

Child Labour in Fostering Practices: A Study of Surulere Local Government Area Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Many studies in Nigeria have been carried out to examine the trend and outcome of fostering practices and child labour independently but such studies have generally overlooked the issue of child labour in fostering practices. The study therefore, attempts to examine the existence of child labour in fostering practices: through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, the study exposes how children are being used as economic support by foster parents and the exploitation of the socialization process which sees research as part of the upbringing of a child. This is explicated through the increasing level of poverty in cities and rural areas which have necessitated the act of child labour in fostering practices. Major findings from the study revealed that child labour is on the increase and the effects were negative on the children. Findings were linked to the downturn of the economy which prompted child labour as a coping strategy. Among the sampled respondents, the effect of economic activities on their education was negative. The need for house help, economic crises and schooling were major reasons sustaining fostering practices vis-a-vis child labour. Biological parents influence had minimal effect on foster parents control over the economic activities they engaged the foster children which was also observed to be gender based. On the whole, child fostering was viewed as important irrespective of the menace of child labour. Based on these findings, the study suggested that there is need for government as well as civil societal groups' intervention to alleviate the problem of child labour in fostering practices.

Key words: Economy, exploitation, fostering, socialisation, schooling, engaged

INTRODUCTION

The fostering of children is an ancient phenomenon in many parts of the world. Many researchers and non-governmental agencies have noted that child fostering; the institution in which parents send their biological children to live with another family is widespread in Sub-saharan Africa (Akresh, 1996). This is because in African society, children belong not only to their biological parents but also to the entire community hence, both are supposed to play significant role in the training and discipline of the child.

The International Labour Organization (ILO, 1997), described that many individuals and families have taken advantage of the cultural tradition of fostering where the less privilege often send their children to other families for educational and employment purposes. Sometimes, it is these same families that actually request for these children to be fostered. Often times children in this situation do not receive any formal education, instead they are forced or lured to serve as domestic servants become street hawkers or engage in other activities that are not favourable to their growth, education, mental

development as well as being exposed to all sorts of vices. The incidence of child labour in fostering practices seems to have accentuated during and after the oil boom in the 1970s. This was as a result of increase in rural-urban migration and later economic deterioration, dwindling returns on investment with a corollary effects on workers. Retrenchment, unemployment, food insecurity, all culminating into dis-empowerment of many families who were in turn forced to send their children out to other families to be fostered in order to alleviate economic hardship and crisis (Oloko, 2002). Harsh economic realities, the burden of paying school fees and catering for a large family size, according to the Geneva Convention there are some of the reasons why biological/foster parents alike compel their wards to engage in adult economic activities/work.

History and experiences of developing countries like Nigeria, especially in cities demonstrate a departure from the ways and manners of raising children in the past even the perceptions, ideas and attitudes toward children in pre-colonial era on fostering have been rendered impracticable by the quest of materialism and increasing level of poverty. The introduction of cash economy and

Western way of life by the colonial masters had a drastic impact on the social structures becoming more exogenous and complex with series of problems on the traditional system of fostering.

Some of these problems include child prostitution, trafficking, sexual harassment and child labour etc. Thus, Koffi Annan noted that younger adult and children not only face dangerous working conditions but also exposed to long term physical, intellectual and emotional stress. Child labour has become a topical issue of global concern in view of its exploitative and detrimental effects on any one <18 years of age. It is also pathetic to note that children who are not in any way responsible for the social injustices and malaise into which they were born, suffering becomes involved in this societal act called fostering and in the long run affects children's development mentally, physically, educationally, socially and morally. This is not to deny the fact that fostering has its positive effect as many successful adults today at one time or the other passed through the act or process.

Statement of the problem: The importance of children in society cannot be overemphasized; they are treasured worldwide for the simple reason that the baton of leadership will be handed down to them. They, therefore need to be safeguarded; their rights to education, self-expression and freedom from exploitation need to be upheld. Thus many countries/societies of the developed world deploy lots of resources to child development.

Yet, it has been observed that children are being used for economic activities while they ought to be properly nurtured as specified by the child's right act of Nigeria that:

Before making a fostering order, the court shall be satisfied that the order if made will be for the maintenance, care, education and general welfare and best interest of the child an intending foster parents

The Lagos state ministry of youths and social development also noted thus:

Some of these children living with their foster parents or guardians in Lagos especially in Surulere suburb are not being catered for properly.... that these parents contribute to the increasing rate of street urchins in Lagos metropolis is no longer surprising

The commissioner also highlighted the point that:

Many of these foster parents are not well off to cater for themselves talk less of other peoples' children. Most times the biological parents of these children are deceived before allowing the children to be fostered without knowing the true living conditions of the foster parents

The situation also shows that the implementation of the child's right act in most developing countries are either not existing or government officials are quiet about its enforcement. Vreyer noted in the analysis of data from the 1990 Survey on the Social Dimensions of Adjustment in West Africa Sub Region that rapid growth and unprecedented structural changes and adjustment in population, housing, economy and environment in general showed that there were children everywhere in their numbers during the day when they ought to be in school, engaging in activities meant for adults. Studies tend to group these children as street urchins without parents or homes which is not always the case.

Children are significant aspect of the African family vis-a-vis work which is seen as an integral part of their growing up it is also an important part of the socialization process which may appear, strange and harsh to outsiders/foreigners visiting traditional African societies for the first time. It is regarded as necessary for the children to learn important skills which he or she will find useful in life if not now certainly later. It is this practice that has developed into all forms of child abuse in cities/towns as most countries in Africa are facing one form of economic depression or the other, breaking the traditionally strong social bond.

