



**Exploitation of Children in the Informal Sector:  
Case Study of Street Hawking Children in Ifo  
Local Government, Ogun State**

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This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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## List of Acronyms

ACRWC	Africa Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Children
CRA	Child Right Act
FMWA	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPC	National Population Commission
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## **Abstract**

An attempt to explain the prevalence of street hawking children in rural areas in Nigeria by using Ifo Local Government of Ogun State as a case study, this research is keen to explore the prevalence, determinant and implication of street hawking on development of a child and make recommendation on how to enhance the working condition for children to combine work and schooling. The study is to draw the attention of policy maker on street hawking by children and possible policy intervention that can support these children positively. The study will be focusing on group of school age children between the ages of six to eighteen.

**Methods:** This study made use of random sampling to select five different household and purposive sampling was used to pick street hawking children that are below the age of eighteen and one community leader that tells more about the prevalence of economic working children in Ifo local government of Ogun state.

**Findings:** the finding shows that children engage in street hawking due to the poverty level of their parents in order to finance their education and to boost the household income. These children faces a lot of challenges; some of which are long walking distance that leads to leg pains, carrying of heavy wares on their head and walk all day that results to neck pain, some are expose to environmental hazard, to mention but a few.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

This paper is of significant value due to the exploitation of working children. One need to be concerned about the present and future development of children that work because a child that work rather than schooling or acquire the necessary skill that will make them self-dependent as adult stand the chance to live in poverty as an adult. This study will serve as an awareness of the risk involve in street hawking by children and inform policy maker who can implement policy that will reduce the high incidence of street hawking in Ifo Local Government of Ogun State.

## **Keywords**

Children, Child labour, Child Rights, Fertility, Households, Poverty, Street Hawking.

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# **Chapter 1 : Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction and Background to the Problem of Street Hawking in Ifo Local Government of Ogun State**

In an attempt to explain the prevalence of street hawking children in rural areas in Nigeria with Ifo Local Government of Ogun State as a case example, this research is keen to explore the prevalence and determinants of street hawking and implication on the development of a child. The study seeks to draw the attention of relevant policy makers to problems associated with street hawking by children and thereby to contribute to creating a basis for possible policy intervention in support of these children. The study focuses on the group of school age children between the ages of six to fifteen.

Street hawking is a form of selling goods along the road from one place to the other (Umar 2009). It also extend to be an act of canvassing for sale items carried by a hawker along the street , from house to house or in the public space (Ikechebebu et al 2008: 114). Street hawking is a veritable means of socialization in the western part of Nigeria and it is widely practiced despite the attendant moral and physical dangers for children (Ebigbo 2003:103). In Nigeria, street hawking is done mostly by female children. Children hawk different items, ranging from food to different types of non-edible items. Some children have a particular spot where they stay to sell their wares. Some move from place to place along the street, while others go from door to door in residential area (Grootaert and Kanbur 1995:4). Child hawkers sell tray of goods on their head by moving from one street to the other. The hawker that sell similar goods walk different directions while those that sell goods that complement each other like food and drinks walk in the same direction. The youngest among these hawker are followed by an adult child who also sell different things in order to teach the younger ones how to calculate or protect the child against any occurrence. These child hawkers shout on top of their voices to announce what they are selling in the community so as to attract the attention of intending buyer of their arrival.

Street hawking is rampant among children in Ifo Local Government, Ogun State, Nigeria as was observed personally by the researcher. According to the local community leader, street hawking has been in existence there for a very long time. As the major occupation is farming and trading, during the time of trade by barter, when a farmer's harvests crop, he takes from the harvested crops for food consumption. The remaining has to be traded within the neighbourhood by the wives and children, so that they will get the money needed to purchase some other things needed in the household. Due to structural change (discovery of cruel oil), currently many people are moving out of the agricultural sector and migrating to the city for a decent job. There is not much attention for farming any longer. As a consequence most households nowadays buy things for the children to hawk around the neighbourhood with

their mother. By so doing, children are taught how to trade for future purposes (personal observation)

## 1.2 Research Focus Area

Ifò local government is located in Ogun State with 524,837 inhabitants (NPC, 2006). This community is characterized as a rural area in the state with few job opportunities in the informal sector. Residents have to travel out of the community to seek for jobs. The main occupation in Ogun State is agriculture and trading. It was observed by the researcher that growing numbers of children are engaging in economic activities most especially in the informal sector. The community is one of the twenty one local districts in Ogun State.

However, Nigeria is a developing country with many socioeconomic challenges. The country has a population of 144,483,655 which showed an annual growth rate of 3.2% in 2007 (CRC 2008:13). In the 1960's and 1970's, Nigeria's economy had a rural-based economy as the major national income was from cash crops. During this period, farmers were marrying many wives in order for their children to help in agricultural produce for export. Consequently, farmers' children were fully socialized in farming activities (Torimiro 2009:67). Ebigbo noted that, after the civil war, trade became the main occupation of Nigeria while crude oil became the main export with 90 per cent foreign exchange earnings (2003: 97). After the discovery of petroleum, there was a decline in agricultural production which led to the abandonment of the rural sector. Due to economic recession, many rural households experienced high poverty levels. This situation led to vulnerability of children. Adversely, children were taken off- farm work by their parents and more often became engaged in the informal urban economy, for example as a domestic servant (ibid). This household economic situation led to children street trading, hawking and becoming child domestic servant, "almajeri"<sup>1</sup> in the north, "area boys"<sup>2</sup> in the south, child prostitution and child trafficking (Ebigbo 2003:98)

