

CHILD ABUSE AMONG PARENTS IN EKITI STATE: IMPLICATION FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

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Abstract

The study examined various child abuse practices among parents in Irepodun/Ifelodun Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The purpose of the study was to find out the main cause(s) of child abuse and which form(s) of abuse is more prevalent in the state. Data was collected from two hundred children (male and female) below the age of 18 years old from Irepodun/Ifelodun L.G.A, using stratified random sampling. The instrument of the study was a self-constructed 40-item questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was established by face and content validity, while a test-retest method was employed to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, using Pearson product movement correlation equation to estimate the reliability co-efficient. The data were analyzed using frequency count and percentage. Chi-Square test was used to test all the hypotheses, at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The result showed that there was no significance difference between child abuse practices in urban and rural areas, polygamous and monogamous families. However, significant difference was found between literate and illiterate, intact and broken homes.

Keywords: Child abuse, child abuse practices, sexual abuse, child maltreatment, physical abuse and parents

Introduction

The rate at which children are being abused in Ekiti State calls for immediate intervention of all stakeholders in the state. More so, the spate of child abandonment in the state, which has led to increase in the numbers of children at the motherless babies' home in the state, is another major concern.

Children of different age range, from a day old upward are found helpless and abandoned at different parts of the state. Babies are dropped on refuse grounds, uncompleted building, bushes, isolated environments, including the ones found in the pit toilets.

Furthermore, it has also been noticed that parents/guardians are seen physically abusing, stressing and exploiting their children at different point in time. In some families, especially the rural areas, children have gone to a farm before reporting at school. This also justifies another reason for embarking on this study.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), child labor (a form of abuse) refers to children under 15 years, working to earn a living for self or family usually under conditions that damage physical and mental development.

In its contribution, the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, ANPPCAN (1963), defined child abuse as the intentional, unintentional nor well intentional acts which endanger the physical, health, emotional, moral and the educational welfare of the child.

Anukan (1986) analyzing the different kinds of child abuse, gave the definitions of five kinds of child abuse as, physical abuse, being a bodily injury which the parents or caregiver may inflict on the child. Emotional abuse may occur when the parent or caregiver is so dependent on the child that parent child role is reserved. Emotional neglect, this occurs when parents show no sign of love or hatred towards the child, thus, the child feels empty. Verbal abuse, which is the most commonly used, includes raising insults on the child. Sexual abuse on the other hand involves, using a child for sexual gratification. All these are the major areas of abuse found around here. On the other hand, child abuse practices are the various acts perpetrated by parents, guardians, friends and older people against the child which literarily affects his/her physical, psychological and moral development.

There are several factors that encourage child abuse in Nigeria, particularly in Ekiti State. No single explanation has been given for the cause of child abuse. Many divergent views have however, been put across from a complex combination of personal, social and cultural factors.

The social science encyclopedia (1993) grouped those factors, namely inter-generational transmission of violence, social stress, social isolation and low family financial support.

However, in Ekiti State, the child abuse practice could be traced to the following: poverty, ignorance, low income status and cultural believe.

It has been discovered that child abuse could cause and lead to various side effects directly or indirectly. Child abuse may permanently alter the psychological well being of a child; following abuse, children are known to display the following problems: unusual high level of anger and aggression, feeling of guilt and shame; for sexual abuse victims this could be severe, general fearfulness and specific manifestations of phobia, depression symptoms , social withdrawal, low self-concept, feelings of stigmatization, intrusive thoughts, fear, depression and loneliness are some of the effects of child abuse.

The study is not just necessary but also relevant in our society. The study is so important to the society because of the high level of so many children are being abused today. Also, the study is relevant to children, government, families and religious organizations because it could help to reduce the trend and enlighten the public of the child right act.

The study aims at providing answers to the following research questions:

Is there any difference between child abuse practices in urban and rural area?

Is there any difference between child abuse practices among illiterate parents and literate parents/families?

Is there any difference between child abuse practices between polygamous and monogamous families?

Is there any difference between child abuse practices between intact and broken homes?

Statement of the Problem

Child abuse affects many children of all ages. Child maltreatment, physical abuse, psychological maltreatment, severe beating, neglect, sexual abuse and emotional abuse are key areas of concern in Ekiti State.

Below are some of the prevalent series of child abuse noticeable in the state:

Hawking (during school hours), child labor, child abandonment, severe beating, starvation and child neglect.

All these calls for immediate intervention of all stakeholders, government, parents/guardians, teachers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious bodies.

Child abuse as a social problem has disastrous effects on the developmental growth of children. It is in view of this that individuals, organizations and researchers are poised to stem this ugly tide.

In this study, the following general questions were raised.

*In what areas are child abuse practices more pronounced?

