

# Causes and Consequences of Violation of Child Rights of Primary School Pupils in Kebbi State Nigeria: Management Intervention Strategies

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**Abstract** - *This study assessed the causes and consequences of violation of child rights of pupils in primary school in Kebbi State. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. Head masters and Primary School Teachers and Pupils in five education zones of Kebbi state in North Western Nigeria participated in the study. Primary school pupils who are central to this study were sampled because of their experience as victims of violation of child rights. To this end 500 participants made up of 50 out of 230 schools were Head masters deliberately selected 200 primary school teachers out of 1670 and 250 pupils out of 26800 were selected by stratification, cluster and simple random sampling technism for the study. The participants cut across urban and rural schools, private and public schools. An equal number of 10 schools were purposely selected from each of the five Education Zones to get 50 schools out of 230 schools self-designed structured questionnaire titled "Causes and Consequences of Child's Right Violation Questionnaire" (CCCRVQ) was used for data collection. The instrument had three sections that captured the causes, consequence and management intervention strategies to be applied to uphold child right. Internal consistency of items was analysed using Crombach alpha coefficient which yield 0.78. A total of 250 copies of the instrument were administered to participants on the sport collection of completed questionnaire was used to obtain 100% return rate. The items were scored on four point Likert scale. Weighed means were used and a cut off mean of 2.50 and above was used for acceptance while mean below 2.50 indicated rejection. A Grand Mean was also calculated for overall accept are or rejection. Interview format was developed from the items on the questionnaire to elicit pupils responses. The pupils were interviewed by trained research assistants with the help of guidance counselors in each school. Findings of the study show that child right violation is caused by social economic, political and cultural factors. Violation of child right have negative consequence both on the individual and society at large. School managements must apply various intervention strategies to promptly address violation of child right in their domains.*

**Key word:** Child Rights, School Management, Intervention Strategies, violation, Pupils.

## INTRODUCTION

There is no universal definition of a child as the concept is culture biased. However, children's Act of 1989 and Family Law Act of 1996 defined a child to mean every human being below the age of 18years. The focus of this paper is on primary school children who fall between the ages of 5-12years (Federal Republic of Nigeria, [1]. Other children that may be affected but not included in this study are those who are below five years or above the age 12 as those children largely fall within the group of pre-primary and post-primary school levels in Nigeria.

Children at the primary school are at the foundation and perhaps the most critical level in the

education ladder and everything possible must be done to provide them with quality education and proper upbringing. That is why the United Nation's Geneva Convention of November 1924 ratified a Charter on Child's Rights as reported by Abdulmumuni [2] to include: A right to life, a name from birth and a nationality. A right to family life and to live with parents, unless judged to be incompatible with the child's interest; A right to be brought up by family in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, peace and brother hood; A right to adequate standard of living and requisite means of survival in an environment that is conducive for full and harmonies development; A right to education which shall be free and compulsory at least in the

elementary stage; A right to give special education, treatment and care if the child is handicapped or disabled; A right to tender loving care which include the right to be feed when hungry, to be treated when sick, adequately clothed, properly sheltered, and well groomed; A right to full opportunity for play, exercise, recreation, rest and adequately sleep; A right to enjoy special and full protection before and after birth; Right to be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty, kidnapping, exploitation, sexual abuse, trafficking, hard labor; A right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, privacy, freedom of movement, fair hearing dignity of the human person and non-discrimination (p.71).

In spite of United Nations Convention, to protect Child Right as provided in 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Child rights, it appears that many rights of the child are still being trampled upon. There are diverse ways in which children's; rights are abused. A child's right can be abused by being starved, beaten, imprisoned in an enclosure, given hard labor, sexually defiled, abandoned, neglected when sick, trafficked and being denied some basic rights Clement [3]. In some cases child rights are abused by strangers, close relations, parents, teachers and even school administrators Tella [4]. This ugly situation seem to be wide spread in Nigeria and Kebbi state in particular Virtually no part of the world may be absolutely immune from Child Rights abuse. In many cases school managers do not take concrete steps to enforce child right in their schools. Thus the main thrust of this paper is to investigate the causes of child rights abuse, the consequences of child Rights abuse and school management intervention strategies that school mangers may apply to address the ugly trend.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical basis of this paper is drawn from Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory in Manga [5]. The theory postulates that every individual has physiological and psychological needs which are arranged in a hierarchy towards self-actualization. The physiological needs include the need for fresh air, good drinking water, adequate food, suitable clothing, comfortable shelter, exercise, recreation rest and sleep. Psychological needs include the need for safety and security, the need for acceptance, recognition, affiliating and self-actualization Manga, [5] These needs are precisely addressed by various principles entrenched in the child rights Laws and constitutional provisions. This is because the whole

