especially on the streets and different homes within the state. These children are facing hazardous working conditions every day, and most of them work for long hours despite their health conditions. UNICEF (2006) reported that many children are exposed to long hours of work in dangerous and unhealthy environments.

Many children today are forced to work at the age that they are supposed to be taken care of by their parents, guardians and be protected by the government. A lot of children all over the Nigeria have become medium of wealth generation for some people, organizations, parents, and relatives. Modern slavery has really affected the children today because a lot of attention by the government and other agencies has been shifted from protecting the rights of the children to war against importation and transportation of drugs, oil bunkering, corruption, and other political issues because there are more gains from these areas as compared to the fight against violation and abuse of children. Modern day slavery is consuming the children because in some ways the concerned parties are not aware of this new form of slavery. It takes forms in which it is not discovered to be slavery as compare to generally known Atlantic slavery. This might be because it is rooted in the culture of the people.

The impact of slavery is influencing every aspect of the Nigerian society. From family life, religion, business to governance and the most affected class of Nigerians in this social menace has always been the innocent children who cannot defend their rights. Many children serve as slaves in many homes in Nigeria. Some of them are used as house maids and are maltreated by guardians. In the religious circle, a lot of children are treated as slaves by prophets, parents and guardians on the premise of being possessed by evil spirits to cause misfortune for their families and that of their guardians. In business, many children are found across the streets of Nigerian towns and cities as hawkers that work under dangerous condition. The government at different levels have accepted the United Nation Children Right, and made laws/Acts to protect these children. The challenge remains that these laws/Acts are abused everyday on the streets, schools, churches/mosque, and homes without the serious intervention of the government agencies to prosecute those who perpetuate modern day slavery with children.

In this dispensation of world advocacy for Human Rights, Human Freedom, Democracy, and global liberty, child slavery is perpetuated by people through subjecting children to hard and forced labour. Forced labour takes away the right of a child as was perpetuated by the Europeans during the Cross-Atlantic slave trade. Forced labour is one major characteristic of slavery. Today in Akwalbom State, many children are under forced

labour. They are found on the streets of Uyo metropolis and other parts of the state working like slaves, hawking on the streets, not for their welfare alone, but for their parents, guardians and masters who bought them for certain amount of money for a certain period of time or negotiate for certain promissory benefits on either the path of the parents or the child which in reality may not be met. On this backdrop, this research work sought to examine the roles of parents/guardians in perpetuating modern day child slavery in Akwalbom State under parental influence, cultural practice of "*AkɔdaduUbook*" (*a child is to grow and take care of his/her parents*), and poverty as variables for the study.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopts Survey Research Design because the study seeks to gather information on the socio-cultural determinants of modern day child slavery in Uyo metropolis, Akwalbom State. Survey Research Design is adopted because it expedites search for information to acquire proper understanding about a fact or social problem. This will be achieved through the employment of explanatory potentials of the survey design, which makes qualitative research possible and easy. The survey research design is also ground-breaking because of its much potential in new information gathering techniques.

The Study Area

The study was conducted in Uyo metropolis, Uyo Local Government Area of Akwalbom State. Uyo metropolis is considered as the centre of Akwalbom State capital. Uyo metropolis occupies Uyo Local Government Area, parts of Itu Local Government Area, Uruan Local Government Area, Nsitlbom Local Government Area, Ibesikpo-Asutan Local Government Area and Etinan Local Government Area. It is a much organized city with beautiful structures and a highly diluted population. The city center is known as Plaza and it connects all the major roads in Uyo; Aka Road, Abak Road, IkotEkpene Road, Barracks Road, Nwaniba Road and Oron Road. Some of these roads are very beautiful and have trees planted over the sidewalks for aesthetics. Uyo is home to University of Uyo, several private polytechnics and monotechnics. The high-brow residential areas are Ewet Housing, Shelter Afrique and Osongoma Housing Estate. Uyo has a museum, several shopping malls (including Shoprite which is under construction), a cinema, a world standard golf club, there is also a 5 star international hotel called Le Meridien Hotel, numerous night clubs and many wonderful sceneries.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Since the study was a qualitative research with the aim of seeking information from the targeted population, no calculated sample size was needed. The researcher adopted a big-net approach (Fatterman, 2010) to determine sample size after deciding on what and who to study. Study participants who were found to be parents of the teenage hawkers, road side traders, hawkers from 18 years of age. Non-probability sampling technique was used. These include snowballing and purposive sampling techniques to reach the respondents where they were likely to be found in all nooks and crannies of Uyo metropolis especially along the street