According to the 2006 Census, the population of children amounts to 72 million (CRC 2008:13). Out of the children aged five to fourteen, 29 per cent are involved in child labour (UNICEF 2012:122). According to UNICEF, a child is considered to be involved in child labour under the following conditions: children of 5 to 11 years old who, during the reference week, did at least one hour economic activity or at least 28 hours of household chores, or children of 12 to 14 years old who, during the reference week, did at least 14 hours of economic activity or at least 28 hours of household chores (2012:123). Children's productive activities are classified into three according to the ILO (2010: 6): children in employment, children in child labour and children in hazardous

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<sup>1</sup> Almajeri is a kind of system that is common in the Northern part of Nigeria among children especially boys from the poor households. Young boys from poor households are put in custody of Islamic scholars who teaches them the Quran. These boys are sent out to beg for food by the scholars for their sustenance because the scholars have limited fund to cater for these poor children (Ebigbo 2003: 101)

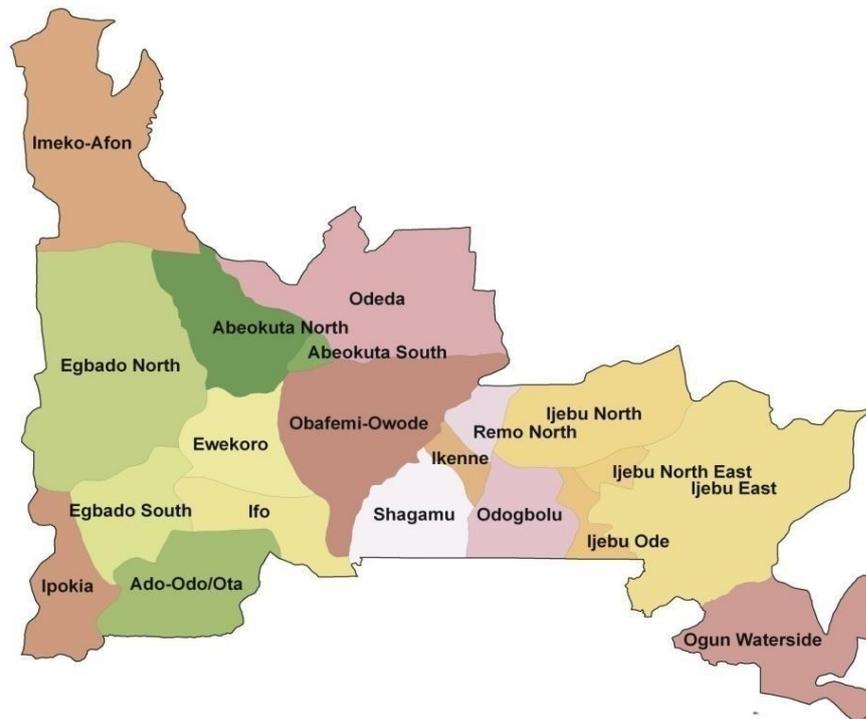
<sup>2</sup> Area boys are violent street young boys who lack parental control (Ebigbo 2003: 98)

work. The term children in employment refer to economic activities within the coverage of all market production and certain type of non-market production and includes forms of work in both the formal and informal economy. Children in child labour are those who do the worst forms of child labour and are below the minimum age (5-17). Hazardous work by children is any activity or occupation that has or leads to adverse effect on the child safety, health and moral development. One of the above definitions by the ILO capture the kind of activity children are engaged in the area where this research is to be carried out.

**Map 1.1**  
**Nigeria and surroundings**



**Map 1.2**  
Map Of Ogun State



Source: <http://www.population.gov.ng/images>

The geographical scope of this research is limited to the south-western zone of Nigeria, which is one of the six geographical zones that constitute the country. This area is inhabited predominantly by the Yoruba, one of the major ethnic tribes in the country. Yoruba language exist in different dialects and English is used to communicate with other tribes that live within the zone. Ogun state is one of the thirty six states in Nigeria with 3,751,140 inhabitants (NPC 2006). It comprises of twenty local government, in one of which the study took place (Ifo local government). The state shares an international boundary with democratic Republic of Benin and a state boundary with three other Nigerian states (Lagos, Oyo and Ondo state). The basic economic activities of Ogun state are farming, trading and business. The predominant cash and food crops grown by farmers are kolanut, palm kernel, rice, cassava, yam, maize, plantain, vegetable and fruits. It is rich in cultural heritage and a tourist attraction centre from which the state earns revenue.

Despite all these economic activities, the state is set behind and most of it local government and rural areas lack social amenities comparable to those of other states in Nigeria. According to the present governor's manifesto of December, 2011.

“continuous neglect of infrastructure development both in rural and urban areas has had some tolls on the socio-economic activities of the state and the welfare of our people. One of the first priorities is to reorganize and refocus the state agencies responsible for provision of infrastructure and commencement of immediate rehabilitation of some infrastructure; township, rural roads, provision of transformers among others. The state and local government will work together in a coordinated manner to achieve accelerated infrastructure development, both in rural and urban areas” (Ibikunle Amosun 2011).

