

Effects of Child Abuse on Primary Education. A Case Study of Some Selected Primary Schools in Zuru Local Government

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Abstract— The research study was conducted on the effects of child abuse on primary education with the objectives of finding out how it affects primary education of pupils in Zuru Local Government area of Kebbi state. Simple random sampling technique was used to collect data from the respondents using sixty (60) structured questionnaires. Responses obtained were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics comprising frequency tables and percentages. The study discovered that low academic achievements, truancy, absenteeism, drug abuse, delinquency, theft, prostitution and drop out from schools by the pupils were found to be the major challenges among the school pupils in the study area, and that poverty, illiteracy, hawking, gambling, drug abuse, trading and farming were contributory to the causes of child abuse in the area. Parents, teachers and child caregivers were found to mostly involve in child abuse in the area and that physical and emotional abuses were prominent in the area. A conclusion was therefore drawn from the research work that the school pupils in the study area were beset with a number of problems which hinder their academic suit and whose future is quite very bleak and endangered just as well the future of the community they belong to. Therefore research study recommended that parents should be enlightened on proper parenting, uplifting of the community's socio-economic level, staging of adequate family planning seminars, adoption of psycho therapies on the pupils deserving such, involvement of government, religious institutions and non-governmental organizations forming part of the stakeholders such as the UNICEF, NAPTIP and WOTCLEF for child abuse control in the study area.

Index Terms—Abuse, Child abuse, Effect, Primary Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Olaniyan and Obadara (2008), nursery and primary education occupies the first levels of education that introduce formal education or literacy to the children. Primary education is a foundation upon which all other levels of education are built. It is therefore imperative to say that the background or foundation of any formal organization of knowledge or education is the primary education. Education occupies a very significant position in the development Programme of any nation. It is the gateway to the future and the key to economic, social and political advancement of the whole world. Education is the vital instrument for social and economic mobility of any person and an instrument for transformation of the society at the national level. It remains a social process in capacity building and maintenance of

society as it is a weapon for acquiring skills, relevant knowledge and habits for survival in the changing world (Fabiya, 2008).

This has thus become the fundamental reasons for the federal government's launching of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in September, 1976. The scheme which was welcomed in any part of Nigeria aimed at among others upgrading enrolment, strengthening public institutions responsible for primary education and stimulating future planning for next phase of the Programme (U.B.E Digest, 2004). This scheme by the government in providing primary education did not yield significant result largely due to some factors which includes lack of continuity in the administration, poor coordination, corruption, mismanagement and the likes (Fabiya, 2008).

Child abuse in primary schools occurs in a wide spectrum of forms ranging from physical, abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. It came to the forefront in the twentieth century which continues to be more recognized in economically developed countries than in developing countries. Children however have been abandoned for many years based primarily on the belief that children are the property of their parents. It is a global phenomenon that dates back to the times of slavery when children were captured to labour on farms for their masters without compensation. These children were malnourished and worked under adverse hardship. The menace of child abuse has prone many children into miserable, empathic and sympathy situations and the problem still exists in our societies but varying in degree from one society to the other (Conway, 1998).

Goldman *et al* (2003) viewed child abuse as a very complex and dangerous set of problems that includes child neglect and the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children. He added that, most people think first of physical abuse when they hear the term. Physical abuse makes up 25% of reported cases. It is defined as physical injury inflicted upon the child with cruel or malicious intent, although the law recognizes that in some cases the parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child; rather, the injury may have resulted from physical punishment. Physical abuse includes punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking or otherwise harming a child. Fatal injuries from maltreatment can result from many different acts such as burns, suffocation, poisoning etc. many physical abused children suffer multiple injuries over the years, which may go untreated to cover up for the abuse. Close observation of a child according to Goldman will generally uncover signals that abuse has occurred. (Holdman *et al* 2003). Hillis (2000), found out the following types of child abuse

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- ❖ **Child neglect:** - Is the most frequently reported form of child abuse and the most lethal. This form of abuse is defined as the failure to provide for the shelter, safety, supervision and nutritional needs of the child. Child neglect can be physical emotional or educational.
- ❖ **Physical abuse:** - This is the second most frequently reported form of abuse and is defined as physical injury inflicted upon the child with cruel or malicious intent. Physical abuse can be the result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking or otherwise harming a child. The parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child; rather the injury may have resulted from physical punishment.
- ❖ **Emotional abuse:** - Is the third most frequently reported form of child abuse and includes acts or omissions by the parents or other caretakers that could cause serious behavioral emotional or mental disorders. For instance, the parent/care givers may use extreme or bizarre forms of punishment such as confinement of a child in a dark closet. Emotional abuse also sometimes termed psychological abuse, verbal child abuse or mental injury of a child.
- ❖ **Sexual abuse:** - Is the least frequently reported form of child abuse and is believed to be the most under reported type of child abuse or maltreatment because of the secrecy or "Conspiracy of silence" that so often characterizes these cases. Sexual abuse includes fondling, intercourse, rape, commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials such as magazines or films that show sexual acts.

Fetitti (1998) stated other forms of child abuse as racial abuse, non-enrollment of the child to school, begging, hawking, overworking the child, corporal punishment inflicting pain to the child, allowing the child to labour without payment.