Data Collection Technique

The primary data were collected purposively through personal in-depth interviews,

key informant interview, snowballing and accidental methods through which selected respondents within the streets of Uyo metropolis were selected. Apart from in-depth interview (IDI), observation, informal discussion and key informant interview (KII) discussion were used within Uyo metropolis.

i. **Complete Observer:** The researcher observed and sought explanations from the respondents in order to acquire understanding of the socio-cultural variables from the stand point of the children involved. This process involved note taking and photographs for analysis.

ii. **Interview:** This was carried out by the researcher with the help of 2 (two) research assistants in order to cover the sample size of the respondents within the stipulated time. The interview schedule was structured with questions which the interviewees were expected to give truthful and unbiased answers. Section A of the interview schedule examined the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section B focused on the substantial issues as identified by the objectives of the study.

iii. **Key Informant:** six key informants were recruited by the researcher to assist in gathering data for the study. These elderly men and elderly women within Uyo metropolis were chosen by the researcher to help in clarification of the socio-cultural variables which enhance modern day child slavery in Uyo, AkwaIbom State.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the field as related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the section A of the interview schedule, were analysed through the use of table of simple percentage distribution. The data collected from the section B of the interview schedule were analysed through thematic, content and contextual analysis, with excerpts or verbatim reports using pseudonyms.

FINDINGS

Parental influence in perpetuating Child Labour

Information gathered through interviews by the researcher showed that parents and guardians in most cases are strongly behind forceful labour of their wards especially among the street hawkers along the major streets of Uyo metropolis. One fact emerging from interviews was the fact that most of the children found along the streets of Uyo metropolis hawking have the approval or support of their parents or guardians. In some cases, the children are sent out by their parents or guardians.

One of the study respondents aged 38 years in her narratives reported:

"See I am a mother and I live along the street in this Uyo, and I want to tell you that none of these children that you see hawking by the streets that does not have the support of his or her parent or guardian which the child lived with. They agreed to what their children are doing and they give them the support because of the gains they are benefiting from the labour of their children."

Children are placed under pressure to labour by hawking on the streets of Uyo by

their parents or guardians. The majority of the study respondents in their responses agreed that parents and guardians have used many approaches like talking to their children about their poor situation, comparing their children with that of the other rich families who are taking care of their parents, and using biblical teachings of children having to obey their parents in order to be well with them. These approaches placed the children under psychological pressure to labour mostly by hawking or going for house help in order to source for resources for their families' survival.

One of the key informants (KII) aged 48 years in his narratives reported:

"Parents are responsible for the suffering these children are going through. These parents will use different forms of pressure to psych their children until these children feel responsible for their living. These parents do feel that their laziness should be borne by their children and that is why you will see them try to make these children labour in their place."

It was reported by most of the interviewed respondents that these children do not just go through physical stress or labour but, they also go through mental stress as a result of threat from some of the parents. Narratives revealed that some parents threaten their children with hunger, beating, rejection and curses in order to force them to go to the street for sales. According to study respondents, this has forced some of this class of children to live on the street, on the premise that their parents want them to live there.

A respondent of the in-depth interview aged 52 years in his narrative reported:

"These children you see on these streets have seen a lot in the hands of their parents. Some of the mature ones that you see living from the streets today, have gone through the same treatment in the hands of their parents, and therefore decided to make the streets their territories for survival. Some of them have faced a lot of threats from their parents especially the mothers, and because these children have nowhere to go, they will go to sell on the streets and from there, learn the street's life and grow up to live on the streets. I have witnessed this in a compound that I have lived before."

Another study respondent aged 32 years in her responses said:

"If you see how these women who have their relatives lived with them treat those children, sometimes you will feel bad. This is because they can't allow their children to hawk on the street, but I tell you to go to four lane junction, check those children that sell pure water, some of them as I know are staying with their aunties who send them to hawk pure water for the food they eat and the rent of the house they stay."