Since he was sworn in as the governor of the state, it was observed that the state has not experienced social amenities. Ifo local government as part of rural areas has been deprived from infrastructural amenities both from the past administration and the present administration. The area as observed personally by the researcher still lack good roads network, portable water supply, inadequate schools and lack of primary health care, low employment rate to mention but few.

### **1.3 Statement Of The Specific Research Problem, research Questions and Objectives**

The prevalence of child labour exist in various forms but some are clearly visible than the other. Children are seen getting involve in different kind of production work ranging from agriculture, manufacturing, industries and domestic work. In Nigeria, street hawking seems to be more popular form of child labour. Children hawk a wide range of cheap articles, edible and products such as sachet water, vegetable, bread, slippers, newspapers, fruits to mention but few. Street hawking is considered to be one form of child labour and exploitative because of the excessively long hour of trading by the children, hindrance of school attendance, effectiveness on child's health (Ibanga 2007: 9). Many Nigerian children are compel to work because of their parents joblessness, poor or uneducated (ibid). Ibanga study show that traditional custom especially polygamy contribute to poor living standard and push children into the street due to parents giving birth to many children. Some of the street hawking children spend the entire day and sometimes until late in the night selling goods under harsh weather condition. This form of economic activities by children interfere with emotional, educational and social development of children (ibid). It was observed personally by the researcher in Ifo Local Government, children are involved in harmful and exploitative work during school hours and they work for very long hours per day. There is a need to be specifically concerned about street hawking children. As indicated by Admassie (2003:168), street hawking as a form of child labour is considered as violation children's human rights in as much as children are force to partake in abusive, harmful and exploitative work which may affect their physical capabilities. It deprives children of their childhood freedom, that is, their right to play and recreate and of their natural development. Street hawking affects the educational development of a child and is a dis-investment in human capital formation and has negative effects on the private and social returns of a child (Admassie, 2002: 253).

While this research paper studied the street hawking children in Ifo Local government of Ogun State, Nigeria, according to Togunde and Carter (2006: 73) lots of studies were done in countries where the prevalence of street hawking is high. Drawing from the data collected from children below the age of eighteen the determinants of street hawking children will be examined. The social characteristic of household such as household income, household size, household head literacy level, sex of the household head and his/her perception of the relevance of child's education for the future development will all be considered.

The following concrete research question will be explored: what could be done to support street hawking children in Ifo Local Government? Answer to this question will be generated through pursuing the following sub-questions

- What are the forces that drive street hawking by children?
- What are the working conditions for street hawking children?
- What policies are in place to assist street hawking in Ifo local government?
- Are there good practice examples for interventions in support of street hawking children either from the government, NGOs or communities in Nigeria or elsewhere?

The main objective of the paper is to shed light on the situation of street hawking children in Ifo Local Government, Ogun state, Nigeria and to inform policy makers on how possibly to support these children. This implies pursuit of the following sub-objectives:

- To present the conditions of street hawking children in Ifo local government, Ogun state.
- To examine the influence and decision-making patterns of children, parents and/or other caretakers or peers as regards participation of children in street hawking.
- To find out about efforts made to reduce street hawking or by relevant actors (government, NGOs, community and other).
- To present the views of street hawking children on their situation and what they think will be an improvement for them.
- To suggest ways to strengthen policy-intervention for street hawking children.

## 1.4 Methodology

Fieldwork was conducted in Ifo Local government, Ogun state, Nigeria for five weeks during the summer that is from 30 July to 31 August 2012. Due to the summer break, the researcher was able to gather the expected group of children. A major challenge was that initially the children were scared of the researcher because of the security challenges such as kidnapping, conflict, violence and bomb blasting that the nation is going through at present. These children are therefore conscious of whom they relate with. This was later overcome with the help of one higher national diploma student who resides in the community and who assisted me in familiarizing with the children and also helped as research assistant. This particular local community was chosen because it is one of the areas with the highest persistence of street hawking children and also because, through the support of my parents, I would be able to have access to the street hawking children.

The study mainly consists of qualitative research work. The primary objective of the qualitative research was to represent data collected through the study of a small number of in-depth cases (O'Leary 2010:105). It was also used

for working with a few people who hold answer to the research question rather than working with many people. Purposive sampling was used to handpick a limited sample of street hawking children that are below eighteen years and five households that have children that hawk.

To have access to the community leader, I had to go through my parents. A higher national diploma student in his early twenties was also introduced to me by my parent because he happened to be a learned person who could be a key informant. Purposive sampling was chosen because the researcher's intention is to have different ideas about the prevalence of street hawking from children of different age groups and households. The interview section was performed through a focus group discussion among children below the age of eighteen. I chose a focus group discussion among the street hawking children, in order for me to gather data evidence for my findings (Cousin 2009:51). It took me and my key informant lots of time to gather children for a focus group discussion. First of all I asked for their house address, so as to seek the consent of their parent in order to follow the ethics of the research work with children. Then, we had to give the children an appointment to meet us in the community leader's house. The discussion was conducted with two groups with seven children in each group. However, some of the children felt reluctant initially, until I explained my mission to them. Keeping to time was another issue that occurred, the first group discussion did not start until after an hour later than agreed, while the second group discussion was postpone to the second day. Rapport was established before the commencement of the interview and oral consent was given by the children. The researcher treated the children as participants and not as objects, the reason being that this would encourage the children to express themselves without been subjected to any strict condition.