Many studies have been done on the issues of child labour and fostering practices independently, however less studies are available on child labour from the view point of fostering practices in urban areas like lagos (which cannot be over studied) and other major cities in Africa with a high population growth with consistent inflow of migrants with the perception that life will be rosy. Therefore, the inadequate research on child labour from the angle of fostering practices might have denied/deprived policy makers of an in-depth understanding of this reality. Hence, the need to examine critically the relationships between child labour and fostering practices for planning, legislative and developmental purposes etc.

Aims and objectives: The broad objective of the study is to examine child labour in fostering practices among residents in Surulere area of lagos state. Thus, this study attempts to understand these by:

- Examining the factor that sustains and produces child labour in fostering practices
- Investigating the effect of children's activities on their educational performances
- Ascertaining biological parents' role on the way and manner children are being catered for in their foster home
- Examining the relationship between gender and types of child labour-activities in fostering practices.
- To observe the attitude of children towards the type of work they do in their foster home in relationship to work with their biological home

Significance of the study: Today, opinion leaders, policy makers and various NGOs are concerned with the problems of breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and underdevelopment of the child. To achieve these objectives whatever will disturb or prevent proper upbringing of a child or children must be tackled in the issue of child labour in fostering practices as well as other acts in which child labour is bound to cover its ugly face. This study also aims at bringing to the knowledge the misconception of socialization that incorporates child labour as a socialization process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area: This study was carried out in 4 areas in Surulere-lagos state of Nigeria: Ijesha-tedo, Aguda, Itire and Coker suburbs. These suburbs of Surulere are where children are easily noticed around engaging themselves in adult activities while they ought to be in school or at home. The suburbs have four major markets and other shopping outlets where children engage in casual research, weekends and after school hours, sometimes all day. Apart from the familiarity with these suburbs, the areas are heavily populated with low-income earners/traders except in Aguda where there are people in the high-income bracket.

Generally, these areas have high records of migrant population as well as transitory ones. The general deplorable and uninspiring characteristics of Lagos as a city continues to fester as if there are no solution to them realizing the fact that children make up about 51% of the entire Nigerian population (Mabogunje, 1999).

Study population: The study population consisted of a hundred and fifty children between the ages of 7 and 17 years. This was because the ages of most children being given out for fosterage falls within the age bracket of 7-17 years. From each of the four study areas, 40 children were administered questionnaire in 3 of the study areas namely

Ijesha-tedo, Coker and Itire while in Aguda 30 questionnaire were administered, most of the questionnaire were read to some of the children who were unable to read and write properly. This made the total administered questionnaire a 150. About 5 in-depth interviews were conducted on 10 fostered children and 5 foster parents.

Sampling techniques: The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. For the parents the quota, purposive accidental and snowballing sampling techniques were used to identify and select the respondents. This was as a result of the difficulty experienced where some foster parents were unwilling to make themselves available to be interviewed and their unwillingness to disclose information about foster children in their custody. Again the issue of time was put into consideration in searching for foster parents around the streets of Surulere.

Instruments/methods of data collection: The questionnaire and in-depth-interviews were used to facilitate maximum responses. The in-depth interview contained retrospective life history of the children, the activities they engage in their general well being and other information about child labour and fostering practices and the foster parents. Questionnaires were distributed to only children in their teens, some in secondary others in primary schools as well as those who were not schooling and unable to read and write of which they were interviewed.

Data analysis: Qualitative and quantitative techniques of data analysis were used to accommodate all aspects of data. Qualitative data emerged from In-Depth Interviews (IDIs). The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. This analysis was achieved through transcription, sorting and grouping of relevant information. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) was used to generate frequency distribution and cross tabulation for the analysis of the data.

Limitations of the study: As in other social science researches, there were problems encountered in the course of collecting data. The first problem was in trying to explain the essence of the study. It took some time to convince them that the information given by them would not be used against them. Initially they viewed the research with suspicion and so were reluctant to respond to questions put to them on one occasion seeing the questionnaires and interview guide, they had thought we

(myself and the field assistants) were local council officials coming to arrest them or serve them notice for not properly caring for their wards.

Some thought we were home inspectors popularly called *wolewole* in Yoruba language. Another problem encountered was in the area of interpreting/translating some words like fosterage, labour, discrimination into Yoruba dialect. There was also the usual difficulty of getting back the administered questionnaires (of the 150 questionnaires administered and distributed 120 were recovered) as well as in getting complete interview from foster parents, some of who stylishly avoided some questions and their wards were not allowed to grant interviews while they were present, this was seen as a mark of disrespect in African context.

Brief literature review and theoretical framework: Child fostering connotes the relocation the transfer, giving out or exchange of children among families (Fiawoo, 1978). It is also referred to as child fosterage, the relocation or transfer of children from biological or natal homes to other homes where they are raised and cared for by foster parents. The relocation of children (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1983) is itself a demographic phenomenon with potential bearing on many aspects of family behaviour. It is likely to influence decisions concerning childbearing, childcare and rearing, the education of the children and the labour force participation of both children and mothers.

Many researchers have highlighted the fact that this practice is widely spread in Sub-saharan Africa, generally children are seen to belong not only to their biological parents but to the entire community. This ought to empower a lot of people to play significant role in the training of children in this region unlike the Western industrialized countries where this practice is rare and usually takes place through the mediation of a social welfare authority (Goody, 1975).

In West Africa, to foster out a child is not an acknowledgement of the parents inferiority but for other reasons especially, as the child is expected to return to the biological parents anytime from a couple of days to many years and may be an important source of wealth transfer to the parents or of social mobility for the clan or kin group at an older age (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). The population and development review, explained the various types of child fostering arrangements together with the reasons and motivations for the practice. They are shown in Table 1.