Emerging from interviews is the fact that most of these children are into this modern day slavery. Most of them are born in families that either one of the parents or both parents are selling by the streets, motor parks, or road side markets. From gathered information, it

was revealed that children who are born into these families that sell by the road side or on the street found it natural to help in their family business, by taking to the streets in order to help grow their family enterprise. Gathered information from the study respondents show that there exists a set of children consider street hawking as their families' way of life. In fact, to them, the streets are where their wealth is gotten and that must remain because there is nothing wrong to earn living from the street.

Children who are born into the families that sell by the streets, according to findings are often exploited by their parents. This is because some of those parents make the children to think that their life is in the streets and outside the streets, they have no other life because they do not have what it takes to compete with the high classes of the society they found themselves.

One of the study respondents aged 32 years of age narrated:

“Some people are born into what you call child labour whether by street hawking or child trafficking for housemaids. Since you cannot decide on where you are born, some of us were born into street marketing, we grew up to see our parents sell by the streets. As I am talking to you now, my mother is still selling at Aka road by Nsential. I have sold on the street throughout my life. I started selling for my parents and did that throughout my primary school days up to secondary schooldays, but now I am selling for my own self. This is our home, God bless Victor Attah for this Plaza” (Akan 32, interviewed on 8/7/2019).

Parental influence has been discovered from gathered information to play a key role in child modern day slavery. Emergence from the study findings is that most parents are responsible for the decision taken on behalf of these children who not up to the age of decision making, and these decisions affect the status of these children as slaves in the hands of their parents. Though some are born into it, most of them are forced into street hawking and other forms of slavery by their parents or guardians' decision.

Cultural Beliefs and roles of parents in modern day child slavery

“*Akọd adu Ubọk*”, (Grow-up to feed your parent) is found to be a cultural proverb among the people of Akwa Ibom State. As gathered from interview by the researcher, the people believe that it is a culture that children should grow to feed their parents. Therefore the people have adopted many strategies and approaches toward reaping the fruits of having children. Having or forcing the children to hawk on the streets or serve as maids is found by some of the study respondents as part of the fulfilment of “*Akọd adu Ubọk*”. The challenge of this cultural practice is found to be the fact most parents do not know that this cultural proverb is not applicable to children under the age of 18 years. Information gathered by the researcher revealed that this proverb has been abused by most of the parents among Akwa Ibom people.

A study participant aged 33 years in his reaction to questions said:

I used to hear that “eyen ado Akọd adu Ubọk” (a child is to grow and take care of his/her parents). I agree with quite well, but I don't

think that this refers to children under the age of 18 years, as these children cannot make decision on their own and are at the age whereby they need care and support from their parents. But the opposite has been the case of many children you see along this Abak road. Many parents do not know that before you are qualified to be fed by your children, you must have fed them and given them good education for a foundation that can take care of you at your old age. But what do we have today? Parents and guardians hiding under "eyen ado Akod adu Ubok" to exploit their own little children as you can see here.

Another study respondent aged 47 years in her responses said:

"To me oh, the most important reason why you will continue to see children hawk by the streets is that most parents believe that it is their children responsibility to take care of them as their culture demands instead of them labouring to take care of their children and give the children good foundation so that the children can take care of them at their old age. Some parents want their children to take care of them from age 5 till they die. If a child labours to raise money for food at age 5 is it not that a child that is feeding his or herself and his or her parents at the age he or she supposed to be fed and taken care of by the parents"

Emerging fact from interviews is that some of these children are born into families that have the culture of depending on children for survival. Some of the study respondents in their responses agreed that some children are unfortunate to be born into families that look up to their children as hope for survival. According to them, such families will trade their children for their selfish reasons and live their life at the expense of their children freedom, joy, happiness and future.

One of the study respondents aged 35 years in her narratives reported:

"There are some of these children who must hawk by the street, not because they want to meet their personal needs, NO! It is because there are people at home who depend on whatever that the child will be coming back with. It is their way of life; Lazy parents who sit back at home while they expose their children to danger every day at the streets."

Child slavery according to the information gathered from the respondents is found to be rooted in the culture of the people and has been transferred from one generation to another. Emerging from the interviews is the fact that there exist many reasons for child labour especially in street hawking around the city of Uyo, but culture has a great influence over the reasons why there are children hawking by the streets of Uyo.