Moreover, unstructured and note taking interviews were conducted among the focus group discussions. The procedure of the discussion was explained to the children, as follows. First of all the researcher introduced herself to the group and the purpose of the discussion. Then the children were asked the same question which they answered one after the other. The interview was conducted in Yoruba language with research assistant taking note of what the children were saying while the researcher acted as moderator of the focus group discussion. The children were delighted to express their feelings during the discussion. Upon the initial meeting with the children individually, question were asked about their names, household size, parental occupation and educational attainment, which makes the focus group discussion to be conducted for thirty minutes during the market activities of the children so that they had time to move about with their daily activities.

I selected five household randomly. two of these households are female headed (a widow and the other woman's husband migrated to the city for greener pasture). One household is polygamous, while another household is monogamous with a large family and unemployed husband. the last household is male headed household with the husband unemployed and with a large family size.

Furthermore, for the purpose of this study, and as presented in the next chapter, the existing literature on the different determinants of street hawking

by children and other relevant aspects was reviewed. Chapter three explains the normative framework, legal documents and national policy provided to protect children from exploitative work. Chapter four of this study reviews the findings on the prevalence of street hawking among the children, the views of households and information about the intervention of local NGOs while the last chapter formulates conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **Chapter 2 :**

### **Determinants of street Hawking Children**

#### **2.1 Poverty as one of the Determinants of Street Hawking by Children**

Poverty is characterized as lack of purchasing power, rural predominance, exposure to environmental risk, insufficient access to social and economic services, lack of political right and few opportunities for formal-sector income generation (Kempe 2005: 22). Street hawking is a part of the informal sector. The study done by Davies (2010: 32) shows that informal economies have grown in developing countries, and that many households supplement their incomes formerly earned in the formal sector with income earned informally. According to different scholars, Bass (2004: 6), child labour perpetuates poverty which costs Africa societies the ability to integrate into the increasingly technological global economy. In other words, if a child works rather than attends school, it will be difficult for such child to gain economic dependence as an adult which in turn makes it difficult for African countries to raise income and standard of living. Blank (2010: 448) pointed out that she based her theories on working children on the notion of poverty and its effects, but also considered this problem as a result of failure of market force, economic underdevelopment, inability of individuals to participate in the market, and in social and political processes as a result of individual behavioural characteristics and choice. It can also be said that family poverty make child labour inevitable, Bonnet (1993: 375) for example asserted that the poor economic and social environments in which families live make them send their children to hawk. The poorer a family is, the more vulnerable it is to events, be it natural, social, war, death of breadwinner or during drought to mention but few. Bonnet points out that economic environments offer neither stability nor the flexibility needed to overcome difficulties. In other words, children have to work. In a poor country, life is becoming more expensive, unemployment is continued to rise and workers are paid less. Consequently, to send child out to hawk is what Bonnet called a family strategy to escape a deteriorating situation (ibid).

Similarly, linking poverty to social capital, Cleaver explain how social capital leads to a better understanding of the extent to which social relationships enable or constrain the livelihood of the poor and what kind of opportunity such people have within the existing social structure. Moreover, a social capital approach also gives a better understanding of processes of institutional inclusion and exclusion, and limits to the emancipatory possibilities of development interventions that aim at promoting public participation (2005: 895). In other words, a lack of coping strategies affects poor households and compels them to send their children to work. To the contrary, Admassie (2002: 251) pointed out that poverty is not the only determinant for parents sending their children to work in less developed countries like Nigeria. Rather, it is coupled with other factors like, a poorly developed agricultural sector, a high fertility rate that leads to population growth and low literacy rates to mention but a few aspect. Admassie (2002: 251) argued that comprehensive and multifaceted interven-

tions like poverty reduction strategies, provision of mass primary education and mobilization of community awareness can solve the problem of working children.

This study is based on the hypothesis that poverty explains many aspects of child labour- work. There is a lot of literature that explains how poverty perpetuates parents to send their children to work/hawk. For instance, Basu and Tzannatos (2003: 148) used the luxury axiom to illustrate how households send their children out to work in the light of poverty. In this case, households whose adult income are very low find it very difficult to keep children out of productive and economic activities. Basu and Tzannatos reviewed that it is only when adult income is high that they can afford to keep their children out of the labour force. Children's work can be substituted with adult labour in terms of technological production. However, adult labour cost more than that of children's work. The political economy model elaborated by Basu and Tzannatos (2003: 148) showed the income inequality gives rise to the incidence of children involved in the incidence of children working. Bass (2004: 6) considered working children as a companion of poverty in a mutually reinforcing relationship but pointed out that issues often differ along many factors which vary from child to child. She further argued that failure to understand how children's work perpetuates poverty may lead to misallocation and development of government expenditure, and prevents nation meeting up with the increasingly technological global economy. If children continue to work rather than attend school, it becomes difficult for the children to gain economic dependence as adult. Nevertheless, Bass argued that children's work in the post-colonial period is a function of poverty and inequality created by international corruption and Africa's inauspicious position in the global economic system. She also attaches the kind of work that children do to the poor educational facilities, lack of opportunities as mentioned by Cleaver above and general lack of development in the rural areas. It may also be acceptable for a child to do unpaid work in the family business or to do paid work for spending money because some child work is seen to be beneficial to both the child and his or her family (ibid)

Arguably, high income countries often view policy interventions to ban exploitative work of children are seen as appropriate response. High income households would prefer not to send their children to work, while low income households that are dire in need may be forced to send their children to work in order to survive. Emerson asserted that, if adult wages are high enough, all households will benefit from the adult earnings and children can be kept out of the labour force (Emerson 2009: 3). However, if adult income is too low, the household would not be able to survive on adult wages alone. Consequently, households may be compelled to send their children to work in order to add the children wages to those of adult for the families to meet up with their basic needs (ibid). In other words, Basu and Van (1998: 143) asserted that, if all children are taken away from work, there will be shortage of labour and if child labour is substitute by adult labour, there would be rise in adult wages in response to the excess demand for labour. Apparently, once there is rise in adult wages, parents will not want to send their children to work.