*What are the main causes of child abuse practices in Ekiti State?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out the causes of child abuse in Ekiti State. More so, the study aim at identifying which form of child abuse is more prevalent in the state. Also, examine the level and nature of child abuse practice in Ekiti State. Finally, identify and analyze the steps to be taken in curbing and eliminating the incidence in the State and in the society at large.

Research Hypotheses

There is no significant difference between child abuse practices in urban and rural areas.

There is no significant difference between child abuse practices between among illiterate parents/families and literate parents/families

There is no significant difference between child abuse practices between polygamous and monogamous families.

There is no significant difference between child abuse practices between intact and broken homes.

Methods

Research methods present the methodology adopted for the study. It includes the research design, population, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, the validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, administration of the instrument and the data analysis.

The population for the study consists of all children and students i central senatorial district with Irepodund/Ifelodun Local Government area as a case study.

Respondents below the ages of 18 years old constitute the target population in each town and village of Irepodun/Ifelodun Local Government Area.

To draw the sample for the study, 200 children (male and female) below the age of 18 years old were randomly selected from the studied areas.

Stratified random sampling technique was employed because “it has the advantage of allowing the researcher to include sub-groups that are of particular interest to the study” Bandele (2004)

The instrument of the study is a self-constructed 40-item questionnaire titled Child Abuse Inventory (CAI). The instrument contains two sections.

Section one elicits background information while section two seeks information relating to how children were being abused in Ekiti State.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of an instrument is its measure of consistence, stability, dependability, predictability, precision and accuracy.

A test-retest method was employed to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. An interval of two weeks was allowed for proper test-retest method.

The reliability coefficient is at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The Pearson Product Movement Correlation Equation was used:

$$rtt = \frac{N\sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{\{N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2\} \{N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2\}}}$$

Where rtt= reliability coefficient

N= Number of students in the sample

X= Scores in the 1st administration of the test

Y = Scores in the 2nd administration of the test

Administration of the Instrument

Two hundred (200) copies of the questionnaire forms were distributed personally to the respondents. Brief explanation was offered before, during and after the administration. Personnel administration was employed because it enables maximum returns after proper response.

Data Analysis

The data collected were subjected to frequency count and percentages. They were analyzed using chi-square to test the hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results and Discussion

This presents the results obtained from the survey. It is divided into two sections, presentation of results and discussion of the results. The data is analyzed using frequency count, percentage and chi-square.

The formulated hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

General Question One

In what areas are child abuse practices more pronounced?

Using frequency count percentage:

Table I: Showing which type(s) of abuse is more pronounced

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
	YES	%	NO	%
1. I hawk to support the family	136	68	64	32
2. Sometimes I do menial job to keep the family.	108	54	92	46
3. My parents/guardians beat me often	154	77	46	23
4. My parents/guardians sometimes deny me of food	116	58	84	42

5 . My parents/guardians do abuse me verbally	176	88	24	12	
6. My parents/guardians have injured me before	96	48	104	52	
7. I do go to farm to help & support the family	128		64	72	36
8. I engage in house-help to keep the family	72		36	128	64

*N=Total=200, Percentage (%)

From the above data, verbal abuse and constant beating are the areas where child abuse practices are more pronounced.

General Question Two

What are the main causes of child abuse practices in Ekiti State

Using frequency count percentage:

Table II: Showing the main cause of abuse

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
	YES	%	NO	%
1. My father & mother are not living together	104	52	96	48
2. My mother is no longer living with my father	104	52	96	48
3. I do not go to school because of money	92	46	108	54
4. I didn't attend school because I didn't have father/mother	88	44	112	56
5. My parents/guardians are aware of my rights under the law	48	24	152	76
6. Is child abuse a crime under the Nigerian law	44	22	156	78

*N=Total=200, Percentage (%)

The above data revealed that, ignorance is the main cause of child abuse practices in Ekiti State. The results showed that, most parents/guardians and children are not aware of the right of a child under the law.

Research Hypotheses

HYPOTHESIS ONE:

There is no significant difference between child abuse practices in urban and rural areas.

Using chi-Square test

Table III: Showing the difference in child abuse practices in urban and rural areas.

FORM S of ABUSE	Hawking	Menial Job	Beating	Starvation	Verbal Assault	Physical Assault (injury)	Farmining	House Help	Total	X cal	X tab	Df
URBAN	72	48	73	56	89	44	57	40	479	5.26	14.07	7
RURAL	64	60	81	60	87	52	71	32	507			
TOTAL	136	108	154	116	176	96	128	72	986			

The table shows that X calculate is 5.26 and X table value is 14.07

Decision: Since X calculated is less than X table value, therefore, hypothesis one which states that there is no significant difference between child abuse practices in urban and rural areas is accepted.

HYPOTHESIS TWO:

There is no significant difference between child abuse practices among illiterate parents/families and literate parents/families.

