



Government Policies On Child Labour Eradication And Sustainable Development In Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated government policies on child labour eradication and sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a Descriptive Survey research design. Two (2) research questions and two (2) hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was all child labourers and policy makers in Rivers State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of three hundred and twenty-four (324) respondents (261 child labourers and 63 policy makers) in Rivers State. Data were collected using structured questionnaire designed on 5-point Likert rating scale of agreement titled “Government Policies on Child Labour Eradication and Sustainable Development” (GPCLESDQ) and Interview. The data gathered was analyzed using mean and standard deviation while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to test the alternate hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that there is significant relationship between government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria [(P =.009) p<0.05]. Further findings revealed that there is significant relationship between effective implementation of government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria [(P =.006) p<0.05]. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that government should endeavor to build an international organization partnership that is dedicated to improving the lives of children, establish and implement a strong advocacy campaign using the child right organization and rural communities and also involve parents in their children’s school activities hence giving every child reasons to stay in school. The findings from the study have contributed to the growing literature and knowledge on government policies on Child labour eradication and sustainable development in Rivers State.

Keywords: Government policies, child labour eradication, sustainable development, Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

In any political system, the requirement for eradication of wrong practices for the establishment of sustainable development is essential and inevitable. The accomplishment of such goals and objectives is anchored on government policies. It is this belief that clearly underscores the imperatives of government policies in achieving national development (Ali, Orokpo & Paul, 2012). Policies according to Salami (2013) are deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes; they are statements of intents and are implemented as a procedure or protocol. They contain the reasons things are to be done in a certain way. A government policy explains a course of action and unfolds a starting point

for desired change. The Federal Government of Nigeria has adopted several policies and social programmes which aim at improving education, health, population, social development, and child welfare which if enforced would help to reduce child labour. For instance, the section 34 (C) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria stipulates that “Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person and no person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.”

The child is an individual who deserves the right to respect for the dignity of his person. Sad to say, the dignity of person in the child has been trampled upon through years of crass exploitation in the form of child labour. No doubt child labour is a crime against children because it deprives them access to education, and they are exploited, underpaid, exposed to hazardous work conditions; it is also against Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which documents that “State Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure State Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development”. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child is reputedly a document of social safeguard for children anywhere they may be in the world. It spells out the cultural, social, political, civil and economic rights of children and the responsibility of State parties to enforce them (Healthy, 2012). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stressed the criminal element in child labor by illustrating the worst forms of child labor (Convention No.182) and the minimum age requirement (Convention No.138) to provide the essential legal limits to settle in totality on issues pertaining to child labor (International Labour Organization, 2012).

Nigeria, reputedly a rich nation in oil and other natural resources, is still grappling with the internationally condemned problem of child labour. On the basis of favourable statistics, there is no doubt that Nigeria today is one of the less developed nations in the universe despite the fact that successive governments in Nigeria since 1960 when the country enthroned self-government, have put in place various policies to achieve the eradication of the issues surrounding child labour. In Nigeria, advancing policy prescriptions and laws towards child labour eradication as well as other issues that touch on development, presents no difficulties. Rather, it is the effective implementation of such policies in order to achieve the set out objectives that is problematic and no doubt, the effectiveness of any country in implementing policies, be it political, socio-economic, and educational or health related, will to a large extent improve the well-being of its citizens and consequently facilitate the overall development of that nation. However, ILO (2012) observes that some of the legislation and policies in Nigeria have vitiated, and are not being imposed. Concerning this, authorities in the area of public policy have attributed the poor implementation of most public policies in Nigeria to a host of factors. These factors include a lack of technical expertise on issues of public policy, regulatory changes, and a lack of involvement of principal stakeholders (Makinde, 2005).

