

**POVERTY AND GIRL CHILD LABOUR: AN EXAMINATION OF  
JAAGI, KPAKI AND MUWO WARDS OF MOKWA LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AREA, NIGER STATE**

*BY*

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**ABSTRACT**

*The multifaceted nature of Poverty makes its definition elusive. It has varied perspectives and connotations given by different individuals and scholars. It is a situation of inadequacy or complete absence of resources in terms of basic necessities of life such as food, cloth and shelter. Poverty can be relatively confined to individual household within a community where majority lives in affluence and it can be community based where its manifestation affects almost everybody in the community. It is against this backdrop that this paper conceptualized poverty under the purview of general connotation, poverty as deprivation and poverty in psychological perspective. The paper investigated the relationship between parental poverty and girl child labour, relationship between illiteracy and girl child labour and evaluated government poverty reduction programmes in the study area, using 300 respondents randomly selected. Face to face interview, focused group discussion and observation are the methodological choices of this paper. Simple percentages and tables were used as the tools of analysis. The paper was guided by three causal hypotheses and the result revealed material poverty, social cultural values, proximity to three major transportation routes and absence of government interventionist programmes of poverty reduction as the causal factors responsible for girl child labour export from the study area. By implication this paper suggested aggressive human capital development, infrastructural development, investment in the occupational equipments of the people as the solution to girl child labour export.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The phenomenon of poverty is multidimensional and it has eluded any precise definition. Consequently, it has become a subject of discourse by different scholars in different perspectives. In consonance with the above

Okunmadewa (2001) acknowledged the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and decipher it as physiological deprivation, social deprivation and human freedom deprivation. Physiological deprivation has the nexus of inadequate basic needs of food, nutrition, health and education. The social deprivation configures lack of resources to participate in customary activities (Social exclusion). While human freedom deprivation is the denial of rights and freedom or lack of dignity, self respect, security and justice.

The repugnant monster of poverty is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria because over the years there have been people who are unable to meet their basic necessities of life inspite of the abundant human and material resource endowment of the country. A World Bank report in Tokumbo (2003) opined that since the collapse of the oil boom of the 1970s, there has been a dramatic increase in the incidence and depth of poverty in Nigeria both in urban and rural areas. It is therefore not an illusion when Raanan in Tadaró (2000) said humanity shares one planet, but it is a planet on which there are two worlds. The world of the rich and the world of the poor.

However, with development and epochal changes in human society, men entered into social contract and relinquished their powers to a more organized institution (state) that is charged with the responsibility of making life comfortable for its citizens. Nigeria is no exception in the common good stance of the state. Therefore, when notable Nigerians agitated for decolonization and subsequent independence, they meant total freedom and sustainable comfort from self-government. But the government turned out to be government of looters, exploiters and collaborators with predatory relationship where people obtain goods not through productive efforts but by extorting the claims to social surplus on the basis of one's position, ownership and control over the means of production and exchange organization. (Nuhu Yaqub 1993, and Haroun, 1982)

This predatory relationship has impoverished a significant number of Nigerians. It is on the basis of this persistent poverty in Nigeria over the last few decades that Jega (2007:2) commented that:

*Nigeria has grappled and battled with a profound paradox. Our country has enormous resources endowments ranging from human to physical resources to mineral resources and vast potentialities. Sadly, unfortunately, a lot of these have been wasted, squandered even vandalized. Opportunities for purposeful socioeconomic development have been misused with reckless abandon. In general except for few*245

*isolated cases credible, competent and patriotic leadership has eluded us. We have been in general bedeviled by inept, corrupt, incompetent, egocentric, and selfish personalities occupying critical positions of responsibilities which they discharge irresponsibly. In this circumstance, governance has been feeble and irresponsible to popular expectations and governors have been predatory and prebendal in their management of national resources.*

With this dramatic dominance of few hegemonic political class and their cabals in governance, majority of the masses become relegated to the background. As such, the masses become so compelled to sell out their labour power in order to survive. The peasant rural dwellers that dominate the primary sector of the Nigerian economy are mostly the victims of this deprivation. Consequently where the income from the sales of their farm produce cannot provide their physiological and other material needs adequately, they augment it by leasing out their children for child labour in major cities of Nigeria.