Furthermore, one needs to ask the question, weather child work is necessary since Basu and Tzannatos claimed above that child work can be substitut-

ed by adult labour. Bhatotra answered this question in her study on Pakistan. She found that if children work because their households are very poor in the sense that the households income exclusive of child earnings falls below subsistence requirements, child work is required. In other words, children will have to work towards a targeted income that is shortfall between subsistence needs and other income (2006: 30).

Many countries in Sub Saharan Africa are facing the challenges of structural constraints including poverty, debt, corruption, war, ethnic conflict, diseases, international competition and ineffective legislation which make the issue of child work and labour inevitable (Bass, 2004: 43). The political and economic factors provide diminishing educational opportunities and expand work responsibilities for children. For instance, the prevalence of children's work is high in south Asia but recent studies reviewed that is declining in Asia due to rising per capital incomes, spread of basic education and reduction in family size. Edmond found out in his cross countries research that there is strong link between child's work and GDP per capital (2003: 1). Using non parametric techniques to analyse the relationship between the decline in child's work and improvement in economic status, Edmond showed that the relationship between the two should be flat such that a household will begin to meet up with the subsistence needs and thereafter there will be a rapid decline in child economic activities. Increase in the per capital income of individuals in Vietnam resulted to decline in child involvement in economic activities (ibid). Further literature points that the higher the per capital income of the household, the lower the participation of children in economic activities of the household (Alimi and Micah 2010).

In support of Edmond's findings, Hazan and Berdugo (2002: 811) argued that technological progress increases the differential wages for parental and child work gradually decreases the benefit from child work and ultimately permits households out of the poverty trap. Yet, as Bass pointed out the rate of rural population and percentage of GDP derive from agriculture is low compared to that of technologically advanced countries (op cit). As was noted by Togunde and Carter that 'Nigeria demographic size, coupled with protracted socioeconomic development problems, makes most families vulnerable to poverty' (2007: 74). Income inequality also account for the high rate of child participation in economic activities (op cit). Moreover, the work that children engage in is gender biased because girls mostly are involved in both domestic and economic activities. A study done by Fetuga et al (2005: 7) in Nigeria on child labour revealed a gender bias because parents send girl children to work so as to prepare them with small scale economic trade for boosting their family economy when they grow up.

## **2.2 Intergeneration Transfer, Fertility and Child Work**

Children play a vital role in the production process in rural areas. Parents have many children because the children are economically useful (Bass 2004: 22). High fertility rate tends to lead to larger households and which in turn are more likely to be poor than smaller family (Kempe 2007: 23). Comparing intergenerational transfer and child labour, Sagawara explained that intergenera-

tion transfer plays an important role for demographic transition because children are considered to support their family and also to reduce the risk of poor age parents (2010: 584). Adversely, child income is important for family income. High fertility rate according to Sagawara is a rational parental choice because of the economic constrain making parent relying on the child income (ibid). It was argued by Sagawara that fertility rate is high in developing countries compare to developed countries with low fertility rate, parent in developed countries prefer quality rather than quantity through education (ibid). In other words, intergeneration transfer influence fertility in developing countries like Nigeria. Additionally, child labour is related to intergeneration transfer and fertility rate because parents have to force their children to work, if the household income depend on the children income (Sagawara 2010: 585). Also, it was discovered that poverty induce higher fertility and higher population growth among poor people because children provides old age security as well as extra labour and income and having more children compensate for higher mortality rate (Fisher 2010:7)

Similarly, Bass (2004:37) asserted that 'families tend to see their children as being necessary for labour needs in the immediate term, and as investments and old age insurance for the future'. He further argued that the fertility rate is high in developing countries while it is very <sub>low</sub> in developed ones. Fertility rate decrease with an increase in opportunity cost of rearing children caused by an increase in parental wage income (op cit).

Children hawking on the street is closely related to intergeneration transfer and fertility rate because parents have to force their children to hawk in as much as the survival of the household depends on the children's wages. Grootaert and Kanbur (1995: 10) pointed out that the number of children in the household determines the supply of child labour. So, as such fertility behaviour is a determinant of the supply of child labour. Also, children's income potential support their work as children and their income transfer to their parents when they are old (ibid). However, Longford asserts that families who have too many children have the immediate and pressing problem to feed many mouth on the wages earned by only one parent (1995: 475). According to Sagarawa, child work affects the ability of children to receive education and the accumulation of human capital. In contrast, if the fertility rate and child labour is high the human accumulation is slow and at low educational (op cit). Thus, if there is increase in parental wages compared to that of child earning, there will be a decrease in fertility and increase in school attendance. Also, Alimi and Micah (2010) noted that high fertility rate and illiteracy of parents constitute child labour. In a situation where there is an increase in population with low economic growth, the alternative is for the able body (of which children are not excluded) in the household to find a means of livelihood to sustain the household. Furthermore, large family size according to Fetuga et al (2005: 6), is based on potential economic consideration. Arguably, a large family size would force children to engage in economic activities because of many dependants on little or limited resources. Households allocate time for children either leisure, schooling or work (Grootaert and kanbur:1995: 11). The way the households will allocate the child's time depends among other things, such as the household size and structures, the productive potential of the child and its parents in

the house and market work, and the degree of substitution between the child and its parents (ibid).