issue of child rights is to guarantee that every child is given the opportunity of full development and of meeting the child's basic needs for survival. Although these rights are established to safeguard and protect the child, yet they are constantly violated without minding the consequences. It should be noted that the theory underpin the topic of the discussion because the children needs have to be considered and satisfied before a meaningful Teaching learning process are to effectively taken place in the primary Schools in Nigeria.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following objectives were formulated to guide the conduct of this study: to find out the causes of violation of Child Rights of primary school pupils in Kebbi State; to examine the consequences of violation of child rights of primary school pupils in Kebbi State; to investigate management intervention strategies be executed by school managers to address violation of child rights of primary school pupils in Kebbi State.

However, to find out the causes of child right violations many researchers have talked on the various manifestations of child rights violations. A child can be abused by being starved, punished severely, and being denied some basic rights. In spite of global condemnation, cases of violation of childcausesrights violation have persisted over time. No realistic solution may be found without an objective and comprehensive investigation of the causes of child rights violation. Akintude[6]., opined that violation of child rights may be traced to social factors as child abuse is most likely to be rampant in any society that is infested with crimes, violence, social discrimination and high level of corruption. Abdulmumini[2].in his view maintained that violation of child rights may be pinned down to political factors. This is because violation of child rights will be inevitable where the political will to enforce the constitutional provisions on child rights and to severely punish offenders is lacking. From the environmental causes, Alexander (1980) noted that where there is high level of insecurity in the environment, unhealthy neighborhoods and unfriendly school environment, violation of child rights will most likely be inevitable. From the economic causes, Akue [7] argued that harsh economic realities characterized by high level of poverty and deplorable standard of living may lead to illegal exploitative child labor, deprivations of basic needs and other violations of child rights. On moral causes, Ajitomobi [8] and that moral decadence in society may contribute to violation of child rights in the area of sex abuse which is

characterized by rape, incest, sodomy, subjecting the child to forced prostitution, sex slavery, pornography, bestiality among other abominable carnal vices. This sometimes results in unwanted pregnancies, abortions, abandoned babies and outright murder of unwanted children. Benedicts [9].noted that parental causes may contribute to child right abuse where the loss of one or both parents renders children orphans especially in cases where they are not properly catered for by blood relations or the government. In some cases irresponsible parents may criminally neglect and abandon their children. Clement [3] noted that harmful cultural practices of early marriages, genital mutilations in Southern Nigeria and the Almajiri practices in Northern Nigeria may significantly contribute to violation of child rights.

The consequences of violation of child rights in any society in the long run can be disastrous and irreversible. Colin [10] notes that children who suffer under bad political leadership may grow up to become reckless and self-centered leaders. A society that violates child rights may propagate and transmit distorted values, criminality, discrimination and other harmful vices Chianu, [11]. It should be noted that economic meltdown in society characterized by high rates of inflation, unemployment, low productivity and poor standard of living may lead to vicious circle of perpetual violation of child rights.

Harmilton [12] argued that child abuse may lead to high level of insecurity in which the environment may be characterized by terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, hooliganism, cultism, communal clashes among others. Nwagwu [16] maintained that violating a child's right to education results in illiteracy, ignorance, poor manpower, and lack of scientific technological and all round development of society. Ajetumobi [8] posits that violation of child's rights will breed children who grow up to be immoral, religious fanatics, and spiritually bankrupt. It can therefore be summarized that child rights violation definitely have a negative impact on all round development of the child both physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, among others. As Ogunsola [13] notes that violation of child rights may lead to destruction of cultural heritage and global understanding.

School managers at the primary school lead have a serious responsibility of applying various managerial intervention strategies to enforce and uphold child rights in the schools. It was however, suggested the school managers should review and update school curriculum to incorporate child rights. Tella [4] suggested that school managers should

strictly supervise and monitor activities of students and teachers to prevent acts of child rights violation in their schools. The author opined that school managers should promptly apply stiff penalties and sanctions in proven cases of child rights violations in their schools and that school management could assist poor parents and pupils to get free legal aid for the prosecution of violation of children's rights in courts when it becomes necessary. Alexander [14] advises that school managers could use institutional mechanisms such as appealing to National Human Right Commission to intervene in serious cases of violation of child rights of their pupils. The author therefore, stated that school managers could use multi-media approaches, interactive sessions and other public enlightenment strategies to inform, educate and conscientize the general public on the existence of laws on child rights and the consequences of violation of child rights.