Notwithstanding, Nigeria adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2001 (Doftori 2004). The Federal Government in 2003 enacted a “Child Right Act” which was designed to regulate, streamline and monitor the inalienable rights and privileges accruable to the child from parents, community-based social obligations and government social responsibilities (Rights of the Child in Nigeria, 2003). The Child Rights Act (2003, Sec.11) identified certain inalienable rights to the dignity of a child which stipulates that:

a child shall not be exposed to any form of physical, emotional, or mental injury; exploitation, or mistreatment, including sexual abuse; nor be endangered to suffering, degrading, or inhumane treatment or punishment; suffer any form of attacks upon his or her honor or reputation nor be held in servitude or slavery while the child is under the parental care or legal guardian, including school authority, or any other person or authority having the care of the child.

In addition to the Child Right Act of 2003, Nigeria in same year, also ratified ILO Convention No. 138, the Minimum Age Convention and Convention No. 182 that calls for the prohibition and elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour which besides the involvement of children in slavery, prostitution, pornography and drug trafficking also includes work that is likely to endanger or imperil the health, safety, morals and education of young persons. These two conventions represent a statement of standard in the fight against child labour. They were introduced as the tools to fracture the backbone of child labour practices in most countries of the world. These conventions have been domesticated and have laid to rest the argument that children have no clearly definable rights in Nigeria (ILO, 2012). For purpose of clarity, an ILO Convention is an international agreement on an important labour-related issue that has been reached by governments, workers and employers meeting at the annual International Labour Conference of the ILO. After the adoption of a Convention at the Conference, each country is then asked to ratify the Convention through its legislature (parliament, congress, etc.). This process may involve the inclusion of provisions specific to the circumstances of the country. Once ratified, the country is bound to carry out the provisions of the Convention (as ratified). The ILO reviews the implementation of Conventions and holds countries accountable.

Child Labour is an age-long practice in the history of mankind. It has existed in various forms in various parts of the world since ancient times. In more recent history, child labour emerged as an issue during the industrial revolution when children were forced to work in dangerous conditions for well up to 12 hours in a day. Until 1990, child labour policy was made subservient by abolitionist methods influenced by the International Labour Organization's Minimum Age Convention (Convention 138), which stated that the minimum age for working children should not be less than 15 years of age or of completion of mandatory schooling. Acceptance of Convention 138 led to the removal of children from working situations in many nations. This caused sudden economic difficulty in many cases. The Convention also disparaged from efforts to restructure the working conditions of a child. Hence, it was criticized for promoting a Western view of childhood, subjugated by education and play, and for ignoring evidence that many families are dependent on children's earnings, and that schools may be unreachable, and too expensive. This led to calls for policy which prioritized children's overall health and wellbeing (Victor, 2018).

Array of factors have been identified to either pull or push children into child labour. Previous studies on child labour had established how family size, poverty, rural changes, corruption, ineffective laws and the lack of will to enforce them influence and perpetrate child labor. Child labour and its attendant poverty appear to be aggravated by the recent explosive phenomenon of orphan-hood associated with war, famine and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Many children also work due to the fact that the benefits of working are perceived to be greater than those of attending school. Other reasons that have been given by scholars for children's involvement in labour include exploitation by parents/guardians, children's own choice because of ignorance or love for money at their tender age, economic condition of parents, desire to help their parents/culture that belief children are to help their parents, high rate of unemployment, rapid population growth, and a host of other related factors (Ijere, 2015). These studies have also suggested how these have severe implications on children's access to basic education with associated effects on the overall child sustainable development (Olatunji & Ajayi, 2016).

The world community have averred that the persistence of child labour in the world today is unpleasant and therefore unacceptable and has raised a concern to uphold the protection of children from violence everywhere and at all times which is their fundamental rights (ILO, 2016). To this end, the international community renewed its commitment to eliminate all forms of child labour by 2025 which they have expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals. By this target, the international community has actually acknowledged that a world without violence against children reflects respect for life and human dignity, equal rights, social justice and cultural diversity. World Bank (2016) asserts that child labour is a core development and human right issue which hinders the achievement of many other development goals; and suggests that ending violence on children is an imperative for sustainable development. Children are

particularly to be protected against exposure to tasks that may translate to unlawful labour. For Jide (2008), no work should be so labourious to the point of imposing an obligation on the child.