The most prominent among the causes of child abuse is mental illness and psychological problems. The tendency is that people who are not in their right minds could easily do harm to children whether intentional or otherwise. Family problems are also other major causes of child abuse. Parents under the influence of drugs could easily hurt their children. Financial problems could invoke parents or other members of the family to abuse their children. Parents who are gamblers could also abuse their wards directly or indirectly (Taicher, 2000).

Statement of the Research Problem

Child abuse has been recognized as a universal problem but varies from one society to the other. This has over the years led to poor academic achievements of primary school children, truancy, perpetual absenteeism, delinquency and consequent drop-out leading to production of in disciplined and criminal children in the society mainly teenagers. It therefore becomes mandatory to curb the situation as the younger generation forms the bed for future leadership of the country (Kelly, 1997).

The causes, behaviours and effects of child abuse on primary education is a major concern of government, school

administrators, teachers, parents and society. This is the problem under investigation in selected primary schools in Zuru local Government Area.

Research Question

The researcher seeks to ask the following questions which shall form basis for generation of relevant data for the research work.

- i. What are the causes of child abuse?
- ii. What is the extent of child abuse in the study area?
- iii. What are the effects of child abuse on primary education?
- iv. How could these problems be solved?

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the paper is to find out the effects of child abuse on primary education. The specific Objectives however include the following:

1. Find out the causes of child abuse in the study area.
2. Determine the extent of prevalence of child abuse in primary schools of the study area.
3. Determine the effects of child abuse on the school children's primary education.
4. Proffer practicable solutions to the problems discovered in the research study.

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between child abuse and the children's primary education.

H02: There is significant relationship between child abuse and the children's primary education.

Significance of the Study

The research work will be very significant to the parents, teachers, school administrators, policy makers and government. Particularly, towards evolving policies and legislations that could halt or minimize child abuse in primary schools which shall lead to increased academic performance of the primary school pupils.

METHODOLOGY

Seven (7) out of the 77 primary schools in the local government area were randomly selected and administered with questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to the selected primary school teachers, school administrators and parents personally by the researcher.

Population of the Study

The population of the study includes all the 77 primary schools in the Local Government Area. The characteristics or behaviours of the sample size drawn was used to make generalizations to include all the primary schools in the area.

Research Design

The research design for thus study is the structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to the selected primary school teachers, school administrators and parents personally by the researcher.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study includes 5 selected primary schools such as Dabai Model primary School, Rumu

Primary School, and Zomzomo Primary School. Rikoto primary School, Andi Gomo Model Primary School and Danga Gomo Model Primary School. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a total of 60 primary school teachers which were issued with structured questionnaires in the 6 selected primary schools. 10 teachers were selected from each primary school with the aid of questionnaires schedule, the aspects covered by the questionnaires were demographic data on the effects of child abuse on Primary school Education.

Method of Data Collection

Instrument used for data collection was questionnaire schedule which were administered to the respondents

personally by the researcher in the selected schools. The questionnaires were divided into three sections, which included, the schools administrators, teachers and parents section.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data collected from the administered questionnaires were collated, tabulated and analyzed using simple descriptive statistics comprising frequency distribution tables and percentages. The percentages were used to test for significant relationship between personal characteristics of the respondents and their responses on the research topic.

RESULTS

Table 4.1: Distribution of the respondents according to the genesis of child abuse.

| GENESIS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGES (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Farming | 10 | 16.6 |
| Religious beliefs | 15 | 25 |
| Trading | 5 | 8.3 |
| Poverty | 20 | 33.3 |
| Drug abuse | 10 | 16.6 |
| TOTAL | 60 | 100 |

Sources: filed survey, 2012.

Table 4.2: Effects of child abuse on primary school education.

| EFFECTS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Poor result outcome | 15 | 25 |
| Drop out | 9 | 15 |
| Truancy | 5 | 8.3 |
| All of the above | 31 | 51.6 |
| TOTAL | 60 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

Table 4.3: Distribution of the respondents according to the consequences of child abuse in the primary schools.

| CONSEQUENCES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGES (%) |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Physical health consequence | 6 | 10 |
| Psychological consequence | 10 | 13.6 |
| Behavioral consequence | 4 | 6.6 |
| Societal menace | 6 | 10 |
| All of the above | 34 | 56.6 |
| TOTAL | 60 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 4.4: Distribution of the respondents according to the effects of child abuse on other levels of education.

| EFFECT | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGES (%) |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Increased school dropout | 15 | 25 |
| Negative attitude to education | 19 | 31.6 |
| Low academic results | 22 | 36.6 |
| Cognitive constraints | 16 | 6.6 |
| All of the above | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 60 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

Table 4.5: Distribution of the respondents according to the ways of stopping the menace of child abuse in the study area.

| WAYS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGES (%) |
|---|------------------|------------------------|
| Enlightenment on proper parenting | 30 | 50 |
| Family planning seminars | 20 | 33.3 |
| Involvement of agencies for child Abuse control | 10 | 16.6 |
| TOTAL | 60 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2012

DISCUSSION

In the table 4.1 above, it is indicated that 16.6% of the respondents said that the genesis of child abuse has been farming, but 25% stated that was religious beliefs while 8.3% reported that it was trading, 33.3% who constituted the majority reported that it was poverty and the rest constituting 16.6% of the respondents agreed drug abuse as being the cause.

