



**ROLE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN ERADICATION OF CHILD LABOUR IN
BENIN METROPOLIS, EDO STATE, NIGERIA.**

**Dr. N. R. Erharuyi¹, Mrs. Oviawe Iyore
Isoken²**

^{1,2}Department of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

Abstract

*This study assessed the role of Adult Education in the eradication of child labour in Benin metropolis. Four objectives and four corresponding research questions were raised to guide the study. The target population for this study consisted all adults who are currently enlisted in Adult literacy programmes in Benin Metropolis. One hundred and twenty (120) adult learners were selected as samples of the study using simple random sampling technique in view of their homogeneity. The data for this study was obtained through the use of questionnaire. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that Parents' socio economic status influences children involvement in child labour. Findings further revealed that illiterate parents do not see anything wrong with child labour; they usually give birth to the number of children they cannot cater for. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Adult education should be used to sensitize parents on the ills of child labour in Benin Metropolis. **Key words:** Child, Child Labour, Eradication, Education, Adult Education*



Introduction

Children are the future of every nation and therefore have a right to acquire the needed education towards attaining their goals and contributing meaningfully to the larger society. The United Nations (UN) Convention on the rights of the child acknowledges the family as the fundamental unit of society. It emphasizes the role of parents as the primary care-givers with responsibility for the up-bringing of their children and obliges governments to support parents in fulfilling their essential roles. However, their future is often threatened when they are engaged as labourers at a tender age just to support the incomes of their families.

According to Ubong et al (2021), child labour is a widespread global abnormality, wherein underage children are engaged in undignified, dangerous and debasing economic activities without considering the implications on their safety, security and dreams. These children are engaged to work for long hours. This situation has a significant socio-psychological effect, which in extreme cases results in delinquent behaviour. Nevertheless, the abuse of child's rights has become a social problem all over the world. According to a report on child's rights by the ILO (2021), the number of children in child labour has risen to 160 million worldwide. In Sub-Sahara Africa, population growth, recurrent crises, extreme poverty and inadequate social protection measures have led to an additional 16.6 million children in child labour over the past four years, with millions more at risk due to the impacts of COVID-19. The report further warns that globally, nine million additional children are at risk of being pushed into child labour by the end of 2022 as a result of the pandemic.

UNICEF and International Labour Organization (ILO) have both conducted data analysis in support of a threshold for the inclusion of unpaid household services in the measurement of child labour. The target population for the resolution were children aged 5 to 17 years. According to UNICEF (2013), the results of these analyses were presented at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) which took place in Geneva in October, 2013. The conference adopted the resolution concerning the measurement of working time. The resolution sets standards for the collection and analysis of data on child labour and calls upon all countries to develop a system of child labour statistics. The



resolution also confirms that any type of work undertaken by children should be considered in the measurement of child labour, in addition to economic activities. UNICEF's standard indicator for child labour includes the following:

- 3- Age 5 to 11 years: At least 1 hour of economic work or 21 hours of unpaid household services per week.
- 4- Age 12 to 14 years: At least 14 hours of economic work or 21 hours of unpaid household services per week.
- 5- Age 15 to 17 years: At least 43 hours of economic work per week (UNICEF database, 2022)

Nevertheless, Bhat (2010) asserts that the definition of child labour is not simple because it includes three difficult concepts which are "child", "work" and "labour". He claims that the term childhood can be defined by age but, in some societies, people cease to be a child at different ages. The onset of puberty occurs at different ages, for different people. Therefore, the definition of a child differs among societies, for example in Africa and Asia, they do not consider the work of fifteen years old person as child labour, they view child labour as good task, and they believe children should learn some skills from work. They distinguish between child labour and child work.

Where child work is considered to be a part of the children's training to be responsible adults, child labour is thought to be exploitative (Omokhodion & Odusote, 2016).

According to ILO and UNICEF (2021:18) article 7 of ILO Convention No. 138, states that national laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons from 13 years of age (or 12 years in countries that have specified the general minimum working age as 14 years) in light work that is not likely to harm their health or development. The participation of children or adolescents above the minimum age for admission to employment in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interferes with their schooling, is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays, such activities contribute to children's development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.



United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) cited in Oyitso and Erharuyi (2020) defined a child is a person under 18 years of age. It acknowledges the primary role of parents and the family in the care and protection of children, as well as the obligation of State to help them carry out these duties. Similarly, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as amended (2018); defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. This section also gives the child right for care.

The US Department of Labour in its (2010) report claims Nigeria is witnessing the worst forms of child labour particularly in agricultural labour, mining, manufacturing, domestic service, scavenging and begging on the streets. Others are trapped in slavery, in armed conflicts, forced labour and debt bondage (to pay off debts incurred by parents and grandparents), as well as in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities, such as drug trafficking. Many of these are harmful, morally reprehensible, and they violate the child's freedom and human rights.