#### **SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

The paper is focused on poverty and girl child labour export in Jaagi Kpaki and Muwo wards of Mokwa local government area of Niger state. Primary data was gathered from the field through the instrumentation of face-to-face interview, focused group discussion and observation. The secondary data was mainly content analysis, which is the utilization of library materials such as textbooks, Newspapers, Magazines, Journals, Internet materials, archival materials and publications of government agencies.

In order to get a reliable data from the field, three hundred (300) head of households were randomly selected from the three wards based on number of villages in each ward. Jaagi ward has eighteen (18) villages, Muwo has fourteen (14) villages and Kpaki has eleven (11) Villages. Simple percentages and tables were used in data analysis.

#### **CONCEPTUALIZATION OF POVERTY, ITS CAUSES AND THEORETICAL FRAME WORK.**

Poverty is a recurrent phenomenon in the history of human existence. Its meaning has varied interpretations depending on scholars and its degree of manifestation in human societies. It is often linked to inadequacy or complete absence of resources needed for comfortable life on earth. Consequently, United National Development Programme (UNDP) summit of

1995 defined poverty as lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood. It includes hunger, malnutrition, illhealth, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased mobility and mortality from illness, inadequate housing, unsafe environment, social discrimination and exclusion. This entails one's inability to participate in decision making, civic, social and cultural life.

Onibokun and Kumuyi (1991), Nemedia (2001), and National Bureau of statistics (NBS, 1996). All conceive poverty as shortage of resources necessary for daily living. In situations of this nature, people live in harsh environment that are inhospitable resulting from the distortions in the economic, political, social and cultural system of the society.

### **CAUSES OF POVERTY**

Ayittey (2002) configures two main factors responsible for poverty particularly in Africa. They are internal and external factors. Internally, Ayittey is of the view that Africa's woes are designed and perpetuated by architects within the shores of Africa. Such factors include high level corruptions leading to sit tight syndrome by political leaders, misgovernance, capital flight, economic mismanagement, lack of investment in productive ventures by those manipulating public treasuries, infrastructural decay, fetish practices, incessant civil wars, political upheavals, selective justice and flagrant violation of human rights, change of government by the barrel of the gun (military).

On the other, the under development theorist (UDT) in the ranks of Ander Gunder Frank, Samir Amir, Walter Rodney, Kwameh Nkrumah, Ali Mazrui etc concord that the underdevelopment of Africa and her subsequent impoverishment was a result of transfer of surplus from the third world countries of Africa to the advanced capitalist nations of the world. Eric (1964) commented that the backward and dependent situation of Africa is a consequence of the continents common historical experience of economic exploitation by European organized colonialism, slave trade, mercantilism and imperialism. Mazrui (1986) said almost everything that has gone wrong in Africa was the fault of western colonialism and imperialism. These two epochs under which Africa was reduced to primary producer, has negatively affected the development of local technology and the end result is the collapse of infrastructure, roads, railways, and public utilities. African poverty is the brain child of the conditionality of the international financial institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the Breton woods institutions and Paris Club etc.

However, this paper is a strong apologist of the view that sees Africa=s woes as internally orchestrated. The continent is so chosen by God and blessed her with abundant resources. But the elites at the corridor of power have creased endless deprivations using different sentimental divisions among the peasantry which consequently impoverished the peasantry materially and also swept the conscience of the political class in successive regimes in Nigeria in particular and Africa at large.

Oloko, (2002), ILO (2002), Ronke (2001), Somavia (1999) all conceives child labour as the engagement of children below 15 years in work or employment on regular basis with the aim of earning a living for themselves or their families. Oloko (2002) and Hodges, (2001) also distinguished child labour from child work. Child work is socialization process, or a learning process that tends to be flexible and responsive to the development of the child and encourage him or her to participate in the appropriate aspects of decision-making process.

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In theoretical purview, this paper is predicated on the wage Labour and capital theory of Karl Marx. Marx (1982) commented that capitalist domination has permeated the political economy of our societies with the survival of the ever increasing population determined largely by the sales of their Labour power to the owners of means production means of subsistence in return for wages. This configuration by Marx has therefore refuted the Malthusian theory of population as the causes of poverty and starvation is facilitated by capitalist system rooted in the extremely unjust distribution of material wealth. He said the working people are often deprived of even the most essential means of subsistence.