Alimi and Micah showed that educated parents are more likely to understand the need of growing child to concentrate on activities capable of enhancing the scope for realization of their full potential and the need to avoid potential harmful activities (ibid). Furthermore, larger household size reduces children's educational participation and progress in school and reduce parent investment in schooling (op cit). On the other hand, the larger the low income household size, the greater the probability that a child will work. In relation to Alimi and Micah, Grootaert and Kanbur argued that the parental education and household income level determine the school enrolment of children. When household income increases it outweighs the substitution effect and child labour decreases. Low educational level of the parent(s) determines the kinds of employment that is within reach and whether the income will be sufficient for the household upkeep. Irregularity of parental employment creates the needs for an additional or stable income source which has to be provided by children (Grootaert and Kanbur 1995: 15). Ibanga (1986: 9) pointed out that traditional, custom especially polygamy can contribute to a poor living standard and push children into the street due to parent giving birth to many children and their inability to cater for the children. Street hawking can only be reduced if there is a policy put in place to raise the household income.

### **2.3 Other Determinants**

Many studies show that poverty is one of the reasons why parents send their children to work, but many other factors in low or no income households will co-determine whether to send their children out to work. Further literature revealed that a female headed household is another determinant of street hawking. Children living in a female headed household according to Kempe (2007: 23) are at greater risk of poverty because of male migration to the city or death of a male adult in the household. The reason for this is that female in some societies lack access to education, land and other assets. Kempe's study shows that there is a greater incident of children's economic activities among children whose mothers are not educated compared to children whose mother had some education (ibid). In addition the education acquired by child's parent especially mother has a very strong impact on the development of child potential (Andrea et al 2005: 643). Arguably, maternal education determine the attainment which impact successful development of future generation (ibid). To the contrary, one of the household in this study revealed that 'I have no education, so I have to let them go to school so that they can communicate well in the society and moreover after school they will get a good job'. Togunde and Carter reviewed whether the level of parent's education determines if a child works or not. In a less developed country like Nigeria whereby the educational system is poor and low, parents may decide to send their children to work because they have little or no education (2006: 84). Apart from household educational level, Edmond and Pavcnik argued that parent might decide not to send their children to school because of the low return from education (op cit). For instance, a situation whereby the rate of unemployment is high, parents might decide to send their children to work because of what will become of the child

after education. During the interview with one of the households, Mr Taiwo said: ‘the children are not just hawking but learning trading at the same time. What is the essence of sending them to school that they will not have good job at the end of the day?’. The case of Mr Taiwo shows that his decision for sending his children to work results from the high unemployment rate in the country and low return from education. Grootaert and Kanbur asserted that ‘education is no longer a road towards obtaining a diploma which in turns leads to a modern sector job’, in an economic environment where most household survival depend on the informal sector, many parents prefer to put their children to work as solution for household survival (ibid).

## **2.4 Child’s Right and Street Hawking**

The 1989 Convention on the Right of the Children focuses on children’s right in states parties, including Nigeria. The right of the child to be protected from economic exploitative work that are likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education or to be harmful to the child’s health or development is included (Ladd 2002: 89). The interpretation of this right is still controversial in many traditional societies like Nigeria, because children are seen to be their parent’s property and they raise them as they like (Burke 2007: 334). The Convention states that children should be protected against all forms of economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Nigeria ratified the Convention on the Right of the Child but is faced with the challenges of long standing ethnic, religious and civil strife, economic constraint including poverty, unemployment and the heavy debt burden. This make it very difficult to realize the children’s right as enshrined in the Convention. Despite of this Convention, children’s right are still violated in Nigeria because children are seen engaging in work that keep them from going to school. Bessells (2009: 534) argued that international child labour advocacy for children involvement in work was as a result of lack of political will to prevent and protect children from working rather than poverty.

Consequently, viewing child labour from the normative dimension (which will be developed further in the next chapter). Satz reported that children are subjected to the parents as a result of weak agency whereby the parent’s decision is binding on their children. In other words, parents make the market decisions concerning their children’s time. Children that work in exploitative situation are excluded and denied of their human rights, children as rights owner are meant to enjoy their rights without any hindrance. If children are right owner, it is the responsibility of adult to protect and care for them (Fetuga et al 2005: 7).