To a very large extent, lack of interest in the elimination of child labour undermines the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria considering that there is a linkage between government policies and a number of child labour practices enhancing factors such as poverty, health and education. Doftori (2004) maintain that child labour can be effectively addressed through consistent implementation of government policies which drives at education. Fortunately enough, the Nigerian government makes basic education free and compulsory for all children but many children do not attend school. UNICEF (2017) observes that about fifteen million children in Nigeria, both boys and girls, are estimated to be working. The dropout rates for primary school are also high for both boys and girls because of several factors including child labour at the top of the list (Awosusi & Adebayo, 2012). This situation demands that concerted and deliberate actions be taken in pursuing the achievement of zero practice of child labour.

Interestingly, everywhere else in the world where child labour has been successfully combated, government played a leading role through policies initiative and implementation of innovative programmes designed to discourage and curb child labour practices (Brown, Dearthoff and Stern, 2001). Nigeria was one of the very first African countries where UNICEF established a programme of cooperation. Today, UNICEF is still working in partnership with many stakeholders, including government, civil society, children and families, to achieve national and international goals in the fulfillment of children's rights.

Apart from UNICEF/ILO countrywide studies, little empirical research attempts have been carried out to evaluate the actual performance and impact of government policies and programmes on child labour eradication in Nigeria, thus suggesting the need for further research. Moreover, though these policies on child labour may be known in Rivers State because several studies have addressed child labour from different perspectives such as its relationships with education; school enrolment and attendance as a means to stem the flow of children into labour, while others have addressed the causes and consequences on the child and the society as a whole, but the effectiveness of these government policies on child labour eradication for sustainable development in Rivers State has not been empirically examined and documented. This dearth of research has created the need for this study on government policies on the eradication of child labour for sustainable development in Rivers State. It is against this backdrop that this study is set to evaluate some government policies and programmes aimed at child labour eradication.

Statement of Problem

Child labour is a crime against the child and a problem against any society. Although it is a global phenomenon, it is morally and ethically unacceptable, and as well, an infringement of the basic rights of children: it impairs their physical and mental development and rubs the society of her future leaders and labour force because child labour prevents children from attending school or cause them to drop out from basic education. This view has been given several academic backing like Ajayi (2016) who opines that child labour is destructive to children's intellectual and physical development and therefore hampers human capital development. The implication is that missing out on education makes it impossible to break the cycle of poverty and exploitation which prevent children from having a better life and a safer future.

The global community has averred and is committed to end child labour by 2025. Fortunately, so many programmes and policies have been put in place to address the problem of child labour in our country including an impressive policy framework for child labour, and there is a growing awareness of the menace of child labour. Arguably, effective and efficient implementations of result-oriented policies have the potentials to drastically reduce to the barest minimum, if not totally eliminate child labour in Nigeria. But neither the constitutional guarantees nor the Policies have translated into action or mobilized political will to make the necessary changes in the lives of the children. Nigeria has only paid lip service to the implementation of the various policies. Perhaps, that can explain why child labour in Nigeria is still significantly large enough to warrant serious concerns because ensuring the effective monitoring and

enforcement of child labour laws in Nigeria have remained a challenge. Labour inspection system remains generally weak owing to both capacity and resource constraints. Moreover, even where inspection systems are in place, they rarely reach work places in the informal economy where most child labour is found. Therefore, without much contradiction, one can say that the formulation of policies will not result in the eradication of child labour unless there is a special focus on the rights and needs of children as an integral part of such effort. Further, although these government policies on child labour are well known in Nigeria, the realities concerning the status of children in Rivers State does not seem to respond positively to the existing policies on child labour. Moreover, their effectiveness on child labour eradication for sustainable development in Rivers State has not been empirically examined and documented. This dearth of research has created the need for this study on government policies on the eradication of child labour and sustainable development in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim and objective of the study was to investigate government policies on child labour eradication and their impact on sustainable development in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the effectiveness of government policies on eradicating child labour for sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. examine the challenges of child labour eradication for sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. How effective are the government policies in eradicating child labour for sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges of child labour eradication for sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following alternate hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁: There is significant relationship between government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is significant relationship between effective implementation of government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Government Policies