Essentially, child labour in this study may not be a kin to the sale of Labour in the scientific capitalist system of western world as encapsulated by Karl Marx. Nonetheless, the propelling factor in the sale of Labour power in whatever perspective it is viewed, is material wealth. In this regard, the causes of poverty and its effect is extremely relevant in coming to terms with the fundamental issue of child labour generally in poor families in Nigeria and in Niger State in particular. It is the aftermath or the condition left by poverty that propels poor families to act the way they do. Thus, the chronic lack of material goods such as clothing=s, artifacts or other societal values necessary for participation in customary activities has generally the affects of creating certain inabilities in poor families as such they lease out their children in exchange for money to acquire materials wealth.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section analyses the statistical data generated from interviews and questionnaires regarding the causative factors of girl child labour export from the area of study to some cities of Nigeria particularly Kaduna, Zaria, Kano, Sokoto and Abuja in Northern Nigeria. They are also exported to south Western cities of Lagos and Ibadan. In these cities they work in educated elite homes or business centers exhibiting glaringly the class difference between them and the offspring of their employers.

It is against this backdrop that tentative generalization were made and tested on the field during the course of this research. It is important to re-state the whole idea behind the formulation of the tentative assumption namely:

1. To establish relationship between parental poverty and girl child labour export.
2. To establish relationship between illiteracy and the prevalence of girl child labour export in Mokwa
3. To ascertain the impact of poverty reduction policies in the community

Essentially, by way of recapitulation the research was limited to the three councillorship wards of Mokwa Local Government Area of Niger state, areas with greater prevalence girl child labour export than any other (see the section on methodology).

However, on the whole, three hundred head of households were interviewed on the field and their responses analyzed according to each hypothesis formulated using tables and simple percentages.

### **Relationship Between Parental Poverty and Girl Child Labour Export**

This is the pivot around which the paper revolves. Before presenting the data, it is important to make brief comments. First the researcher being indigenous to the area has been able to observe the level of material poverty on the field during the course of this research. Otherwise, the responses that follow are self-explanatory.

Secondly, at the time of this research Niger State was the largest in the whole federation in time of territorial land mass. According to Niger State ministry of Agriculture, there are about 8,139,121 hectares of arable land mostly in the rural areas where varieties of crops are grown with reasonable yield annually. With this natural endowment, crops such as maize, millet, rice, sorghum, yam, cassava, groundnut, beans, soya beans and sugar cane are cultivated in the state. Yet this investigation has revealed that the research area is one of the most poverty ridden, particularly material deprivation.

**Table 1: Relationship between parental poverty and Girl child labour export Percentage distribution by wards**

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Respondent</i>		<i>Percentage distribution</i>
Jaagi	Yes	100	33.3%
	No	20	6.7%
Kpaki	Yes	67	22.3%
	No	13	4.3%
Muwo	Yes	83	27.7%
	No	17	5.7%
Total		300	100%

Source: Field survey, 2008

**Table 2: Summary of table 1**

<i>Respondent</i>		<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Yes</i>	250	83.3%
<i>No</i>	50	16.7%
Total	300	100%

Sources: Field survey, 2008

From the above table 2, 250 respondents about 83.3 percent cutting across the three wards answered in the affirmative that they are materially poor and incapacitated by lack of access to market. That the bad terrain they have to pass through to take their primary products to market has incapacitated them and therefore experience decline in their income. As such they cannot provide material goods adequately to their female children and

other household needs particularly clothing=s, utensils and others like corrugated roofing sheets.

It is the proceeds realized from the sales of their farm produce that they use to provide household needs. When the return from farm produce is not forthcoming as at when due given their peculiar situation they resort to girl child labour export to augment whatever might eventually come from the sales of their farm produce. They lease out their girl children on the agreement that their daughters would be given adequate care and they (parents) would in turn get feed back at intervals from the intermediary between them (parents) and the employers of their children. But unfortunately, in most cases when their children get to the cities, they never hear about them neither do they see them nor the agent that took them to the city until after a year when they will return home particularly during idil-kabir celebration. That at this point, they cannot tame them again. Therefore, at the end of the sallah celebration they go back to the city to meet the agent who is at liberty to lease them out to another employer within the city where they worked initially or to other parts of the country.

On the other hand, 50 respondents about 16.7% as shown on the table acknowledge the material poverty that permeated their societies, but they never allow any of their girl children to go on child labour. They attested to the fact that those girls that go on child labour come back home with material goods that are enticing. This is what pushed a lot of parents that are materially deprived to send their girl children on child labour. To some of these parents as confirmed by 16.7% respondents in these three wards, it pays them more than to be keeping them at home because at the end they will come back with money and material goods.