Kinship fostering: Most fostering in West Africa takes place within the Kinship framework because children are generally thought of as not only to biological

Table 1: Types/reasons of child fostering

Types	Reasons
Kinship	To strengthen family ties
Crisis	To improve survival chances
Alliance and apprentice	To strengthening social ties and for skill acquisition
Education	To acquire formal education
Domestic	To render assistance and help to foster parents

Population review (1985)

parents but also to the lineage or the Kinship group. This type of fostering is largely a consequence of the need to relocate resources within the extended family or the Kin group, ensuring maximum survival for the unit and strengthening of kinship ties (Okore, 1977). This is common among many ethnic groups in West Africa where children are sent to live with relatives of either parents or exchanged among kinsmen who share kinship obligations and assistance.

Crisis fostering: This occurs in the case of dissolution of the family of origin by divorced, separation or death of a spouse. Children boarded out as a result of being born out of wedlock also belong to this group, especially in a culture where such children are stigmatized, closely related is a parent sending a child away because of previous, possibly repeated experience with infant or early childhood deaths. Crisis fostering is generally thought to improve the survival chances of children by removing them from the source of a crisis, real or imagined.

Alliance and apprentice fostering: This type of fostering is used to establish and strengthen social, economic or political alliances (Sinclair, 1976; Goody, 1975). Children are sent as wards to the homes of non-relatives, including friends and acquaintances of respected social standing. Alliance fostering and ward ship often combine the responsibilities of training and sponsoring of young children, they go hand in hand with apprentice fostering. Children may be sent away at a very early age to homes where they are disciplined or where they learn a trade.

Educational fostering: Most present-day child fostering is thought to be associated with formal education which is increasingly viewed as a means of social mobility. Isiugo-Abanihe (1983) noted that sending children away for schooling is common in many parts of the world and that clearly not all African school children living away from their parents are being fostered especially at older ages. Children are boarded out with relatives who are expected to provide formal education to the younger ones in return for having themselves received educational assistance. The children may also be sent to non relatives in cases where few relatives live closer to school.

Domestic fostering: In Africa, children are an important part of the domestic labour force and are needed to perform various household tasks and small services; children therefore may be fostered to redistribute availability of services between households with many children where there may be a liability and those with few where they will be an asset. Not only are children sent away to redistribute their domestic services, they are also sent out to provide emotional support. They are sent to elderly or childless women for companionship and childless couples are often given children to rear so that they do not become discouraged (Sinclair, 1976). Fostering of children for domestic tasks may have taken a new dimension in present day urban areas of West Africa where many working families take children as domestic servants, maids and baby tenders in exchange for their maintenance, training and token wages.

From the above, it is obvious that the act of fostering or fosterage of children is imbedded with so many reasons or objectives; some of these reasons are not far fetched because in traditional African society, a child does not belong to the biological parents alone but also to the immediate as well as extended family. This an outsider will find difficult to identify the actual biological parents of a child in an extended-household setting, especially in situations where every other mother regards the child of her sister as her own child (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1983). This can hardly be said to be true in present day Nigeria as in most West African countries as biological children are some how differentiated from the fostered ones either by the school they attend or by the domestic or economic activities they do in their fostered parents home (Naidu, 1982).

Children live away from their parents for various reasons, some to attend school in other towns while others are fostered because of their parents' economic hardship or to become house-helps to relatives or well to do business men and women in urban centres. As a practice among the Yoruba's, child fostering carries with it both social and economic benefits from the assistance received from the foster-parents in terms of training and in return works for them thus, making it a mutually benefit relationship (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1983; Renne, 1993).

Previous researches on child fostering have centred mainly on the positive benefits derived from the practice by both families involved. The experience of the child is more assumed than discussed, parents sending away their children to live with other kinsmen are primarily interested in either maintaining close kinship ties or in transferring some of the economic burden of raising the child to kinsmen who are in most cases are economically better off (Caldwell, 1977; Bledsoe and Isiugo-Abanihe, 1989).

The questions that have remained unasked are: What is the reaction and experience of the object of the practice of child fostering the child? How does the child feel about the change in its status? Do parents ever think of the psychological strain of separation from biological parents, especially mothers what children encounter when they are fostered? How do the foster parents respond to the illness of these children and how well is the health of the child maintained? Oni (1995) observed that fostered children usually face a dual problem; first the problem of psychological strain arising from the separation from their parents and secondly that of not being able to question whatever is done to them by their foster parents in the new environment.

The child is normally not expected to report back to the biological parents any difficulties experienced in the foster home. In instances where children do report back, the tendency is for the biological parents reprove them from doing so. Inevitably, foster-children have quite different experiences in their new homes. They are often deprived of some basic needs and subjected to hard work and numerous household tasks (Isamah and Okunola, 1996).

Generally, this task/labour is believed to have useful and positive contributions to a child's development and that it can also help children learn about responsibilities and to develop particular skills that will benefit them and society. However, noted that across the world, millions of children do extremely hazardous work in harmful conditions, putting their health, education, personal and social development at stake. According to the Nigeria Demographic, Educational and Health Survey (NDES) observed that up to 20% of children of primary school ages estimated to be 128 million were not receiving any education as at 1990 due to various activities they were mandated to carryout. The same year, saw the proportion of children of secondary school age who were not enrolled but were involved in economic activities for their parents or guardian doubled.

The United Nations International Children Education Fund, looked at child labour as an interruption in the developmental process of the child. It says that over 200 million children around the world engage in work which is either so long that it interferes with their normal development. Also the International Labour Organization (ILO, 1997), reports that 41% of African children between the ages of 5-14 years are labourers.