It can be seen from the above that the most active agent of child abuse is poverty and the experience in the area shows a lot of destruction to lives of primary school pupils. Poor families do not often send their children to schools and even if they do, they lack the required resources to pay for the school fees of their wards, cloth them adequately and meet their nutritional requirements. This therefore affects the child's performance academically.

In the table 4.2 above, it is showed that 51.6% who constituted the majority reported that the effects of child abuse on primary education include truancy; drop out reason and poor result outcome. However, 25% of the respondents reported that, the effect of child abuse is seen through poor result outcome, and only 15% of the respondents revealed that drop out reason was the effect of child abuse and the remaining 8.3% being the majority reported that the effects of child abuse was truancy. It can be deduced from this table that negative behavioral influence is the extent of child abuse in the study area because the abused pupils often disrespects members of the society and thus are often considered as criminals and in disciplined pupils in the society as many of them resort to theft, prostitution and many other anti-social

vices which are contrary to the norms and values of the society. Similarly, the effects of child abuse on primary education was evident in terms of poor result outcome, drop out from school drug abuse and teenage pregnancies among girl child pupils.

In the table 4.3 above, it is indicated that 10% of the respondents revealed that, the consequences of child abuse is shown through physical health problems, 16.6% indicated that, it is evident through psychological problems, 6.6% showed that the consequences were observed through behavioral influence while only 10% lamented that, the consequences were through societal menace and the rest 56.6% of the respondents who constituted the majority reported that the consequence of child abuse was shown through all the above stated consequences in the table. It can be observed from the above table that child abuse had led to physical health consequences, psychological problems, behavioral constraints and societal menace. This influenced negatively the child's primary education.

In the table 4.4 above, it is observed that 25% of the respondents reported that, the effects of child abuse were increased school dropout while 31.6% of the respondents said that the effect of child abuse lead to negative attitude to education, 36.6% of the respondents who constituted the majority reported that, the effects of child abuse on other levels of education were seen through low academic results and the rest 6.6% being the minority expressed that the effect of child abuse on subsequent level of education was cognitive constraints. It can be observed as such that, the pupils further education can be seriously affected especially if sound basis is not laid from primary schools. Academic achievements in

other academic levels such as secondary and tertiary education respectively could be affected to a greater extent.

Table 4.5 above indicated that 50% of the respondents who constituted the majority agreed that strategies to addressing child abuse problems should be through enlightenment on proper parenting. This was followed by 33.3% respondents who agreed on family planning seminars and the remaining 16.6% who were the least supported that involvement of agencies for child abuse control can assist in controlling or stopping the menace of child abuse.

It is evident from the above therefore that, proper parenting or parental care plays a vital role in cubing the menace of child abuse cases. Similarly, through family planning seminar and the involvement of agencies for child abuse control such as UNICEF, NAPTIP and WOTCLEF can help to stop the menace of child abuse in the primary schools.

Based on the results obtained, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted which indicates that there is significant difference between child abuse and primary school education while the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected.

CONCLUSION

The research identified and examined the causes, behaviour and effects of child abuse as a constraint towards primary education. The data for the research were collected through a total of 60 structured questionnaires which were administered in the study area to obtain classified information from the respondents.

The study revealed that majority of the respondents were female and were married while males formed the minority in the teaching of primary school pupils. This was attributed to the fact that women prefer to teach in primary schools due to limited technicalities of the primary school subjects as they are easier and simpler to teach than those of other institutions of learning such as secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Similarly, some women derived pleasure in handling small children (children of tender age) as they are their mothers. The study showed that poverty, farming, trading, religious belief, unconsciousness of the risks involved in child abuse and illiteracy by some parents were causes of child abuse in the study area. The research also discovered that physical abuse and neglect of children formed the greater and devastating type of abuse in the study area and had negative consequences in the primary pupils enormously ranging from low academic performance, teenage pregnancies, delinquency and negative attitude to education and finally dropping out from school. The study also identified prostitution, theft, malnutrition, illiteracy and drug abuse as other effects of child abuse. A conclusion can be drawn to say that a number of respondents believed that socio-economic status upliftment by all concerned will go a long way in preventing child abuse and invariably improves primary education in the study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of research study, the following recommendations are hereby made on ways to improve the situation.

-Government should intensify efforts in the fight against the menace of child abuse by mass enlightenment campaigns on the dangers involved.

-Non-governmental organizations should organize awareness programmes, workshops and seminars with a view to educating all concerned with child upbringing and child education.

-strong and functional guidance and counselling services should be provided in primary schools towards helping the pupils to acquire effective study habits.

-Qualified and honest teachers should be made to teach in the primary schools and erring teachers should be suspended or dismissed

-Parents at home and teachers at school should always play their child-discipline roles that the pupils will be up and doing.

-Government and the society must ensure that every child have access to basic education

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