A household with two or three girl children is sure of getting fourty thousand naira or seventy two thousand Naira and above annually depending on the economic status of her employer, which the sales of farm produce, may not provide. It is in this regard as revealed by 16.7% respondents that some parents deliberately refused to send their girl children to school until when they reach maturity age before they send to another relation for up keep. It is from there that the girl child would be leased out for child labour to get material goods for herself preparatory for her marriage.



### **Relationship between Illiteracy and the Prevalence of Girl Child Labour Export**

Education has been very instrumental in the emancipation of individuals and societies from the shackles of ignorance, diseases and poverty. It is against this backdrop that this hypothesis tested on the field the assumed relationship between illiteracy and girl child labour export as shown on the table below.

**Table3: Relationship Between Illiteracy and the Prevalence Of Girl Child Labour Export in Mokwa**

<i>Wards</i>	<i>Respondent</i>		<i>Percentage Distribution</i>
Jaagi	Yes	10	3.3%
	No	110	36.7%
Kpaki	Yes	4	1.3%
	No	76	25.3%
Muwo	Yes	6	2%
	No	94	31.3%
Total		300	100%

Source Filed survey, 2008

**Table 4: Summary of the above table 3**

<i>Respondent</i>		<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	20	6.6%
No	280	93.4%
Total	300	100%

Source Filed survey, 2008

The above table 4 revealed that two hundred and eighty (280) respondents about 93.4% across the three wards are illiterates. They cannot read nor write in any language not even in their own local dialect (Nupe). While twenty respondents about 6.6% cutting across the three wards have acquired western education.

However, their responses attested to the fact that their inability to read nor write in any language was not responsible for the prevalence of girl child labour export from their localities to the major cities of Northern and Southwestern Nigeria. But rather their strict adherence to their socio-cultural values.

They live in traditional village setting with clusters of compounds tightly knitted to each other by blood or marital relationship. Consequent upon this, they would want the continuity of such relationship from generation to generation. In this attempt, they unilaterally pick any of their girl child at will and give her hand in marriage to a friend=s son or to a female sibling=s son.

Inwardly, the girl child may not have affection for such a man of which her parents would be ignorant. That the next line of action they (parents) will notice is the disappearance of the girl and in most cases none of them has been traced after leaving home in disagreement of the actions of their parents. That they only come back home after acquiring materials needed for marriage.

However, when they eventually come home, the parents would make an attempt to reconcile them with the same man they left if he is still

alive. They do this by counseling the girl child and also ask elders of the community to intervene and talk to her to see reasons for marrying that same man she ab-initio rejected. That if all efforts prove abortive, they have no alternative than to allow her marry the man of her choice to avoid her leaving home again.

Alhaji Adamu Tatabu said in most cases they become more exposed than the man their parents want them to marry. He stressed further that with the materials they acquired from the sales of their labour most of them never marry the choice of their parents.

On the other hand, there is competition among the girl children in acquisition of materials over and above each other. That they often say to each other that I am going out to work and acquire more materials for my marriage than you.

There was a unanimous response from the three wards that the unfortunate side of this phenomenon is that some of them come back home with children out of wedlock. While some of them never return as a result of death.

Apparently, twenty respondents (20) about 6.6% across the three wards had secondary education particularly teachers grade two certificate. One respondent in Kpaki ward was undergoing a degree programme as at the time of this research. This category of respondents doesn't engage in girl child labour export. Except in Tatabu where one of the respondents said his niece who refused to go to school and decided to leave the house to an unknown destination up to the time of this research.

It suffice to say that girl child labour export becomes prevalent in Mokwa Local Government Area of Niger State because of their proximity to three major routes of transportation. These routes are River Niger, railway with station in Mokwa and high way that pass through Mokwa linking the Northern and southern parts of Nigeria. The girl child can leave home unnoticed by her parents or guardians to any part of Nigeria using these three routes.

From the riverine communities of Jaagi and Muwo wards a girl child can follow canoe men through river Niger to Jebba, Lafiagi and Egan in Kwara and Kogi States for onward Journey to where she want to go.

On the other hand, a girl child can leave to Mokwa town and board a train or a vehicle going to either North or Southern parts of Nigeria. Trailers and Tanker drivers mostly facilitate this journey.