In Nigeria, the range is between 20-30% of the population of children who are labourers. In urban areas, 1.1 million working children are <15 years of age and about 900000 engage in manufacturing and work as domestic servants. The involvement of children on regular

basis in some productive or income yielding activities for persons other than themselves is referred to as child labour (Anukan, 1986). Child labour can be viewed as a situation whereby a child is made to work or to earn a living sometimes, the child is paid and other times he is fed (Abdalla, 1986; Isamah and Okunola, 1996). Child labour is at present the world most common form of child abuse, it remains a wide spread phenomenon throughout the world engaged by both biological as well as foster parents and children on the street. It is a phenomenon that has elicited diverse comment from different scholars and interest groups.

Interestingly, parents' placement of children in another family is an old phenomenon in many societies worldwide. Though the practice has not spread to every African society, all existing studies concur to indicate that it is especially common in West Africa (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985; Page, 1989). Researchers have only recently started looking into the practice. Anthropologist and sociologists blazed the trail followed by demographers who initially were motivated by the relationship between fostering practices and fertility behaviour and recently as it affects children many indeed have taken a growing interest in the phenomenon.

Theoretical framework: The theories of Karl Marx Economic, Robert Merton and Emily Durkheim-Anomie and Structural functionalism were employed to explain the issue of child labour in fostering practices. Economic theory of Karl Marx emphasized that every society rests on an economic foundation/structure which other structures or institutions further rest upon. The examination of the Marxian perspective within the social structural paradigm reveals that every society is composed of 2 classes; the exploiting ruling capitalist class (Bourgeoisie) and the exploited ruled. In the literature it is or can be argued from this perspective that foster parents are the ruling-exploiting class while the children being fostered, fall into the group or class of the exploited (Proletariat) whose labour are used for the up keep of the family.

Generally, the Marxian theorists believed that it is the mode of production and materialism that determines the involvement of children in economic activities. In other words, it is because members of the lower class are poor and deprived of resources that they send their children to live with other families on one hand and the use of these children by foster parents for economic activities on the other. The Marxists believed that this can only come to a halt, if the working class overthrows the ruling class and create a society free from exploitation, inequality, oppression etc. but as in the case of children it will be

very impossible since that of the adult working class is yet to happen. The Anomie theory of Robert K. Merton explains and gives us an insight into the issue of child labour as a deviant act which supports survival within the family. It talks about the motivating behaviours of achieving goals. Merton (1968) argued that deviance results not from pathological personalities rather from the culture and structure of society itself. He emphasizes the fact that individuals in society tend to go against the accepted norms because their actions have been necessitated by the values in the system. This, he explained from the standard functionalist position of value consensus i.e., that all members of society share the same value. However, since members of society are placed in different positions in the social structure families in the lower strata will not have the same opportunity of reaching the shared values. For this reason (class differences), many families will result to unconventional means of achieving their goals. Some of such are child fostering and child labour. These unconventional means, Merton (1968) referred to as innovation, a response to cultural goals where the normative means of achieving success seem not to be available or scarce.

This situation, Merton regards can generate deviance. In his words, the social and cultural structure generates pressure for socially deviant behaviours upon people variously located in the structure. This is related to the issues of the research topic particularly in some part of the globe where great importance is attached to economic success and relatively little importance is given to the accepted ways of achieving success. Many proponents of structural functionalist school of thought view society as operating in functional harmony, the presence of social disharmony in society is seen as a social problem linked to viral infection which must be clinically extracted (Parson, 1973). Structural functionalist theorists preached that society is made up of parts which are functional i.e., society can only be explained knowing the functions of the constituent parts.

The postulate holds that all standardized social and cultural beliefs and practices are functional for society as a whole as well as for individuals in society. Merton (1968) maintained that although, it may be true of small primitive societies, the generalization cannot be extended to larger, more complex societies as the case of urban areas. Stemming from the above, the involvement of children in economic activities and sending of children to foster homes/parents could be explained partially from its function of contributing to the survival and upkeep of the whole family. This view makes it possible for child labour to be seen as a function of the kind of socialization that these children have received (Clarkson, 1955; Naidu,

1982), nevertheless the danger/effect does not augur well with the child hence, the need for a theoretical synthesis in explaining this act from the economic, anomic and functional perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors sustaining fostering and child labours shown in Table 2 which clearly supports the findings from the Nigerian demographic educational survey that children are being fostered mainly as household help because of the need for their assistance in domestic as well as commercial activities which most times goes beyond the home front/household.

The study indicate that 21.7% of the children/respondents are being fostered for educational purpose in the study area (14.2% parents alive) while 25% were mainly as household help (10% parents alive). Another 23.3% agreed that it was because their parents were poor (20% parents alive); 5.8 % were as a result of the death of their biological parents. In one of the interviews carried out with a girl of about 14 years old in a foster home, she captured her agony as a domestic helper as follows:

There was this day I had to wash juniors (foster parents baby) clothes and scrub the whole flat (house) after which I was very tired and had to take a nap; my aunty came and met me sleeping and gave me a knock on my head after which she said do not you know I am trying to help your mother and father by living with me and yet you would not want to work this was just because I was tired and did not go to the market before she came in (the aunty is a cousin to the father)

It was observed from the study that the respondents living with their guardian were less likely to be used as

Table 2: Reasons why children are being fostered and their parents alive

Why being fostered?	Parents alive		Total
	Yes	No	
Schooling purpose	17(14.2%)	9(7.5%)	26(21.7%)
As helper	12(10.0%)	18(15.0%)	30(25.0%)
Because parents are poor	24(20.0%)	4(3.3%)	28(23.3%)
Parents are dead	8(6.7%)	8(6.7%)	17(14.2%)
Other reasons	4(3.3%)	3(2.5%)	7(5.8%)
NR	11(9.2%)	1(0.8%)	12(10.0%)
Total	76(63.3%)	43(35.8%)	120(100.0%)
Poverty as a major reasons for child labour			
Yes	30(25.0%)	28(23.3%)	58(49.2%)
No	42(35.0%)	15(11.7%)	57(46.7%)
NR	4(3.3%)	1(0.8%)	5(4.2%)
Total	76(63.3%)	44(35.8%)	120(100.0%)

house help. The percentages were: 13.3% of respondents living with relatives where meant to school (reason for being fostered) 2.5% lived with guardian and 5.8 not specified for children being fostered as house help, 14.2% are with their relative while 9.2% lived with a guardian, 1.7 specified others. In the words of a 12 year old who lives with his guardian elaborated:

My new step parents do care for me better than my Mummy and Daddy, I am now in a private school; they do not flog or knock my head. They have been very nice to me

The little boy may have been lucky to have being living with a rich guardian as was noticed and again his age may also be a factor to be considered in the way foster parents handle children. In all, 45% of the respondents constitute majority who lived with their relatives, 25.5% are living with their guardian, another 28.3% with others.

The south east (Igbos), from the study had respondents of 8.3% of children living with their relatives while 7.5% responded that they were living with their guardian which could have been other families who do not share close family ties either by marriage or blood (kinship) with the respondents. For example an interview (a boy) with a respondent child from the Eastern part of Nigeria said:

The person I am living with is not related to either of my parents (mother and father), my father told me that the family would be nice to me because they were very nice to him while he was in Lagos as a police corporal in the 80's

Another sets of children remarked:

The guardian is the head pastor of the church we worship so also was my Dad before he was transferred to Jos in Plateau state after the death of my mother last year. This they said was because their father did not want them to school in the North because of the incessant crises often experienced

Other respondents, 1.6% did specify other type of relationship as others. The South West respondents were 9.9% living with their relatives, 4.2% lived with guardians and 3.3 agreed that they live with other people who they could not specify.

The South-south (Niger Deltans) had 16.5% living with their relatives, 4.9% with their guardians and 15.8% with others (unspecified). This shows that the South-

south respondents were easily given out to foster parents irrespective of any close affinity. A parent from the South-south zone said:

I have a child whom my classmate of many years has taken as her own for the past four years in Victoria Island, this was after the father left for north and never came back

The North East (Hausa) had a small percentage of respondents, 0.8% live with guardian. For the North West 3.4% were living with their relatives as against 2.5% living with their guardians. The North-central zone had 5% living with their relatives, 5.4% with their guardian for other respondents who could not specify their foster parents ties, they constituted 4.2%.

Surprisingly, many respondents did not accept that poverty was the main reason for being used for economic activities directly or indirectly as shown in Table 3; this was as a result of children feeling shy to say their parents were poor. The distribution nevertheless shows a slight difference contradicting expectation that their responses would have been more on the affirmative, 49.2% of respondents agreed that they were engaged in work as a result of the economic hardship facing their parents at home. Another 46.7% constituted those who did not see poverty as a reason for working; of these respondents 63.3% have their parents alive as against 35.8 whose parents are not alive.

The effect of economic activities on the child’s education:

Among the 42.5% of children who worked to earn income, 12.5% were schooling in their foster home and at the same time 30.0% were not schooling. of those respondents who did not work to earn money (57.5%), 40.0% were presently schooling, 17.5% were not schooling. Conclusively, it was clear that 42.5% worked to earn income while 57.5% did not. Significantly the ratio still calls for concern as the matter at hand deals with children whose interest should not be to work at such tender ages <18 years.

Work and its effect on children’s education:

Among the 52.5% of the schooling respondents as shown in Table 3; children who were affected by their work constituted 28.3% while 24.2% said their education was not affected by their activities. The distribution though low for respondents who did not agree that their work at home had effect on their performances at school, nevertheless the effect of fostering on performances at school, affected more of the female respondents (7.5%) as against (10.8%) for male i.e., 28.3% of the total respondents affected in

Table 3: The effect of economic activities on the children’s education

Effect of economic activities	Schooling		Total
	Yes	No	
Do you consider yourself as working at home?			
Yes	15(12.5%)	36(30.0%)	51(42.5%)
No	48(40.0%)	21(17.5%)	69(57.5%)
Total	63(52.5%)	57(47.5%)	120(100%)
Gender			
Effects on education	Male	Female	Total
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	13(10.8%)	21(17.5%)	34(28.3%)
No	18(15.0%)	11(9.2%)	29(24.2%)
Total	31(25.8%)	32(26.7)	63(52.5%)

their education. This may be because females were more among the respondents being fostered because of their domestic and economic values. Most of the females interviewed said they often miss classes and often times resume late to school because of one work or the other. Age wise, among the schooling respondents, it was discovered that children within the ages 14-17 were seriously affected in school, they constituted 25.8 of the 28.3% who affirmed that they were affected in their performances at school.

Foster children’s working hours: It was noticed from the survey that the children had little or no time for themselves based on the number of hours they engaged in performing domestic as well as commercial activities. Table 1-3 clarify that respondents age 9-11 (1.6 %) engage in work for about 0-5 h daily while 2.4 and 4.9% of the same age work between 6-11 h daily. For respondents between the ages of 12 and 14, they constituted the majority 17.4% who engage in work for over 12 h, 14% of the same age bracket work for 6-11 h as 11.5% of the respondents for <6 h.

Z years (9%) worked for <6 h. On the other hand while 27.6% of them worked between 6-11 h, 10.7% worked for over 12 h on the average. Though, some of the respondents may not have calculated the number of HR they work correctly but it was inferred from an interviewee, a foster father with a nephew at a construction site:

This is my boy here with me, he is hard working, he joins me to work any time I have a contract (Journeyman), the money I ought to have paid a journeyman is added to my own since he does the work of a journey man, part of this money I will use in settling him in the future....