Policies are the cutting edge of national development, as well as the basic building blocks of sustainable development. Arguably, no nation can ever attain any level of development without putting in place some policies to galvanize the desired development. Tolling this line of thought, Salami (2004), assert that government policies are coordinated series of actions resulting from decisions of political actors for the purpose of achieving national development and a sustainable one for that matter because government policies stand as gateway to national development. It is in realization of the importance of government policies and programmes to child labour that various governments in Nigeria since independence has come with policies in other to bring development to the country.

Arguably, the level of development of any nation is tied to the workability of her policies in that there is a close relationship between national development and government policies (Egonmwan, 2001). Studies have indicated that formulation of policies in Nigeria is not a problem, but the problem has always been in its implementation. However, in response to the growing incidence and concerns for child labour in Nigeria as a phenomenon that deters national and sustainable development, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment developed a regulatory framework for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. The framework includes the following documents: the National Policy on Child Labour, the National Action plan on child labour and Hazardous list of child labour in Nigeria.

Sustainable Development

Development is needed to enhance the quality of the lives of citizens in a country. Specifically, sustainable development requires meeting the pressing needs of all people and extending opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. It ensures a developed world with secured and healthy environment for all; human beings, animals and plants alike (Ndubuisi-Okolo, Anekwe & Attah, 2016). Adebayo (2010) argues that sustainable development is the efforts of government (federal, state, or local) to improve the environment and the living conditions of the people in such a way as not to negatively affect generations to come. Similarly, Mohammed (2013) sees sustainable development as “the ability to preserve the existing resources of the state for collective use of citizens +while conscious efforts are made to conserve the resources for the future generations. Michael (2016) also defines sustainable development as ‘the utilization of resources to meet the economic, social and environmental needs of humans, such that the interest of the present and future generation is reserved.

Child Labour

A satisfactory discussion on an important issue as child labour should compulsorily begin with an effort to capture the very meaning of the concept. Unfortunately, the concept of child labour does not align itself to an easy definition because the person considered to be a child in one context may not be in another. Okafor (2010), observe that most individual researchers and various countries alike try to address the definition of child labour within the context of their institutions and experiences in general. This fact explains the reason for the apparent nuances and dearth of a homogenous definition of the concept. On this note, different attempts have been made to define child labour which also necessitates first to have an understanding of the meaning of a child.

Theoretical Review

Rational Choice theory by George Homas (1961)

Rational choice theory was pioneered by the sociologist George Homas in 1961. According to Blume (2008), this theory was designed for understanding social and economic behaviour. The theory stipulates that behaviour in society reflects the sum of the choices made by individuals. According to the theory, individuals make their choices based on their own preferences and the problems they face and therefore choose the action they most prefer where such actions can be evaluated in terms of costs and benefits. The theory believes that a rational individual will choose action that provides the maximum benefit when compared to the cost incurred in taking such action.

As a platform to explaining this study, it can be assumed that children go into child labour due to the limited resources and overflowing demand experienced by parents in meeting their financial obligations in the family as a result of the disturbing economic situations in the country, the choice of child labour in the family becomes necessary to augment family income. Ekpenyong and Sibiri (2011) posited that parents and guardians make the choice of engaging their children in child labour to augment the family income because of the constraint experienced in meeting family needs.

Review of Empirical Studies

Oluyemi *et al.*, (2016) investigated child labour activities in a changing world. The study explores child labour activities in a metropolis in Nigeria. The aim of this study was to unravel the factors responsible for the increase in incidences of child labour in the study population. Findings from the study revealed that, poverty as a result of low income in many families is a strong determinant of child labour among the participants. Other factors such as the need for children to exchange child labour activities for education and personal development, the need to live a better life, the need to earn a living and the need to fend for themselves were also revealed in the study as determinants to child labour in the metropolis. The study recommends that government should impose stiffer punishments for offenders of child labour offences to serve as deterrents for parents and wards who engage their children in labour activities.