### **Poverty Reduction Policies and Girl Child Labour Export**

The success of past government in Nigeria in reducing poverty and reversing the girl child labour export was examined on the field during the course of this research. The assumption is that the programmes would provide incentives and development infrastructure for economic activities that are likely to assist the participants realize some income. However, the empirical data gathered from the field revealed the contrary as captured by the below table.

**Table 5: Poverty Reduction Policies and Girl Child labour Export**

<i>Wards</i>	<i>Respondent</i>		<i>Percentages Distribution</i>
Jaagi	Yes	112	37.3%
	No	8	2.7%
Kpaku	Yes	78	26%
	3	2	0.7%
Muwo	Yes	97	32.3%
	No	3	1%
Total		300	100%

Source: Field survey, 2008

**Table 6: Summary of the above table 5**

<i>Respondent</i>		<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	287	95.6%
No	13	4.4%
Total	300	100%

Source: Field survey, 2008

From the above table 5, 37.3% of the respondents in Jaagi ward confirmed the total neglect they suffered from successive governments inspite of all the poverty reduction policies and programmes. A journey to Rabba Kede in this ward re-enforce the quality of data gathered on the field. The road leading to Rabba Kede is an untarred sandy road that requires a vehicle with auxiliary gear to ply the road with least difficulties.

The village head of Rabba Kede asked the researcher whether he has seen any vehicle on his way coming to Rabba. That there is none. According to him all one would see is motor cycles. That is our only means of transport that convey us and our goods to Mokwa the Local Government headquarters. He further asked that how many backs of farm produce you wish to supply to the market could a motorcycle take at a time. This has affected their income.

Similarly, these same respondents said they are riverine people producing rice and fresh water fisheries in large quantities. But they have no electricity to process their rice for commercial purposes nor do they have modern technological facilities to preserve their fish. That all they saw in their villages is electric poles that have been a shadow of itself for several years. That they continue to use their age long local methods of processing and preservation of fish which according to them is hazardous to their health and sights.

In the absence of government poverty reduction programmes to alleviate their poverty, they organised themselves together and formed a cooperative society known as Asiriso women cooperative society. It is under the cover of this society that they bought rice and millet processing machines, which they use, petroleum fuel to operate. They said it is very expensive to run the machine with fuel, which in turn affect their income. On the other

hand, 2.7% of the respondents in the ward acknowledged the total absence of government poverty reduction programmes in their villages, but does not engage in child labour export.

In Kpaki ward, seventy eight (78) respondents about 26% answered in the affirmative that government poverty reduction programmes are not visible in their communities. That the state of their infrastructure remains poor and deplorable. Their roads are not easily accessible and they have no portable water or befitting primary health care centers.

The village head of Edugi Alhaji Isah Edugi said look at our primary school. It is an eye sore. That the primary school was built through communal effort using local fabrics. These rural people said that they hear of government poverty alleviation programmes on radio. An elderly man in Kpataki an adjoining village to Edugi said since the days of Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI) whose man-date is to construct rural feeder roads, no single road was constructed nor rehabilitated in their villages. They have no access to the peoples bank nor any other credit institution meant for the poor.

The riverine communities of Kpaki ward live in areas that are naturally endowed with palm trees that produced palm kernels in large quantities, but unfortunately lack processing machines that would enable them produce palm oil. Since government appeared to be far away from them, the world Bank through Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP) came to their aid and gave them money to buy palm kernel processing machines that would enable them produce palm oil in exportable quantities, if not outside Nigeria, to other parts of Nigeria.

Unfortunately, according to the respondents in Edugi, Tswanle and Kpataki all in Kpaki ward said that the deceitful political class in their midst collected the money in the name of buying palm kernel processing machine. But to their dismay, what they saw was twenty-seven sewing machines to be shared by the three villages of Edugi, Tswanle and Kpataki. This has contributed immensely in impoverishing them because the sewing machine became a waste. Those who could not bear the situation resorted to girl child labour export.

However, child labour export of these villages was initially seasonal because of their proximity to Guinness Plc mechanized farm. But now the farm is no longer functional as such parents export their children to other parents of the country.

It is only two respondents about 0.7% in Kpaki ward that endure the hardship they have to grapple with and keep their female children within their villages.

Twenty two percent of the one hundred respondents in Muwo ward have no contrary view from the above two wards. That their ward is located along the major Jebba Ilorin road, but without the presence of government poverty alleviation programmes in their villages. They don't have clean drinking waters neither do they have health centers to take care of their health problem. That they have to travel to Mokwa to get medical attention, which is not efficient because the only general hospital in Mokwa has many things to be desired.