Table IV: Showing the differences between child abuse practice among illiterate and literate parents

FORMS of ABUSE	Hawking	Menial Job	Beating	Starvation	Verbal Assault	Physical Assault (injury)	Farmin g	House Help	Total	X cal	X tab	D f
LITERATE	36	22	60	38	76	18	28	16	294	38.41	14.07	7
ILLITERATE	100	86	94	78	100	78	100	56	692			
TOTAL	136	108	154	116	176	96	128	72	986			

The above table shows that the calculated value is greater than the table value.

Decision: Therefore, the hypothesis two, which states that there is no significant difference between child abuse practices among illiterate parents/families and literate parents/families is rejected.

HYPOTHESIS THREE:

There is no significant difference between child abuse practices between polygamous and monogamous families.

The hypothesis is tested using chi-square test.

Table V: showing the difference between child abuse practices between polygamous and monogamous families.

FORMS of ABUSE	Hawking	Menial Job	Beating	Starvation	Verbal Assault	Physical Assault (injury)	Farmin g	House Help	Total	X cal	X tab	D f
POLYGAMOUS	70	56	80	56	88	48	72	38	508	4.15	14.07	7
MONOGAMOUS	66	52	74	60	88	48	56	34	478			
TOTAL	136	108	154	116	176	96	128	72	986			

*There above table shows that X calculated is 4.15 and X table value is 14.07

Decision: Since X calculated is less than X table value, therefore, hypothesis three which states that there is no significant difference between child abuse practices between polygamous and monogamous families is accepted.

HYPOTHESIS FOUR

There is no significant difference between child abuse practices between intact and broken homes.

Table VI: representing the various child abuse practices between intact and broken homes.

FORMS of ABUSE	Hawking	Menial Job	Beating	Starvation	Verbal Assault	Physical Assault (injury)	Farming	House Help	Total	X cal	X tab	Df
INTACT HOMES	64	48	77	56	87	42	60	30	464	36.14	14.07	7
BROKEN HOMES	72	60	77	60	89	54	68	42	522			
TOTAL	136	108	154	116	176	96	128	72	986			

*The table shows that X calculated is greater than X table value.

Decision: Since X calculated is greater than X table value, hypothesis for which states, there is no significant difference between child abuse practices between intact and broken is rejected.

Discussion

The findings show that verbal abuse, constant beating, hawking and farming are the areas which child abuse practices are more pronounced. Keep kids healthy .com (2006) also confirms the findings by stating different major forms of child abuse, which include physical assault or beating and emotional or verbal abuse.

General question two looked into main caused of child abuse practices in Ekiti State. The result showed that most children and parents/guardians are not aware of the right of a child under the law. This means that ignorance forms the major cause of child abuse practices. This has been the reason why children are being neglected and misused.

Hypothesis one states that, there is no significant difference between child abuse practices in urban and rural areas. After the findings, it was gathered that there was no significant difference between child abuse practices in urban and rural areas. The hypothesis is accepted. The results were confirmed by keeping kids healthy.com (2006), which states that “child abuse happens in all cultural, ethnic and income groups”.

The second hypothesis states that, there is no significant difference between child abuse practices among illiterate parents/families and literate parents/families. However, after the research, it was the reverse; among the illiterate the following were noticeable as a form of punishment beating, starvation and physical assault and less profound among the literate as a form of punishment.

Hypothesis three, those states that, there is no significant difference between polygamous and monogamous families. However, the findings confirmed the hypothesis, meaning that, child abuse practices are not limited to polygamous families. It is both

common and found in polygamous and monogamous families. The result is also reported by child abuse.com (2006) that “child abuse is a general phenomenon practiced by both small and large groups, polygamous, monogamous, rich, poor, able and the disable”.

Hypothesis four states that there is no significant difference between child abuse practices between intact and broken homes was rejected.

The findings showed that there were significant differences between child abuse practices between intact and broken homes as this is evident in the report.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined child abuse among parents in Ekiti State. The purpose of the study was to find out the main causes of child abuse practices and which form of abuse is more prevalent.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

It was discovered from that, there was no significant difference between child abuse practiced in urban and rural areas. This therefore, implies that, child abuse is commonly practiced in both urban and rural areas, and there is no difference in the level of practices in both places.

Also, the study revealed that there was a significant difference between child abuse practices among illiterate and literate parents. This connotes that, education plays a significant role in the eradication of child abuse practices.

The research further revealed that, there were significant difference child abuse practices between intact and broken homes. It therefore implies that, children from broken homes are more likely to experience more abuse and are prone to abuse, while children from intact homes are exposed to less forms of abuse.

The following recommendations are given in view of the general questions and hypotheses.

Parents/guardians should be enlightened on the harmful effects and the cumulative negative impart child abuse as on a child especially when it is done during school hours.

Child abuse practices should be discouraged drastically by educating the parents, guardians and children on the right of a child under the law. The child right bill should be implemented in order to eradicate the menace at both urban and rural areas.

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