## **2.5 Debates that affect street hawking children**

The efforts made by ILO to restore global economy by including all the necessary political decisions is to put every child in school and end child labour. Similarly, the elimination of child labour is a global cause according to ILO and the existence of child labour reviewed that a major gap in achieving of decent

work, that is, every child is free from the need to labour and have a good education (2012: 1). Many scholars debated on how the indecent work of children can be eradicated or reduce, lots of studies suggests increment in household income and making school attractive for children in order to discourage child's work. Edmond and Pavcnik (2005: 209) reviewed that the prevalence can decline rapidly with the improvement of households living standards, that is, family income rise in response to trade liberalization, the work child do response to unexpected changes within the family and ineffective or expensive schools associated with poverty leave children with few option other than to work. For the fact that attention is focused on the future development of a child that work, the view ignore the reality of life for many poor children in poor countries where schools are inaccessible nearby even if they are available, one need to think about the poor quality and discrimination and restriction of labour market opportunities that result to low returns of education (Anker 2001: 85).

Anker further argued that circumstances of street hawking can be positive in a way that it teaches self-reliance, responsibility and traditional skills just like children in the industrial world who work after school or during the holiday (ibid). Additionally, White (1994: 851) asserted that eradication of all forms of work from the lives of children and young workers should not be proper focus of attention, rather there is need to understand better the natures and problems of child and youth employment, identify types of work and the work relations which constitute an abuse of these categories of worker, and support the effort of working children in trying to improve their conditions of life and work. Furthermore, Street hawking may not be eliminated in a society where there is high degree of inequality. According to Satz (2003: 299), inequality can occur between societies or within the families where a child will have to sacrifice his/her education for the sake of other children within the family. Viewing the harmful outcome of street hawking, Satz explained that, the nature of harm depend on the forms of work the child is doing. His major concern is the kind of policy that will reduce the work done by children under certain condition and curtain restriction because it will be unjustifiable if a child that contribute to the up keep of the household is ban from work, the household is likely to suffer the more. Eliminating street hawking would benefit poor children and their families in the long run but poor children and their families will have to survive in the short run. For more rapid economic growth, Anker call on policy makers to help poor children and their family to survive in the short run by enhancing children's education just as it was done in the late industrial countries like China and Taiwan (2001: 89). However, It is noted by Edmond and Pavcnik that improvement in family income may affect a child in four ways; firstly, as income improve, family choose less or no work for their children. Secondly, in case of diminishing marginal utilities of income, the value of marginal contribution of child's income decreases. Thirdly, higher family income purchase substitutes for child's work that is likely to lower the return from the child within the household. Lastly, the child productivity in other activities such as schooling might improve because family might be able to afford to send their children to school rather than to hawk (op cit).

## 2.6 Implication of Child Work on the Future Development of Children and a Nation

According to Basu, (1999: 1059) 'Keeping children away from education may mean missing out on benefit for society at large which do not accrue to the parent who takes the decision'. The case of one of the household interviewed in this study showed that family economic history may have effect on the upbringing of children. Mrs A (not real name) said 'I learnt trading from my mother, so I want my daughters to also learn how to sell so that they can support their household as wives and mothers'. She went further to say that those children going to school, in the end they will look for money (job hunting) and those that are hawking are also looking for money (profit), is the same thing'. Children work have economic effects both at the micro household and macro labour market and economy level as was asserted by Anker (2001: 88). If child work is eliminated at the micro households level is going to have negative effect on poor households except there is policy in place to assist poor families economically. At the macro level, child's work have negative effect on the economic growth and economic development. He argued that the kind of work that displace children from school attainment reduce human capital; consequently reduce labour productivity, economic growth and economic development over a long run. These kinds of work reduces children mental and physical development and reduces children productivity as adult, also fertility rate would increase as a result of low or no educational level.

Furthermore, it was argued by Okafor that nations with high incidence of children that are involved in one work or the other will continue to be backbencher in the quest of sustainable development among other nation because of lack of investment in the future of children in economic activities. When children work out of the home to survive and supplement family income, it may solve some family problems but create a new one for both the children and the society (2010: 8). Creating a new problem in the sense that it affects children's personality development and hardening the aptitude prematurely. It could also lead to compromising sustainable economic development and social development.

Different views were established in Oloko's study in Lagos, they are as follows;

1. The view that street trading is probably safer activities for children than it is usually presumed. This view argued that there is no tendency to exaggerate the harm which children experience.
2. Another view states that much harms associated with hawking activities of children but children and parents tends to ignore this activities because of the cultural lag, ignorant of these harmful effects. Parents also participate in the traditional custom of street trading but fail to understand the cultural and social discontinuities which make children's hawking experience different and more hazardous than their own experience.
3. Another view argued that parent and children understand very well that hawking involves risks but they participate in it because of the economic condition. (Oloko 1991: 13-14)

The views that support street trading by children do so because it is believed to be a form of informal education which fosters attributes like: resourcefulness, perseverance and self-reliance in children that participate in it. Alternatively the views that oppose children's street trading are basically concern about the exploitative nature. The argument here is that not only are children neglected by their parents who sent the children to hawk at an early stage in life but customers also take advantage of the children.

The case of street hawking among children, those children who hawk and do not go to school will lack the capacities that they need to exercise their agency in future (ibid). However, the benefit of education is the ability of educated person to choose in a more informed way. In a situation whereby children economic activities is not presently harmful, it can be very harmful in terms of child's future wellbeing and agency interest as an adult(Satz 2003: 305).

This chapter identified poverty of households that influence children participation in street hawking. This section also compared per capital income of households in developed countries and developing countries, it was revealed that developed countries with higher per capital income have lower children participation in exploitative economic activities that developing countries with lower per capital income. More so, high fertility rate influence street hawking by children as a result of low income earned by households head. Households head that have many mouths to cater for with low income may be compelled to send children out to hawk in order to meet up with the subsistence needs. The measures put in place to eliminate children exploitative work is likely to put poor households in more critical situation. The following chapter will be discussing the normative framework on the rights of children.