On the other hand three respondents about 1% does not engage in girl child labour export even though they are all subjected to the same deprivation of social and infrastructure facilities purported to have been provided for them through poverty reduction programmes.

On the whole, 287 respondents about 95.6% answered in the affirmative that government poverty reduction programmes eluded their villages making them to move in vicious cycle of poverty and in essence engages in girl child labour export. While 13 respondents about 4.4% does not engage in girl child labour even though they have not also benefited from any government poverty reduction programme. The intervention of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) christened Village Economic Development Strategy (VEDS) did not benefit any of the village under this research.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

Poverty has been a monster-eating deep into the fabrics of Nigerian societies even in this 21<sup>st</sup> century when science and technology has brought a lot of positive innovations in human life making it worth living. The resource endowment of Nigeria both human and material has little impact on the lives of majority of Nigerians highly concentrated in the extractive industry of the Nigerian economy. Their poverty is seen glaringly in their one source of food (carbohydrate) shelter, clothing and complete absence or deplorable condition of infrastructures. The rural poor has inaccessible roads, inadequate medical facilities and medical personnel, none functional education inspite of the enormous financial resources that accrues to the three tiers of government in Nigeria. It is in line with above that Abba (2002:13) stated that:

*In this period of 36 months the revenue of the federal government was N1.6 trillion when you add the special*

*funds that federal government, controlled and managed the total revenues comes up to well over N2 trillion in the three years. In the light of the weakened State of the Nigeria economy and the worsening of living conditions of the people, with over 80 million sinking into poverty, the two trillion Naira question, therefore, is what has happened to this whopping sum of money collected by president Obasanjo and vice president Atiku Abubakar on behalf of the people of Nigeria?*

Mohammed (2001) noted that a visitor to Nigeria recently told BBC that Nigerian=s have become local governments unto themselves. They have no alternative than to provide water for them selves regardless of its purity. They contribute money to provide their own security services by building gates that are locked up before sun set and in the end pay vigilante groups. Some individuals provide their own electricity and some cases their own roads and drainages.

It is in consonance with the above that Ochigbo (2001) said two years into democracy they only dividend that permeated Nigerian societies are increased poverty, insecurity, diseases, corruption in high and low places, prostitution and general suffering in the country.

It is however axiomatic that the poor in Nigeria has a bleak future. It is against this backdrop that several policies and programme geared towards poverty alleviation are introduced in Nigeria. Worthy of note is that such policies yield little impact on the lives of the poor in some cases and failed woefully in most cases.

It is under this purview that Kpakol (2009) and CBN (1999) attributed poverty in Nigeria to policy failure and in action of government officials in the past. The failure to successfully implement poverty alleviation programmes and the uncertain political situation has worsened the poverty situation in Nigeria.

It should be noted that corrupt and inept leadership account for much of the poverty situation in the country. As of the time of this research in 2008, the Northern part of Nigeria was considered as poverty endemic area. It is in this regard that Governor Muazu Babangita Aliyu of Niger State was categorical in his statement about poverty in the North as quoted below



(2008:3).

*We can only realize our development aspiration if we resolve today to say no to poverty in our states by providing responsible, accountable, transparent and God fearing leadership. We have to change the people=s orientation and value system so that we can all appreciate that leadership is not an opportunity for plundering our resources, but a privilege to render service to our fellow human beings in the most accountable and dignified manner.*

On the other hand significant number of the respondents are illiterate. They cannot read nor write in any language not even in their own local dialect. Even though this is not responsible for their child labour export it is important they educate themselves and their children. Education is the key to all forms of development. People can only shed away the darkness of illiteracy through education. It is against the backdrop that Albert and Peter (1979:191) stated that:

*In all societies, however developed or developing, capitalist or socialist, traditional or modern, the common purpose of education is the transmission of accumulated wisdom, knowledge and skills from one generation to another and the preparation of the youths for the future membership and participation in the life of the society, in its maintenance, growth and development.*

There is need to understand that child labour is not a cultural phenomenon, but a question of the economy. Those who are economically privileged tend to be better educated. In view of the above, they do not engage their children in child labour. Importantly economic inequality represents repression of which child labour is one. The dominant economic class tends to maintain the existing social order thereby creating endless inequalities in society by appropriating state resources to their own advantage.