Janet (2017) examined the challenge of child labour confronting children in Nigeria and the impacts on sustainable development. It seeks to investigate the causes and cases of child labour confronting children in Nigeria. The study found out that parents, government and society as responsible factors for the challenge. Other factor responsible for child labour are poverty, broken homes, unemployment, bad governance, and culture are noted as causes of child labour in Nigeria. The study further argues that the attendant of educational and socio-economic effects of child labour in Nigeria include dropping out of school, truancy, cheating in examinations, half-baked school products, rape, abortion, broken homes, health hazards, population growth, increase unemployment and underdevelopment. The study then recommends provision of job, strong security base and penalty for offenders to address the challenge of child labour in Nigeria.

Samuel (2016) carried out a study to evaluate the level of preparedness of the education sector to implement the Nigerian policy on child labor, which was adopted on September 11, 2013, by the federal executive council of Nigeria. The findings revealed that schools were evenly dispersed within the study area. However, the state of infrastructure in the schools, particularly in the rural communities, was in a condition of neglect with a high teacher pupil ratio. There was a low incidence of child labor but a weak government enforcement strategy, particularly in the interior/riverine areas of the research population. The study recommended genuine efforts to combat the issue of child labor through addressing high incidence of poverty among the citizenry. The study also recommended funding in education sector for proper preparation of the free education for all children.

Ojo (2013) investigated the determinant factors and the effects of child street hawking in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study revealed that the level of awareness of the dangers inherent in child hawking among the affected children was low. The investigation of the study showed that parents' levels of education, parents' occupations and the sizes of the family were significantly related to the problem of child hawkers in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was carried out in Rivers State. The population of this study was made-up of the thirty-two (32) Lawmakers representing the twenty-three (23) Local Government Areas of Rivers State in the Rivers State House of Assembly, 44 senior civil servants (Grade level 11-Above) of the Rivers State Ministry of Women Affairs, 22 senior Officials of the National Orientation Agency Rivers State, and 29 senior Officials of the Anti-trafficking Agency in Rivers State. The sample size for this study was 380 respondents (261 child labourers, 23 parents and 96 policy makers) in Rivers State. The study employed the multi-stage sampling technique. The first stage of the sampling process of this study was the systematic stratification of Rivers State based on senatorial districts. In the second stage of the sampling process of this study, a simple random sampling technique was also adopted in selecting the Local Government Areas from each of the sampled senatorial districts for the study. In the third stage of the sampling process of this study, the researcher employed accidental sampling technique. Child laborers from each of the randomly sampled Local Government Areas were incidentally met and interviewed, also parents of children in the remote Local Government Areas were as well interviewed on the reasons why they permit their children to go to the city and work for people whom they do not know. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Government Policies on Child Labour Eradication and Sustainable Development Questionnaire" (GPCLESDQ). The instrument (GPCLESDQ) was divided into different sections based on the purpose of the study and the group to respond to it. It was distributed to policy makers (officials of Rivers State Ministry of Women Affairs, Officials of National Orientation Agency, Officials of Anti-trafficking Agency and Members of Rivers State House of Assembly) and child labourers who were the respondents for the study. The instrument was designed in a 5-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA=5), Agree (A=4), Undecided (UN=3), Disagree (D = 2) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1). The data gathered based on the instruments of the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for

the two (2) research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to test the null hypothesis posed for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Analysis of Data and Results

The demographic characteristics of child labourers in Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Data of Child Labourers