According to ILO (2021) poverty and illiteracy are the most important factors behind child labour. The essence of tackling child poverty is to fulfill the right of every child to achieve his or her potential (UNICEF, 2020). Efforts to end child labour often focus on educating children, improving access to school and training of teachers. Education is a basic right for all children around the world. Children who lack education usually lack knowledge and are more vulnerable to exploitation. As a result, they become uneducated or unskilled labourers. According to Ubong et al (2021) quality education should be made free, compulsory, relevant, attractive and available for all. Thus, UNICEF is working with other aid agencies, government and UN agencies to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals to ensure primary education to all children. If child education is guaranteed, parents will not see the need to give out their children as house helps to their relatives.

According to King (2011), education is fundamental to development and growth. Therefore, education remains the only principal vehicle for achieving national development in line with the global trend. In a related development, Nigerian Government in 2004 enacted Universal Basic Education Act (UBE Act 2004). Section 1, subsection 2 (i) of the act states that every government in Nigeria shall provide free, compulsory and universal basic education for every child of primary and junior secondary school age. (ii) every parent shall ensure that his child or ward attends and completes his (a) primary school education;



and (b) junior secondary school education, by endeavouring to send the child to primary and junior secondary schools. Access to quality education is critical for the elimination of child labour, not only as it physically removes children from the work place, and put them in school. It also helps in ensuring that children are safe, reaching their potentials and positively contributing to the society and the economy at large

As we evaluate all strategies to end child labour, it is important to consider the role of adult education in the eradication of child labour. Adult education transforms the adults' perception and the way they apply knowledge to the real world. Such transformation imparts the recipients with the requisite skills for self-reliance and enhances their self-esteem in the society. This is sequel to the fact that most children that allegedly indulge in child labour are perceived to be impoverished and from homes that are financially depressed as a result of illiteracy. According to Yusuff (2010) illiteracy contributes significantly to the causes of child labour in Nigeria due to the negative attitude of some parents towards their children's education. Many of these parents are illiterates; thus, they lack insight concerning the benefits of education. Therefore, adult education is a transformational tool for equipping the adult with occupational and entrepreneurial skills that invariably enhances their status in the society. In short, educated parents are more apt to raise educated children. They also appreciate the value of education and are more likely to ensure their children go to school rather to work.

Statement of the Problem

The sight of several secondary school aged children in street trading during school hours in recent past has become a source of worry to many despite concerted efforts put in place by the present administration in Edo State such as introduction of EDOBEST which introduced ICT in teaching and learning in the primary schools, Provision of free books to teachers, pupils and students in the State, free education from primary to junior secondary school, among others. Interactions with some of those children in Edo State revealed that they earlier dropped out of school and subjected to several inhumane activities. Apart from some children that observably prefer street trading to school attendance, several others are



alleged to drift from Benin to neighbouring states and countries to engage in menial jobs by their parents or guardians.

A trip round some of the public schools did not only confirm the children's allegation of withdrawal but also revealed cases of grade repetitions amongst the school children. Since the incidences of child abuse constitute crime in any societal system, the fear is predicated on the perennial problems of poor academic performance that characterize these children. It is not unlikely that children that are abused by their parents or guardians will get frustrated and express their frustrations by withdrawing from school or by failing examinations that could lead to poor academic performance. Moreover, there is no study known to the researcher that has embarked on the assessment of the role of adult education in the eradication of child labour in Benin metropolis, hence, a gap is created to be filled by the present study.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Find out the perceived causes of child labour in Benin metropolis
- ii. Ascertain the prevalence of child labour in Benin metropolis.
- iii. Determine how parents' socio-economic status influence children' involvement in child labour
- iv. Ascertain the roles of adult education in eradicating child labour in Benin metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the perceived causes of child labour in Benin metropolis?
2. What is the perceived prevalence of child labour in Benin metropolis?
3. How does parents' socio-economic status influence children involvement in child labour?
4. What are the roles of adult education in eradicating child labour in Benin metropolis?



Research Methodology

The area of study is Benin metropolis, which is a subschema of five local government areas, namely: Egor, Ikpoba-Okha, Oredo, Ovia North-East and Uhumwode. This study employed the descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study comprised all adults who are currently enlisted in Adult literacy programmes in Benin Metropolis. The estimated population was found to be 530 participants. Eight (8) functional literacy centres were used for the study. One hundred and eighty (180) adult learners were selected using simple random sampling procedure in view of their homogeneity. The data for this study was obtained through the use of questionnaire. It was validated by some lecturers in the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, University of Benin. The Test-re-test method of estimating reliability was used to ascertain the reliability coefficient of the instrument. A Pearson correlation index of 0.65 was thereafter obtained. This shows that the instrument was reliable. Descriptive statistical techniques involving mean score analysis was adopted with a criterion mean of 2.50.