Poverty and roles of parents in perpetuating modern day slavery

Discoveries from the study respondents have it that child labour in form of street hawking and maids are found most among the poor class within Uyo metropolis. Information

gathered by the researcher through interviews show that poverty has a connection with child labour in Uyo metropolis. This according to the study participants revealed that majority of the children found along the streets of Uyo metropolis are in one way or the other connected to poverty either by family background or by place of residence. The majority of the respondents agreed that children hawking along the streets in whatever way are working toward rescuing their families from poverty or managing poverty.

One of the study participants of in-depth interview, a key informant aged 51 years in his narratives explained that:

There is so much poverty these days that people are frustrated. There are a lot of needs that cannot be met by a lot of families. This has forced a lot of parents to engage their children in street hawking in order to cope with the present economic situation. Some parents have joined in sending their children to hawk in the streets in order to supplement their income so as to meet up the high cost of living which cannot has fallen outside the capacity of their monthly income.

Most of the street hawkers found along the streets of Uyo have similar economic characteristics. Gathered information shows that the common goal of every street hawker is to fight poverty. The majority of the study participants confirmed that poverty and the quest to overcome it from the streets of Uyo metropolis has brought about children from the same parental background in term of economic status.

One of the study participants in an in-depth interview aged 28 years in her narratives explained that:

I know that no wealthy or rich man will send his or her child to go and hawk on the streets, for what? How much will they make compare to what they already have? Therefore, there is one strong reason and this reason can be seen as a common characteristic among all the children that hawk on the streets by anybody without anybody asking question.

Another respondent aged 41 years in his responses reported that:

There is something these parents share in common. I mean these parents that believe that their children must work to feed them and take care of them from their tender age. This men and women are those who have a case with poverty. As a response to poverty, these men and women have found refuge in the lives of their little children who supposed to find refuge in their parents'.

Families from which children are sent into child labour are said to be the low class families. Study respondents reported that though there are rich men and women who indulge in child labour, street hawking is mostly of children from poor homes or families. Poor children were found along the streets of Uyo hawking along the streets. Responses to

interviews revealed that most of the children that hawk along the streets of Uyo, and some of them who serve as house maids are from poor families.

One of the study respondents in an in-depth interview aged 52 years narrated:

"The streets have always belonged to the children from poor homes. This is not to say that rich man children are not on the streets. Most of the children working and earning their living from the streets are from poor families. Therefore street hawking is poor children business which no rich man child can do. If rich man children hawk on the street that is to say that his or her parents are dead and the relative is trying to maltreat him or her."

Though there is a culture of child slavery among the people, this culture is synonymous to poverty. It is a practice that depicts culture of poverty among the people. This is because street hawking and other forms of child slavery are rooted in poverty and those who give their children into this act are seeking an escape routes from poverty.

A study participant aged 34 years in his responses narrated:

"Poverty is behind all these things that we see today. Most of these parents are sending out their children from under age because they want to see how to escape from poverty if at all they will be able to escape because, since I was born and up till down I haven't seen any of these people that have send his or her child or children to hawking, housemaids and other forms of servants become rich from the money they make from their children."

Child labour in form of street hawking is explained as an escape route envisage by poor class of people. The majority of these families are found to be migrants from various rural communities across Akwa Ibom State and its environs. Gathered information revealed that parents or families that engage in sending their children to the streets in order to earn their living are those who are experiencing poverty at different levels of their lives.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study show that modern day child slavery exists in Uyo metropolis in various forms of child labour with street hawking being one of the forms of child labour. Many children were found along Abak road, Aka road, Ibom Plaza, Ikpa road junction, Ekom Iman Junction, Itam Junction, Oron road, Four lane Junction by Oron road, Idoro road, Nwaniba road, Akwa Ibom State Secretariat, Udoudoma road, Ikot Ekpene road, and Urua Ekpa Junction. Street hawking is another form of modern day child slavery that has received the support of some parents within the state. Findings of the study show that parents and guardians play great role in the prevalent nature of this social problem found within the territory of our state capital. This agrees with Aqil (2012) view that; when parents have worked in their childhood their children will work as well, passing it from generation to a generation.