S/N	Variables	Child Labourers (n=261) Frequency (%)
1.	Educational Status	
	No education	51(19.5)
	Nursery	48 (18.4)
	Primary	79 (30.4)
	Basic secondary	44 (16.8)
	Senior secondary	39(14.9)
2.	Gender	
	Male	115(44.06)
	Female	146(55.94)
3.	Religion	
	Christianity	198 (75.86)
	Muslim	63 (24.14)
	Others	
4.	Average Age Range	
	5-10 yrs	41 (15.70)
	11-15 yrs	162 (62.08)
	16-20 yrs	58 (22.22)

Field Survey 2020

Table 1 revealed the educational background of child labourers. The table showed that 19.5 percent of child labourers have no form of education, 18.4 percent had only attained nursery level, 30.4 percent completed primary school certificate, and 16.8 percent had obtained junior WAEC while 14.9 percent had obtained their senior secondary school certificate. The table also revealed that 44.06 percent of the child labourers were male while 55.94 were female. Also on Table 4.1, it was revealed that 75.86 percent are Christians while just 24.14 percent of the child labourers are Muslims. Finally, the table revealed that 15.70 percent of the children engaged in child labour were between the ages of 5-10 years, 62.08 percent were between ages 11-15 years while 22.22 percent were between the ages of 16-20 years.

Research Question 1: *How effective are the government policies in eradicating child labour for sustainable development in Rivers State Nigeria?*

Table 2: Mean Responses on Effective of Government Policies on Child Labour Eradication for Sustainable Development in Rivers State

S/N	Statements	Policy Makers (n=96)		
		\bar{X}_1	SD	Decision
1.	Education for All (EFA) ensured every Nigerian child stays off the street	4.19	0.65	Agreed
2.	Government scholarship scheme encourages children's schooling	4.32	0.59	Agreed
3.	NACCRAN advocacy campaigns on child's welfare contributed to the decrease in number of working children	4.14	0.81	Agreed
4.	Adult Literacy Programmes inculcate skills to enable parents generate means of livelihood for children wellbeing	4.24	0.87	Agreed
5.	Provision of free school meals for children has reduced high rate of hawking among children	4.18	0.82	Agreed
6.	Government compulsory education policy declined worst forms of labour among children	4.10	0.56	Agreed
7.	Government social auditing in industries and factories contributes in the check of working children	3.91	0.81	Agreed
8.	Free education policy improved the standard of living among children thus reduced child abuse	4.16	0.70	Agreed
9.	Poverty elevation programs takes children off the streets for proper upbringing in school	3.79	0.92	Agreed
10.	Policy advocacy on protection of children influenced behavioral changes among parents	4.33	0.73	Agreed
11.	Promotion of girl-child education project improved the number of female children in Nigeria schools	4.15	0.93	Agreed
12.	Government involvement in regulating child hawking has been able to reduce street violence among children	3.80	0.62	Agreed
13.	Provision of fees, textbooks and uniforms by government enhanced attendance of primary school age children	3.75	0.72	Agreed
14.	United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child has been able to protect children from work that is harmful	3.76	0.88	Agreed
15.	Conventions for Rights of the Child reduced child trafficking	3.88	0.97	Agreed
16.	Government provisions of sustainable work opportunities among adults reduced street violence	4.05	0.91	Agreed
17.	Establishment of universal schooling for children terminates child prostitution	3.50	0.70	Agreed
18.	Emergency agencies' intervention to crisis affected populations addressed child labour	4.21	0.92	Agreed
	Grand Mean	4.38	0.80	Agreed

Source: Field work 2020

Table 2 showed the mean and standard deviation of policy makers on how effective government policies are on child labour eradication for sustainable development in Rivers State Nigeria. Based on the responses derived, a grand mean of 4.38 was derived from policy makers which is greater than the criterion mean of 4.0. Hence it can be summarized that based on the responses derived from the respondents, government policies for eradicating child labour in Rivers State has been effective. Findings for each of the items showed that the respondents agreed that Education for All (EFA) ensured every Nigerian child stays of the street (4.19), government scholarship scheme encourages children's schooling (4.32), NACCRAN advocacy campaigns on child's welfare contributed to the decrease in number of working children (4.14), adult literacy programmes inculcate skills to enable parents generate