## **METHODS**

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. Head masters and Primary School Teachers and Pupils in five education zones of Kebbi state in North Western Nigeria participated in the study. Primary school pupils who are central to this study were sampled because of their experiences as victims of violation of child rights. To this end 500 participants made up of 50 out of 230 School were Head masters deliberately selected 200 primary school teachers out of 1670 and 250 pupils out of 26800 were selected by stratification, cluster and simple random sampling technique for the study. The participants cut across urban and rural schools, private and public schools. An equal number of 10 schools were purposely selected from each of the five Education Zones to get 50 schools out of 230 schools self-designed structured questionnaire titled "Causes and Consequences of Child's Right Violation Questionnaire" (CCCRVQ) was used for data collection. The instrument had three sections that captured the causes, consequence and management intervention strategies to be applied to uphold child right. Internal consistency of items was analyzed using Cronbach alpha coefficient which yield 0.78. A total of 250 copies of the instrument were administered to participants. The items were scored on four point Likert scale. Weighted means were used and a cut off mean of 2.50 and above was used for acceptance while mean below 2.50 indicated rejection. A Grand Mean was also calculated for overall acceptance or rejection. Interview format was developed from the items on the questionnaire to elicit pupils responses. The

pupils were interviewed by trained research assistants with the help of guidance counselors in each school.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1. Causes of violation of child rights of primary school pupils in Kebbi State (N=500)**

Cause of violation of child right	WM	Decision
1. Lack of political will to enforce child rights	3.36	Accepted
2. Lack of severe punishment for violators of child rights	2.96	Accepted
3. Environmental insecurity erode child rights	3.26	Accepted
4. Unfriendly school and home environment violate child rights	3.24	Accepted
5. High level of poverty and natural calamities affect child rights	3.12	Accepted
6. Moral decadence in society deprived children of their rights	3.58	Accepted
7. Harmful cultural practices negatively impact on children rights	3.58	Accepted
8. Ignorance of Law on child rights lead to rampant child abuse	3.48	Accepted
9. Religious fanaticism destroys child rights	3.61	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Table 1 show that the mean responses of Headmasters, Teachers and Pupils on all the items were above 2.50 marks. The grand mean of 3.34 also implies that the participate. As accepted all the items as the cause of violation of child’s rights of pupils in schools.

**Table 2. Consequences of Violation of child Rights of Primary Pupils in Kebbi State**

Consequences of violation child’s rights	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1. Nurturing reckless future leaders	3.10	Accepted
2. Transmission of distorted social values	2.93	Accepted
3. Future economic calamities	2.52	Accepted
4. Time bomb for national insecurity	3.33	Accepted
5. Breeding of illiteracy and ignorance	2.90	Accepted
6. Perpetuating moral and spiritual bankruptcy	2.94	Accepted
7. Destruction of cultural violence	3.01	Accepted
8. Future global conflict and misunderstanding	2.85	Accepted
9. Depriving children of all round development	2.78	Accepted
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Responses from the items on table 2 shows that the mean responses of Head master, teachers and

pupils on the nine items on the consequences of violation of child rights were above 2.50. The table also has a grand mean or 2.93 which indicates that the respondents agreed that all the items in table 2 are the consequences of violation of child right of primary school pupils in Kebbistate.

**Table 3. Management intervention strategies to address violation of child rights of primary school pupils**

Management strategies	intervention	Decision
1. Do curriculum reforms for child rights	3.71	Accepted
2. Monitoring and supervision staff to prevent violation	4.42	Accepted
3. Apply punishment for violators of child right	2.60	Accepted
4. Assist poor pupils to get free legal aid	2.97	Accepted
5. Appeal to Human Rights Commission	2.93	Accepted
6. Write to the court for prosecution	3.07	Accepted
7. Enlighten teachers and pupils on child right	3.16	Accepted
8. Use multi-media to propagate child right	3.21	Accepted
9. Counsel parents and guardian on child right	3.25	Accepted
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Table 3 shows that the mean responses of Headmasters, Teachers and Pupils in all the nine items were above the 2.50 decision mark. The Grand Mean 3.25 also indicate that the participants accepted all the items in table 3 as the management intervention strategies that can be executed by school managers to address violation of child rights of primary school pupils in Kebbi state.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Causes of violation of child rights of primary school pupils in Kebbi State include lack of enforcement of child rights, lack of severe punishment of violators of child rights, unfriendly home and school environments, moral decadence, ignorance of the law of child rights among others. The consequences of violation of child rights of primary school pupils in Kebbi State include nurturing of reckless children, transmission of distorted social values, future national insecurity, breeding of literacy, destruction of cultural heritage and depriving children all round development among others.