The field trips revealed a great deal of material poverty or inadequacy in the households of the research area. This has incapacitated the parents to meet up their obligations for their children and other societal needs. This

therefore repressed them to export their female children far away from their immediate environment for child labour. The practical reality of this phenomenon was revealed by Francies (2005:4):

*To their horror, the policemen found Sixty four (64) female children packed like sardines inside the container. A woman name Alhaja Fatima was traveling with the container she had been squeezed by the police and she told daily sun that the children were not stolen or kidnapped. Alhaja Fatima said she had brought the children to Lagos from Mokwa in Niger State with the consent of their parents who wanted the children to be given out as house maids or make them sell groundnut and popcorn*

Apparently, child domestic labour (2004:1-2) added strength to the above that:

*Too many children who are in domestic labour are victims of exploitation. As they clean, cook, care for their employers children, do heavy housework, they are deprived of rights due to them as children in international law. The right to play, visits with their family and friends, descent accommodation, and protection from sexual harassment or physical and mental abuse.*

## **CONCLUSION**

The government is said to exist for the common good of the entire society. When people relinquish their power to a recognized constituted authority, the expectation is good governance and service delivery to all and sundry. However, in contrast to the above, this research areas have little or virtually no impact of the government.

They are largely employed in the primary sector of the economy. They produce on subsistence basis using their labour power with primitive means of labour and very rich objects of labour surrounding them.

Their human capital remain undeveloped and static. A significant number of the household heads are illiterates. They can neither read nor write even in their own local dialect. Their offspring=s have no access to

qualitative education, which has facilitated the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Infrastructure and social amenities also eluded the people. They don't have good access roads nor efficient and sufficient medical facilities. The Jebba hydroelectric Dam is housed by Mokwa local government area, but yet these communities have no electricity but perennial annual flood from the dam threatening their existence.

They have no access to financial institutions like Banks, Credit houses and insurance companies. The peoples Bank that metamorphosed to Micro-finance Bank is still far from the local people's reach.

There is the absurdity of adhering to primitive cultural values at the detriment of the girl child. The value of making a choice of husband for girl child without her consent has permeated the communities sending daughters away instead of the intended unity

On the whole, the people are poor. Their poverty can be conspicuously seen in their farming implements and household utensils. They are still utilizing their primitive backbreaking farming implements. Their fishing gears still remain unchanged. Their fish processing technologies are traditionally inclined and hazardous to human sight.

Their living abodes are poorly constructed and clustered together without cross ventilation. In most cases no sanitary facilities within the compound. Where provision is made for toilet facilities, it is always pit latrine that emits aggressive odour.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Consequent upon the pyramid of deprivations the research communities were subjected to by the failure of government policies on poverty alleviation attributable to the corrupt practices of government officials charged with that responsibility, this research has come up with the following recommendations to ameliorate the hardship and its effect of child labour export in the research areas.

Political leadership right from the base of these communities should reflect their wishes. Essentially, political leadership should emerge from the social acceptance of the people. Public goods within the purview of neoclassical political economy can only be achieved through government that is sensitive to the plights of the people. Such government can only be constituted when the people are allowed to make choice with regards to those who governs them.

Aggressive human capital development should be embarked upon in the community case study areas. Both formal and informal skill acquisition should be encouraged in this research areas.

Infrastructure and Social amenities are sinequanon to development. The three tiers of government should invest in road net work in these communities. Of paramount importance is access to good portable, health facilities etc. with the local people involved in the monitoring of the infrastructure development from start to the completion level.

Government budgetary allocations should reflect the primary occupation of the people. For example in the case of this research area, government annual budget should invest in the production of fishing gears, fish processing machines, palm kernel processing machines, improved farm implements for rice, sugar cane and millet production, rice and millet mills, technology for the improvement of black soap. Their medicinal flora species should be developed for modern health care delivery in Nigeria. This will facilitate their transition from tradition to modernity and by this way enhance their production and their income eventually.

With incremental change in their income, they should be subdivided into focused groups depending on their artisanal abilities and be provided with credit facilities by the government with long range of liquidation time. These focused groups should be taught and guided by financial experts on how to circulate their capital from one investment to another under the direct supervision of the newly created Niger state ministry for poverty alleviation.

Having learned the intrigues of perfect market system, they should have access to such market. The government should facilitate sister country relationship between the community case study areas and some advanced countries. This will enable the local people to sell their primary products at appreciable price while they remain at their local base.

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