means of livelihood for children wellbeing (4.24), provision of free school meals for children has reduced high rate of hawking among children (4.18), government compulsory education policy declined worst forms of labour among children (4.10), government social auditing in industries and factories contributes in the check of working children (3.91), free education policy improved the standard of living among children thus reduced child abuse (4.16), poverty elevation programs takes children off the streets for proper upbringing in school (3.79), policy advocacy on protection of children influenced behavioral changes among parents (4.33), government involvement in regulating child hawking has been able to reduce street violence among children (3.80), provision of fees, textbooks and uniforms by government enhanced attendance of primary school age children (3.75), United Nation convention on the rights of the child has been able to protect children from work that is harmful (3.76) among others are the various means government policies on child labour eradication for sustainable development have been effective in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: *What are the challenges of child labour eradication for sustainable development in Rivers State Nigeria?*

Table 3: Mean Responses on Challenges of Child Labour Eradication for Sustainable Development

S/N	Statements	Policy Makers (n=96)		
		\bar{X}_1	SD	Remark
1.	Most rural families encourage child labour as a means of survival	4.01	0.76	Agreed
2.	Increase in the rate of unemployment among parents	4.42	0.65	Agreed
3.	Weak operation of agencies against child Trafficking	4.10	0.88	Agreed
4.	Poor funding of National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons affects the reduction of force labour	3.12	0.87	Agreed
5.	Inaccurate data on child labour rate limit proper evaluation reduction level	3.48	0.82	Agreed
6.	Corrupt practices among heads of agencies on child labour eradication	4.20	0.66	Agreed
7.	Lack of political will to implement stipulated laws for child labour reduction	4.24	0.81	Agreed
8.	Lack of active and sustain referral mechanism	4.36	0.70	Agreed
9.	Household poverty prevent educational opportunity for children	3.41	0.72	Agreed
10.	Religious belief among families that a child must work	3.13	1.00	Agreed
11.	Cultural practices of most rural areas motivates under age children to engage in labour	3.95	0.59	Agreed
12.	Lack of enforcement of labour restriction policies impedes the success of child labour eradication	3.80	0.62	Agreed
13.	Small-scale farming as an only source family livelihood pushes children to labour	4.15	0.52	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.27	0.80	Agreed

Source: Field work 2020

Table 3 showed the mean and standard deviation of policy makers on challenges of child labour eradication for sustainable development in Rivers State Nigeria. Based on the responses derived, a grand mean of 3.27 derived from policy makers which is lower than the criterion mean of 4.0. Findings for each of the items showed that the respondents agreed that most rural families encourage child labour as a means of survival (4.01), increase in the rate of unemployment among parents (4.41), weak operation of

agencies against child trafficking (4.10), inaccurate data on child labour rate limit proper evaluation reduction level (3.48), corrupt practices among heads of agencies on child labour eradication (4.20), lack of political will to implement stipulated laws for child labour reduction (4.24), household poverty prevent educational opportunity for children (3.41), religious belief among families that a child must work (3.13), cultural practices of most rural areas motivates under age children to engage in labour (3.95), lack of enforcement of labour restriction policies impedes the success of child labor eradication (3.80) and small-scale farming as an only source family livelihood pushes children to labour (4.15) are challenges of child labour eradication for sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria. Table 4.3 revealed that the standard deviation scores of each item (1-21 respectively) are low. Hence the values of the respondents' score are close to the means of the dataset.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 4: Relationship between Government Policies on Child Labour Eradication and Sustainable Development

		Correlations		
		Policies on Child Labour	Sustainable Development	Decision
Policies on Child Labour	Pearson Correlation	1	.309	Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009	
	N	380	380	
Sustainable Development	Pearson Correlation	.309	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009		
	N	380	380	

***S= Significant p<0.05**

The result from SPSS analysis, shows the relationship between government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria. Pearson correlation coefficient demonstrates a weak positive relationship between the two variables $r=.309$, indicating that there exists a weak positive relationship between government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria was rejected and the alternate hypothesis upheld [($P = .009$) $p<0.05$].