When I probed to know how long they have been working, he said:

We arrived here 8:00 am because of the transportation problem and work started say 30 min later (8:30 am), we had a break by 12 noon and started working again, it is about 4 pm now, before 6:00 pm we would have finished and be ready to go home, imagine he is just 16... (He gave the child a part on the shoulder praising him)

This to an extent shows that there are children out there working for >8 h a day with little or no time for themselves as pointed out by International Labour Organization (ILO, 1997).

From the survey it was observed that of the total respondents, 34.2% actually work outside their home and earn income.

It was also clear from the study that with increase in age, the tendency for foster children to work and earn income increases, it was highest at the age of 16. Of the 20% respondents within this age, 11.7% were actually working and earning income. An account of a fostered child at ijsha:

After closing from school everyday, I engage myself with a sachet water factory, this I have been doing for almost a year now...

When asked what led to his working as a child, he commented further:

As time goes, (after about three years with his foster parents), I found out that my uncle was always complaining, one day I asked him to give me some amount of money for my lesson fee, he said are you not big enough to work? as other children do nearby.... so that was how I decided to find something to do here to seal and pack sachet water

Nevertheless, among the various fostered children interviewed, especially those working and earning income, they noted that it was not their wish to work or cater for themselves.

Table 4 shows that among the 44.2% of the respondents who were willing to school, 29.2% (35) of the respondents have their biological parents alive, 15% of their parents were not alive (dead).

Of the 55.8% of the respondents who were unwilling to school continue schooling, 34.1% had their parents alive as against 21.7% whose parents were dead. The implication of biological parents alive or dead did not really show any influence on fostered children schooling or not in their foster home.

The plight of biological parents role were observed from the interviews conducted among some foster children as stated below.

Table 4: Biological parents role on foster parents vis-a-vis fostered children

Effect of economic activities	Are your biological parents alive?		Total
	Yes	No	
Are you willing to school?			
Yes	35(29.2%)	18(15.0%)	53(44.2%)
No	41(34.1%)	26(21.7%)	67(55.8%)
Total	76(63.3%)	44(36.7%)	120(100%)

An interviewee (a schooling respondent), a 12 years old girl said:

It was my parents that categorically told my foster parents that I must be sent to school even though I may later learn a trade

Another respondent (a boy of 15 years of age) has this to way:

If not for my late mother who pleaded with my uncle to make sure I am sent to school while she was at her sick bed, though my Daddy was less concern because he had other wives and children, my Mum was left with no option but allowing my Uncle to foster me...

Of the 10 respondents interviewed, 7 were not schooling but quite agreed that their parents may have told their foster parents that they should learn a trade or be sent to school in lagos. A 15 years old boy among them reiterated in Pidgin English thus:

Na, my papa say make I come learn business for lagos, with my aunty like my senior brother way dey for Abuja, so that one day I go become big person like am....

(Interpretation) It was my father who took me to my aunty in Lagos so as to learn a trade same way my elder brother did in Abuja and today he is a successful man

This goes a long way to show that the invincible hands of a child's biological parents cannot be overlooked let alone put aside in the decision of foster parents regarding the sending of foster children to school or learning a trade. On the contrary from another interview among the 5 parents, most of them said that:

We were in dire need of assistance because our children were many, some had to dropout from school while others were sent to live with friends and relatives, it was difficult to feed them, talk less of sending all of them to school

On the question pertaining to their influence on foster parents sending these children to school a father who has a son and a daughter of his being fostered said:

It was not easy making it compulsory by telling them (foster parents) to send my children to school; my concern then was to make sure they were in safe hands, most, especially where they will be guaranteed of their three square meal. We are still poor, I give thanks to God at least they are alive very soon they will be able to fend or cater for themselves....but the importance of education I know is good but the situation I am now is tight especially since I lost my wife years back while the children were still very small...

From the Table 5, 70.8% of the respondents (children) agreed that their sex determine the type of activities they engage in their foster home while 25.8% disagreed. This finding was justified from the interview conducted below with one of the parents' respondents (a mother of 2) who said: Pointing to her foster child, she said:

This boy is a relative of my husband, it was when I needed someone to assist me at home after the birth of my second child that my husband went home (to the east) and landed with Emeka. Although, I would have preferred a girl by chance it came up to be a boy (14 years) that was available; His parents wanted him to learn a trade but I am contemplating sending him to school. All he does presently is basically domestic duties; he does not go to the market, this I would have loved him to do if he had been a girl as well as cooking and washing of clothes as he does for my husband

Furthermore, >3 quarter of the interviewees (foster parents) agreed that to a large extent, the sex of the fostered child determines the duties assigned to them. They argued that even among ones biological children

that there are some duties better performed by female children like wise other duties by male children. This is even embedded in African tradition (Oloko, 2002) where duties are assigned to children based on their sex, age and strength.

Another interviewee (a foster father) claims:

In fostering a child, I went for a boy because training a male child is an investment I think one can reap from; it is even cheaper than paid house help. This particular boy with me has been very helpful in my life especially when my wife was still at school in one of the higher institutions here in lagos state 2 years ago. He does virtually everything from domestic to commercial activities at home and in my shop, a female child would have ran away as was the case

The wife added:

Girls are even more difficult to train, they are exposed to a lot of problems ranging from rape, molestation, harassment... From experience as a child the girl that once stayed with my parents was a victim, at an early age of 16, although this was partly due to my auntie's neglect, she became pregnant and was eventually sent packing (back to the village). The problem it caused then cannot be forgotten in a hurry between her biological parents and my aunty

Indications from Table 5 on gender shows that 15.8% of male respondents were involved in domestic work as against 20.8% of female respondents, making a total of 36.6% of domestic workers. For respondents who engaged in commercial activities for their foster parents, the female respondents were found having the lead with 14.2-9.2% males. A change in this lead was observed for those who combined both commercial and domestic work having the male respondents 20.8% and female 14.2%.