Findings in research question one revealed various causes of violations of child rights of pupils

of primary schools in Kebbi state. These causes include lack of political will by government to enforce child right laws especially where the perpetrators are highly placed individuals in society. There is also lack of severe punishment for violation of child rights such as in cases of involving sexual abuse and domestic violation on children. The state of environmental insecurity in Nigeria has exposed children to being brutally attacked, injured and killed by terrorists and kidnappers for ransom, and forced to live in unhealthy environments in Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) Camps. High level of poverty have unintentionally compelled poor parent to be engaged in petty trading for long hours without the opportunity for recreation, rest and sleep. In many instances natural calamities or disasters such as floods, violent rainstorms, drought and fire outbreak placed children in precarious situation where their rights cannot be guaranteed due to sudden loss of shelter, property and means of live hood. The findings agree with Ogundele, Jimba and Musa [15] who opined that moral decadence is a major cause of violation as it exposes children to pornography, rape, sodomy, prostitution incest and other evils. Finding also agree with Akye (2005) attributed cause of violence to harmful cultural practices of child genital mutilation, and child marriages, high level of ignorance of the laws on child rights as well as religion fanaticism.

Results of research question two indicate that violation of child right have consequences to the individual and society as a whole. This finding agrees with Chianu[11].who indicated that violation of a child rights will nurture children who grow up to become reckless and self-centered leaders. It will lead to transmission of distorted societal value which children will come to accept as normal in view of their poor upbringing. The findings agree with Hamilton [12].who noted that violation of child right could breed children who become violent thereby creating a time bomb for national insecurity and economic calamities. In line with the finding, Nwankwo [16] noted that violation of child right can lead to denying children of natural development of their personality, which will in turn lead to destruction of eruptional value, engender as to future global conflicts and misunderstanding.

The finding of research question three indicated that there are various management intervention strategies which school managers could execute to address violation of child rights of primary schools pupils in Kebbi State. This finding shows that the first intervention is for management of primary schools to incorporate child rights in the school curriculum. School managers should strictly

monitor and supervise the activities of staff and pupils so as to prevent violation of child right in their schools. School heads could apply appropriate punishment for violation of child right within the level they can handle to deter future re-occurrence.

The findings agree with Nwachukwu [17] who suggested that among many strategies that school managers could apply to curb instances of violation of child rights include assisting poor pupils to get free legal aid, appeal to Human Rights Commission for intervention in difficult cases and may directly write to the court for precaution of extreme cases of violations of child's rights affecting pupils. The finding also agree with Yusuf[18] who suggested that among the best strategies against violation of child rights is for school managers to enlighten, teachers, parents and students on child right through interactive sessions, and use of multimedia approaches to propagate consciousness of child rights as well as counseling parents and guardian or child right. Child right violation is an ugly phenomenon that has local and global tentacles. No child is absolutely immune from violation of its rights in one way or the other. Critical causes of violation of child right could be traced to political economic, environment and socio-cutting factors. These causes, if not meticulously checked and eradicated can lead to dire consequences. Critical among the consequences include nurturing future leaders who might become reckless, transmission of distorted values, economic calamities, uncontrollable state of insecurity and moral bankruptcy. Management intervention strategies that school managers can apply include curriculum reforms, monitoring and supervision of activities of staff and pupils, appeal to appropriate authorities for intervention and public enlightenment through multimedia approaches.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

School managers in primary schools in Kebbi State should liaise with other stake holders in education, legal expert political authorities, religious leaders and social scientists to examine various causes of violation of child rights. This will make it possible to identify appropriate solutions to address each of the causes of child rights violation for a better society.

School managers should use various public enlightenment strategies to conscientize on the consequences of violation of child rights. The knowledge of consequences may spur people to take action to eradicate occurrences of violation of child rights.

School managers have the obligation to urgently execute various intervention strategies to address violation of child right of primary school pupils in Kebbi State. They should strictly monitors activities in the school and punish violation of child right. They should focus on enlightening teachers and pupil on child right laws, forms of violation, consequences and preventive strategies.

The study is limited to primary education of pupils' child right. Further studies can focus on other levels of Education inNigeria and in other countries

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