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between effective implementation of government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Relationship between Effective Implementation of Government Policies on Child Labour Eradication and Sustainable Development

		Correlations		
		Effective Implementation of Policies	Sustainable Development	Decision
Effective Implementation of Policies	Pearson Correlation	1	.402	Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006	
	N	380	380	
Sustainable Development	Pearson Correlation	.402	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006		
	N	380	380	

***S= Significant p<0.05**

The result from table 4.6, shows the relationship between effective implementation of government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria. Pearson correlation coefficient demonstrates a moderate relationship between the two variables $r=.402$, indicating that there exists a moderate positive relationship between effective implementation of government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between effective implementation of government policies on child labour eradication and Sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria was rejected and the alternate hypothesis upheld [$P = .006$ $p < 0.05$].

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Data in Table 2 revealed the effectiveness of government policies on child labour eradication. The study found out that the policy on education for all children ensured every Nigerian child stays off the street, government scholarship scheme encourages children's schooling, advocacy campaigns on child's welfare contributed to the decrease in number of working children and the implementation of, adult literacy programmes inculcate skills to enable parents generate means of livelihood for their children's wellbeing. The finding is in corroboration with Nwokoro (2011) who stated that to scholarship scheme for children, free school meals and schools' infrastructural development ensured many children stay off the streets, violence and protects children from series of abuse. The study also revealed that the provision of free school meals for children has reduced the rate of hawking among children, policy on compulsory education has declined the worst forms of labour among children and the implementation of social auditing in industries and factories has contributed in the check of working children.

Table 3 found out that through the implementation of education for all (EFA) good numbers of children are off the street. This is also followed by the scholarship schemes which the study also revealed encourages children's schooling. The finding is in agreement with Ana et al, (2005) who stated that the elimination of child labour through compulsory free education for young children has surprisingly boosted the economy Nigeria. The study also found out that children benefit from NACCRAN advocacy campaigns as it contributed to the decrease in number of working children. The study also revealed that adult literacy programmes inculcate skills that enables parents generate means of livelihood for children wellbeing and education. The finding is in conformity with Nielsen and Dubey (2002) who posited that the elimination of child labour has progressively removed young children from full-time work resulting to a corresponding increase in their educational attainment. The data gathered in this table also revealed that provision of free school meals has reduced high rate of hawking among children, government social auditing in industries and factories contributes in the control of working children and improved the living standard among children thus reducing child abuse. The finding is in agreement with Ana et al, (2005) who carried out a study and emphasized that the eradication of child labour benefits every such as the enhancement of opportunity for personal development and social inclusion.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concluded that child labour has eaten so deeply in Rivers State. This issue has great effect on the social, economic and personal development of children and the society. It impedes the growth of young children. Classrooms are becoming empty on every session as children constantly drop from school due to poverty and unemployment rate among parents. However, the solution to a global trouble of such is not farfetched; the possibility of putting the activities of child labour under control can only be achieved if functional laws and policies like free education for all, child partnerships programmes, policy on child's welfare, promotion of small and medium enterprise for rural and poor families and initiating effective adult literacy for skill development among others are put in place and enforced for this course.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study and conclusion made, the study hence recommend that:

1. Government should endeavor to build International Organization Partnerships that is dedicated to improving the lives of children. This will help control the activities of children on the street.
2. Establishing and implementing a strong advocacy campaign using the child right organization. This will create awareness on the consequences of child labour among families.
3. Rural communities and parents should be involved in their children's school activities. This will ensure the protection of all children against sexual violence at school and reforming the curriculum to improve the relevance of education hence giving every child reasons to stay in school.
4. The free feeding programme for primary school children should be heavily implemented around all schools in Rivers State. This will go a long way in pulling children begging on the streets.

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