The study found out that 42.5% of the respondents earn income from engaging in work of which 26.7% (32) were male, 15.8% (19) female on the other hand of the 57.5% who were not working, 25.0% were female and 32.5% were male.

Studies have shown that most work carried out by fostered children especially among female children are not always classified as generating income because they are usually done in the private domain unlike their male counterpart (Naidu, 1982; Page, 1989; Oloko, 2002). This also shows that foster children not working outnumbered those working; though commendable, yet it is imperative to say that the percentage is quite high (42.5-57.5%) in the campaign against child labour in all its forms.

Table 5: Gender and economic activities in fostering practices

Economic activities	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
What kind of economic activities are you involved in?			
Domestic	19(15.8%)	25(20.8%)	44(36.6%)
Selling	11(9.2%)	17(14.2%)	28(23.3%)
Both (domestic and selling)	25(20.8%)	17(14.2%)	42(35.0%)
Others	2(1.7%)	3(2.5%)	5(4.2%)
NR	1(0.8%)	-	1(0.8%)
Total	58(48.3%)	62(51.7%)	120(100.0%)
Do you enjoy the kind of activities you do?			
Yes	30(25.0%)	27(22.5%)	57(47.5%)
No	26(21.7%)	33(27.5%)	59(49.2%)
NR	2(1.7%)	2(1.7%)	4(3.4%)
Total	58(48.3%)	62(51.7%)	120(100.0%)
Does your sex determine the type of economic activities you do?			
Yes	54(45.0%)	30(25.0%)	84(70%)
No	20(16.7%)	12(9.2%)	32(26.9%)
NR	2(1.7%)	2(1.7%)	4(3.4%)
Total	76(63.3%)	44(35.8%)	120(100.0%)

Inherent discriminative practices: It was observed from foster children's responses that 35.8% of male respondents did not perform the same duties/work with their foster parents biological children, 41.7% of female respondents equally affirmed to this making a total of 77.5% (93 out of 120) as against 15.8% who agreed that they engage in similar work with siblings from their foster parents.

Alongside respondents (fostered children) ages, it was observed that of the 77.5%, children between the ages of 13-16 years were over 10% of the respondents while for respondents performing similar duties were lowest at ages 10-11, constituting <5%. This therefore, implies that there is discrimination in the act of performing domestic duties/work at home not only based on gender but also on whether the child is biological or not i.e., the labeling of children and the assigning of duties, this disparity may have strong effect on the child's psyche and may cause a child to be withdrawn and reserved and not seeing his or herself as part of the family/home (Goody, 1975).

Many fostered children (48.3%) worked in their foster home because they were not biological children (Pilon, 2003) as against 50.8% who said they work not necessarily because they are not member of the family. This was more for female respondents who said they were working because they were not members of family of these 63.3% of total respondents parents were alive. In support of this, the respondents also agreed that child labour (especially for income earning) should be differentiated from domestic work/duties.

There were 52.5% of the total respondents misunderstanding the difference between domestic duties/child work and child labour, they agreed that both concepts are similar while 40.8% disagree that the 2 concepts are quite different, nevertheless, this misconception was cleared as 50.8% affirmed that child labour is inimical and not good for children since, they were not the creator of themselves as supported by an interviewee:

I am working with my uncle in his art gallery where I learn about carving and ceramic decorations but I do not really like the job, it is hectic for me if I should stay back at home my uncle will feel bad and deny me food for days, I am helpless since, my parents are not alive, I did not create myself

Foster children's attitude towards work in their foster home: The study shows that more male respondents enjoy working in their foster home than the females and vice versa as more female respondents did not enjoy the type of work they do (Table 5). Especially, domestic

duties, these they find hectic. The cross tabulation indicated that of 47.5% of respondents who enjoy work, 25.0% were male, 22.5% were female. Of those who did not enjoy work (49.2%), 27.5% were female and 21.7% for male. Going by age, it was observed from the respondents that those within the age bracket of 9 and 10 years tend to enjoy work more than others because of their age, this was as a result of the fact that they work within the domestic domain and again they constituted a small percentage/number (0.8 and 3.3%) of the study population.

As the ages of foster children increases, they started finding work unpleasant. This was evident from ages 12-14 years, the number of respondents rose to 2.2% those who enjoy working as against 4.2% who did not for age 13, it was 5.8% enjoyed working, 6.7% did not. At 14 years, the percentage were doubled for those who enjoyed work in their foster home 8.3 and 14.2% who did not enjoy working.

A new trend was observed from ages 15-17 as respondents dislike/hatred for work declined especially, at ages 15-17. It can be said that of the 2 trends, first at a lower age between 9 and 11, it seems that the respondents were initially pampered (less work) as a sign of welcoming them to get settled after which more work/responsibilities were heaped on them, these they find uninteresting but as they approach their teens they gradually take solace/consolation with work and go on with their lives. This was summarized by a respondent from Kwara state in a construction site who said:

I remember when I came two/three years ago, my in-law used to pamper me, there was a day, the first time he took me out to a site where he worked as a bricklayer to see things, not knowing that his intention was to gradually introduced me to the work, initially I was very unhappy but after 2 months, I had to stop complaining and start seeing my future in it...that was how I finally left school

From Table 6, analysis of the data on age and working hour, it was noticed that, as the age of respondents increase so also their work hours. For respondents who work between 1-4 h a day, male respondents comprises of 5.9%, female 4.9%. This pattern changed at the work hour of 5-9 h a day, the male respondents dropped, as female increased. About 21.5% (male) and 22.5% for female. The situation continued at the work hour rate of 10-14 h a day, as more female worked, 9.2% for female and 4.1% for male. There were also some respondents who claimed that they worked round the clock (24 h), the male were 7.5% and female