Results Research Question One

What are the perceived causes of child labour in Benin metropolis?

Table 1. Mean Ratings of Respondents on **the causes of Child Labour in Benin Metropolis** N = 180

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Parental level of education	3.20	.65	Agree



2	Financial status of parents	3.42	.78	Agree
3	Parental neglect of children	3.07	.71	Agree
4	Cultural belief	3.01	.74	Agree

Aggregate Mean

3.17

Agree

Table 1 indicates an aggregate mean of 3.17. It shows that following the decision rule of 2.50 as the criterion mean, the respondents agreed that the 4 items on the Table were among the causes of child labour in the State.

Research Question Two

What is the perceived prevalence of child labour in Benin metropolis?

Table 2. Mean Ratings of Respondents on the perceived prevalence of Child Labour in Benin Metropolis

N = 180

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
5	Some children engage in street trading during school hours.	3.38	.43	Agree
6	Some children engage in street begging in the local government.	3.21	.51	Agree



7	Some children assist commercial drivers as “conductors” during school hours.	3.22	.43	Agree
8	Some children work in hotels and restaurants during school hours	3.31	.48	Agree
Aggregate Mean		3.28		Agree

Table 2 indicates an aggregate mean of 3.28. It shows that following the decision rule of 2.50 as the criterion mean, the respondents agreed that the 4 items above were among the perceived activities of child labour in the State.

Research Question Three

How does parents’ socio-economic status influence children involvement in child labour?

Table 3. Mean Ratings of Respondents on how **Parents’ Socio-Economic Status influences Children involvement in Child Labour.**

N = 180

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
9	Parents’ low income usually prompt children to involve in child labour	3.37	.52	Agree
10	The environment a child grows up determines his involvement in child labour	3.38	.49	Agree
11	Illiterate parents do not see anything wrong with child labour	3.32	.48	Agree
12	Parents who do not embrace family planning thereby, giving birth to the number of children they cannot cater for can encourage child labour.	3.40	.49	Agree



Aggregate Mean

3.36

Agree

Table 3 indicates an aggregate mean of 3.36. It shows that following the decision rule of 2.50 as the criterion mean, the respondents agreed that parents' socio economic status influences children involvement in child labour to a high extent.

Research Question Four

What are the roles of adult education in eradicating child labour in Benin Metropolis?

Table 4. Mean Ratings of Respondents on **the roles of Adult Education in eradicating Child Labour in Benin Metropolis.**

N	=				180
Items		\bar{X}	SD	Remark	
S/N					
17	Adult education helps to liberate the mind of the parents in order to have value for education.	3.13	.72	Agree	
18	It empowers the adult with relevant skills which leads to self-reliance which is a cure for child labour.	3.22	.65	Agree	
19	Educated parents easily raise educated children devoid of child labour. Agree	3.30	.48		
20	Adult education enlighten parents on the need for family planning in order to give birth to the children they can cater for	.73	3.15		



Aggregate Mean 3.20 Agree

Table 4 indicates an aggregate mean of 3.20. It shows that following the decision rule of 2.50 as the criterion mean, the respondents agreed that adult education has great influence in eradicating child labour.

Findings

The following were the findings of this study based on data gathered and analysed:

1. Parents' financial status, cultural belief; among others were some of the causes of child labour in Benin Metropolis.
2. There is prevalence of child labour in Benin Metropolis such that some children involving in street trading, street begging, working in restaurants and hotels, assisting drivers as "conductors", among others during school hours.
3. Parents' socio economic status influences children involvement in child labour
4. Illiterate parents do not see anything wrong with child labour; they usually give birth to the number of children they cannot cater for.
5. Adult education helps to liberate the mind of the parents in order to have value for education.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed that parents' financial status, cultural belief; among others were some of the causes of child labour in Benin Metropolis. According to Ubong et al (2021) the major causes of child labour are parents' financial status, cultural practices and parental literacy. The study also revealed that parental neglect as a result of broken home causes child labour as well. This is in consonance with the findings of Akarro (2015) that a society where values are not inculcated and passed from parents to children tends to have high cases of child labour.

The findings of the study revealed the prevalence of child labour in Benin Metropolis such that some children involving in street trading, street begging, working in



restaurants and hotels, assisting drivers as “conductors”, among others during school hours. In agreement with this finding, the US Department of Labour in its (2010) report claimed that Nigeria is witnessing the worst forms of child labour particularly in agricultural labour, mining, manufacturing, domestic service, scavenging and begging on the streets. Others are trapped in slavery, in armed conflicts, forced labour and debt bondage, as well as in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities, such as drug trafficking (to pay off debts incurred by parents and grandparents).