Emergence from the findings of the study revealed that parents and guardians are strongly behind forceful labour of their wards especially among the street hawkers found along the major streets of Uyo metropolis. Most of these children were found to be under pressure to labour by hawking on the streets of Uyo in order to meet the needs of their parents or guardians. Findings of the study showed that parents and guardians have used many approaches like talking to their children about their poor situation, comparing their children with that of the other rich families who are taking care of their parents, and using biblical teachings of children having to obey their parents in order to be well with them, to manipulate their children into modern day slavery. Approaches were found to place the children under mental stress as a result of threat from some of the parents. It was part of the findings that some parents go to the extent of placing a curse on their children in a case whereby the child shows resistance to go and sell by the streets. Osita-Oleribe, (2007), argues that many children are today abused by their parents or care givers primarily because they are daily compared with the wrong section of their peers.

Culture can be said to be that complex whole adopted by a given group of people or society as their way of life. Findings of the study revealed that child labour is rooted in the culture of Akwa Ibom people right from the pre-colonial era. Emergence from findings is the fact that cultural practices have great influence over modern day child slavery especially, in street hawking, and house maids. This agrees with Fawole, Jacob and Osungbade (2003) who argue that cultural beliefs in treating the children are also another cause of child abuse as children are seen more as mere properties of their parents. Findings further revealed that the challenge faced by the fight against modern day child slavery in Akwa Ibom State, in form of child trafficking and child abuse is due to the weight of cultural influence over child labour among the people of the state.

Emerging from the findings of the study is the fact that people have adopted many strategies and approaches toward reaping the fruits of having their children working for them within Uyo metropolis. This set or class of people feel that having or forcing their children to hawk on the streets or serve as maids is part of the fulfilment of "*Akòd adu Ubook*". Findings of the study show that most of these parents do not know that this cultural proverb is not applicable to children under the age of 18 years.

Findings of the study show that poverty has great influence over the practice of child labour in form of street hawking by children, and are found among the poor class within Uyo metropolis. This findings agree with Owolabi (2012), who argues that poverty create many problems such as child labour. The majority of these children found along the streets of Uyo metropolis are in one way or the other connected to poverty either by family background or by place of residence. It was discovered that poor children were found along the streets of Uyo hawking along the streets, and the practice depicts culture of poverty among the people. Child labour in form of street hawking was found to be an escape route envisage by the poor class of people found within Uyo metropolis.

Findings also revealed that a lot of children are exposed to danger by street hawking. Apart from danger, modern day child slavery denies the children their right to free and compulsory education programme of the Akwa Ibom State Government. Most of the girls' hawkers are said to be exposed to sexual assaults by the street boys and grown up adults. The study findings revealed that children hawking by the streets of Uyo metropolis are exposed to

bad gangs or elder age group person who may influence their behaviour in one way or the other. This findings imply that children who hawk by the streets of Uyo metropolis are likely to have contact with people with criminal behaviour. The weather and environmental conditions under which these children work were found to be dangerous to their health conditions.

Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to examine roles of parents/guardians in perpetuating modern day child slavery in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Factors like parental influence, cultural belief of "*Akòd adu Ubòòk*", and poverty play key roles in parents/guardians support of street hawking by children found within Uyo metropolis in Akwa Ibom State. Street hawking as a form of child labour is a serious aspect of modern day child slavery because of the impacts of this social menace on Akwa Ibom children. Parents and guardians have consistently played behind the scene roles in promoting this act of slavery. The culture of "*Akòd adu Ubòòk*", has been in the very act of sending out under aged children into the street to hawk for a living at the age whereby they are expected to be taken care of by their parents. Poverty is found to be the background facilitating factor of street hawking among children in Uyo metropolis. This exposed the children to different forms of danger. The teenage girls were said to face sexual assaults by the opposite sex on the streets, the children faced denial of access to right to parental care and most of them are working under hazardous weather and environmental conditions.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were based on the outcome of this study that:

*Government should ban street hawking by children under the age of 18 years old and teenage girls from hawking on the street of Uyo metropolis due to the impact of this social menace. Parents who cause their children to flout the ban should be made to face appropriate sanctions. Regular awareness campaigns and ethical reorientation should be done through the mass media and other agents of socialization. Also the cultural ideology of "*Akòd adu Ubòòk*" should be abolished among Akwa Ibom people in order to raise a sense of responsibility among parents across Akwa Ibom State.*

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