Table 6: Foster children's working hours in relationship to foster parents

Are your foster parents, relatives or guardians?				
Working hours	Relatives	Guardians	Others	Total
How many hours do you work in a day?				
0	3(2.5%)	-	1(0.8%)	4(3.3%)
1-4	7(5.8%)	1(0.8%)	5(4.2%)	13(10.8%)
5-9	20(16.7%)	19(15.8%)	14(11.7%)	53(44.2%)
10-14	9(7.5%)	5(4.2%)	1(0.8%)	15(12.5%)
15-19	2(1.7%)	1(0.8%)	3(2.5%)	6(5.0%)
20-24	8(6.7%)	8(6.7%)	3(2.5%)	19(15.9%)
NR	-	3(2.5%)	7(5.8%)	10(8.3%)
Total	49(40.8%)	37(30.0%)	34(28.3%)	120(100.0%)

3.3%, this may be as a result of the freedom male respondents enjoy at foster home, especially those who work out side the home. For example, a 16 years old boy who manages his uncle's shop said:

I am in the shop 2/4/7 (24 h) at times at the middle of the night after I must have closed the shop and be ready to sleep, people still come to knock for me to wake up and start selling food items again to them (customer)...once, I declined, the customers reported me...the beaten that day till date I find it difficult to forget

So also for children learning trade in far distances from their home as well as those who work in factories, some even engage in shift duties. An interviewee who was stumbled upon while carrying out this research claims that:

When I was with my auntie in Itire area, last four years (period under fosterage) I work almost all day except when there was nothing to do, which was not possible because of the number of children she had, after which every evening, I engage in a permanent shift work in a fruit juice company (CB Breweries along Ijesha-Sanya/Oshodi Express Road Lagos)

From Table 6, respondents who did not work for their foster parents as indicated by 0 h, 2.5% lived with their relative for those who worked between 1-4 h, 5.8% lived with their relative between the working h of 5-9 h, more of the respondents happen to live with their relatives signified by 16.6%, 15.7% with guardian. For working for 10-14 h, 7.5% lived with their relatives, 14.1 with their guardian.

The percentage of those who work for >14 h, ages (15-19), constituted 1.7% living with their relatives 0.5% living with their guardian, 2.8% with others, about 6.7% of the respondents with their relatives, 1.7% with guardian and 2.5 with others. Of the four respondents who claimed that they do not work (0 h), they stated that it was as a result of their health ie they happen to be sickle cell sufferers. One of them said:

Since, I am a sicklier my brother (Uncle) and his wife even neighbours find it difficult to send me on any errand, they are afraid of my health

Another Supported by saying:

In my own case I do some domestic work like washing of plates which I consider as no job/work, most times when I try to assist my relatives, I am always told to go and rest and not to get myself stressed

The average work hour children engaged in work were inimical for children, the resultant effect will tell on the well-being of these children as well as their developmental faculty, stress and frustration may also come to play making them wanting to go back to their biological home.

CONCLUSION

Child fostering was attributed to so many factors, it was observed that some of the reasons a child may be placed in a foster home are schooling, especially in places where there were no school or higher education; economic down turn (financial crisis). The findings from the study showed that the need for house help, economic crisis and the need for schooling are major reasons sustaining fostering practices. Directly and indirectly the helpless nature of children was also observed as the major reason why many of the children are being used for economic activities by their foster parents.

This was noted from the various interviews conducted. The effects of the activities carried out by children were found to be negative on their education. And 40% of the children were not pleased with the activities (both domestic and commercial) which affected their performances in school. Those who were not schooling constituted 47.5%. This shows that biological parents responsibilities were minimal on the way and manner their children were treated in their foster home especially among those whose biological parents were still alive, visits to foster parents and foster children were irregular. The relationship between gender and the type of activities (labour/work) carried out by foster children, indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that their activities were gender based of this the female children worked more than the male children in both domestic and commercial activities.

In viewing the attitudes of children towards work in their foster homes, compared to that of their biological

home it was observed that children were happier at the beginning of the fostering period i.e., they were pampered at first and later as their stay prolonged with increase in their ages they tend to dislike work and their foster home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings from this study, the following are therefore recommended for effective fostering practices and proper upbringing of the child.

There is need to change the socialization processes which view work for children as a way of building up a child for future challenges. A new orientation should start from the biological parents because it is often said that charity begins at home. If a child is properly socialized against inimical working ethics at home, certainly in the foster home, the child will be respected for it.

Parents should be very careful of those they allow to foster their children. The status of the intending foster parents should be properly investigated to be sure that their ward/children are in a safe hands and are most likely to be given the best of training than what the child was receiving before fostering. In other words foster parents should be better off than the biological parents before fostering is permitted. Foster parents should be able to cater for the children without discrimination.

Governments should provide free education for all children less than 18 years irrespective of class or level of school. Be it at primary, secondary or tertiary level, not the political type being done in some states of the federation especially in lagos state metropolis where parents are made to pay indirectly for their wards through other fees, this will reduce the incidence of children being used for commercial activities in order for them to meet their school fee, this unwholesome act affects the academic performance of the children which might cost them their academic career, further more, the exposure of this young minds to money making ventures might discourage their interest in schooling.

Also fostering laws should be promulgated and implemented to put foster parents in check in other not to constitute machinery for recruiting child labourers to their advantages and at the society's detriment. Lastly the government should intensify national policy on population control, which stipulates four children per couple since, family size has a strong impact on parents sending their children to live with other families as well as its effect on child labour (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985; Oloko, 2002) also mass media campaigns and incentives should be given to parents with less number of children.

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