The findings of the study revealed that parents’ socio economic status influences children involvement in child labour such that Parents’ low income usually prompting children to involve in child labour which invariably affects their academic performance. This finding corroborates the assertions of Akarro (2015) that parents whose financial status is weak tend to accord less value to the education of their wards hence, the high involvement of their children in street hawking which invariably affects their academic performance.

The study revealed that illiterate parents do not see anything wrong with child labour, they usually give birth to the number of children they cannot cater for, thereby encouraging child labour in order to assist in the wellbeing of the family and pay off debts incurred by parents and grandparents. This finding is in consonance with the assertions of Adegun (2013) that illiteracy prevalent among parents has accelerated the indulgence of their wards in anti- academic activities which invariably affects their academic performance negatively.

The findings of the study also revealed that Adult education helps to liberate the mind of the parents in order to have value for education. This is in consonance with a survey carried out by Workers’ Educational Association (2018) that parents feel more confident about helping their children with reading, writing and mathematics after taking adult education courses, the survey reveals.

Conclusion

The study revealed the causes of child labour in Benin Metropolis such as parental neglect of children, financial status of parents, cultural practices, among others. Some of the common prevalence of child labour includes cases of some children involving in street trading, begging, working in restaurants and hotels. It is certain that parents’ socio-



economic status influences children involvement in child labour as illiterate parents do not see anything wrong with child labour, as a result, they give birth to the number of children they cannot cater for. Adult education is therefore a panacea to the menace of child labour by helping to liberate the mind of the parents in order to have value for education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should be empowered financially through the establishment of vocational centres so as to boost their financial status.
2. Government should enact laws that would effectively curb the rate of child labour in the society through imposition of consequences to defaulters as this would invariably reduce the rate of child labour amongst residents in the local government
3. Government should regularly organize seminars and symposia for parents to sensitize and orientate them on the consequences of their wards indulgence in child labour.
4. Parents should be encouraged to give birth to the number of children they can conveniently cater for.
5. Adult education is designed to cater for all categories of learners both drop out and those who were never opportune to attend a formal education system. Therefore, Government should increase its annual budgetary allocation for effective delivery of its mandate.



REFERENCES

- Adegun, O. A. (2013), Practices of Child Labour Among parents in Ekiti States, Nigeria: Implication for School Administrators. *Journal of Education and Practice* 4, (11), 1-7.
- Akarro, R. J & Mtwewe, N. A (2015), Poverty and its association with Child Labour in Njombe District in Tanzania: The case of Igima Current. *Journal of Social Sciences* 3 (3), 199-206.
- Bhat, B, G & Ahmad, S, U (2010), Gender, education and Child Labour: A Sociological Perspective. *Centre of Central Asian Studies* 5 (6), 323-328
- Cibrario, S, L (2015). The Factors Affecting the Prevalence of Child Labour in India, New Dehli: *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 3(2), 123 - 134
- International Labour Organisation (2012). *Tackling child Labour: from commitment to the elimination of child labour* (IPEC) Geneva.
- International Labour Organisation (2013). *World report on Child Labour Economic Vulnerability, Social Protection and the fight against Child Labour*. Geneva.
- International Labour Organisation (2021). *World day against child labour*. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org>
- International Labour Organisation and UNICEF (2021) *Child labour global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward*. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org>
- King, E. (2011) *Education is fundamental to development and growth*. Available at: <https://www.blogs.worldbank.org>
- Omokhodion, F.O., Omokhodion, S.I. & Odusote, T.O. (2006), *Perceptions of Child Labour among working children in Ibadan, Nigeria*. 32(3): 281-286
- Oyitso, M. O., & Erharuyi, N. R. (2020). The influence of literacy education programmes on socioeconomic development of learners in Benin Metropolis. *National Journal of Adult & Lifelong Learning* 4 (1), 269 – 279.



UBE Act (2004). Compulsory free universal basic education Act.
Available at: <https://www.educeleb.com>

Ubong, S. A., Okpa, J., Eshiotse, E., Nnana, O. & Akomaye, S. (2021). Child labour and delinquent behavior in Nigeria: A risk factor analysis. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 10 (3) 90. DOI: 10.36941/ajis-2021-0067

UNICEF (2013). Impact of unpaid household services on the measurement of child labour. MICS methodological paper No. 2, UNICEF, New York.

UNICEF (2020), Sustainable poverty reduction begins with Children. <https://www.unicef.org>

UNICEF (2022) Child labour statistics. UNICEF database. Available at: <https://www.data.unicef.org>

United States Department of Labour (2010). Findings on the worst form of child labour in Nigeria. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4e8c39887.html>.

Workers' Educational Association (2018). Adult education helps parents and their children. <https://www.tes.com>

Yusuff, J. A. (2010). Working conditions and consequences child labour in Nigeria. <https://www.researchgate.net>.