## Chapter 3 : Normative Framework

### 3.1 Introduction

Children's economic activities raised both international and national consciousness because of their adverse effects on child development. The rights of children are important subject of international concerns and actions. The Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC) ratified by all countries except Somalia and the United States. The CRC established principles and responsibilities for all countries that ratified it (Myers 2001: 39). UNICEF and many other governmental and non-government organizations are dedicated to effective implementation of the Convention. The Convention is the universal human rights of children under the ages of eighteen. This rights covers all the aspects of their lives. Implementing the Convention, it states four articles which is most important in the lives of a child, that is, the child must not be exempted irrespective of his or her colour race, religion, language to mention but a few. Also in all action by the state, public, private to mention but a few, the best interest of the child must be put into consideration. Every child must have right to life, survival and development, that is, every child have the right to life and provision should be provided for them to develop their potential and play part in peaceful and tolerant society. Right to be heard, that is , every child have the right to be heard in all in all decision affecting their lives. Reflecting on these article, a child should not be denied of all these rights. A child that hawk and without going to school due to the socioeconomic situation of his or her parents deserve support from the state because the Convention delegate duties to the state parties to implement the child rights through legal, budget, administrative measure to the realization of the Convention. For the state parties to implement this Convention it is the obligation of parents, families, communities, care givers to support the state in implementing the child's rights (CRC 1989)

The Child labour in recent years has been the most visible debates and discussion about how rights are to be defined and observed. It is subject of debate at the national and international level which revolves round the questions of who should decide what is best for children and determine the policies and programmes intended to protect them and based on what criteria (ibid). Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all state parties should recognize the right of children to education. With a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, the state party should make education compulsory and free (CRC 1989). Nigeria ratified the Convention on the Right of the Child but is faced with the challenges of long standing ethnic, religious and civil strife, economic constraints including poverty, unemployment and a heavy debt burden. This make it very difficult to realize the children's right as enshrined in the convention.

In 2003, the Federal government of Nigeria passed the Child Rights Act to complement the UNCRC and ACRWC for ensuring welfare and protection of Nigerian children. It also serves as a national legislation to protect children from exploitation. Yet the Act has been facing implementation challenges due

to the inability of all states to pass the bill into state law. Only 16 out of thirty six states were able to pass it into state law of which Ogun state is one of the states that endorsed the legislation. Intense advocacy continues for the remaining states which explains the landmark in achievement of the legislative arms of government has not yet translate into improved legal protection throughout the federation. However, children are still abused in practice though (Amagiya 2012).

Furthermore, a lot of research and policy efforts have focused on the relationship between children's work and education, especially in developing countries where heavy workloads carried out by many children living in poverty have been perceived to affect negatively children's educational participation and achievement. When work competes with schooling it undermines the children's right to education (Myers 2004: 109). But in a situation in which children are most likely to share responsibility for maintaining the home or boost the family earnings in poor households, children have to work to meet the basic needs within the household.

According to the Convention on the Right of the Child and child's Right Act 2003, a child is anyone under the age of eighteen. The Convention states that children should be protected from exploitative work and work that will prevent them from future development. Similarly, article 15 of the ACRWC (1990:17) states that every child shall be protected from all forms of economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

### **3.2 Challenges For Nigeria's Laws on Children's Rights**

Legal Measures to Criminalize the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Nigeria (Convention on the Rights of the Child: Second Country Report, 2004: 139)

The Labour Act 1974 (revised in 1990) includes a wide range of provisions (Sections 58-63)

prohibiting or regulating various forms of child labour.

Section 59 prohibits a child under the age of 12 years from all work except where he is:

employed by his family in "light work of an agricultural, domestic or horticultural character." It allows apprenticeship from the age of 12 years upwards with the consent of the child's parents, but forbids any child under the age of 15 years to work in any industrial undertaking. As a result, large, formal sector organisations tend not to employ children who are below the age of 15 years. The labour inspectorate system monitors the formal sector ensuring respect for the provisions of the Labour Act.

Two major legislations were enacted in 2003 to further reinforce the protection of children and to incorporate the provisions of the CRC. These are the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, 2003, and the Child's Rights Act, 2003. Almost all the States in Nigeria

have various laws prohibiting hawking, street begging, child prostitution and other forms of exploitative labour against children.

For more clarity, the Nigeria Child Right Act 2003 in section 28 prohibits exploitative labour, subsection 1 which reads that no child shall be

1a. subjected to any forced or exploitative labour

1b. employed to work in industry

1c. required in any case to lift, to carry or move anything so heavy as to be likely to adversely affect his/her physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development or

1d. employed as domestic help outside his/her home or family environment

Section 30 of the Nigerian Child Rights Act prohibit buying, selling, hiring and dealing with children for the purpose of hawking, begging for alms or prostitution.

Nigeria's Child Rights Act prohibits all children under 14 years of age from trading in the street. Street trading in this law, is defined as hawking of newspapers, matches, foods and goods or articles of whatever description; playing, singing or performing for profit, shoe-making and other like occupations carried on in a street or public places (Oloko 1991: 11). Despite all these provision in the Act, children are still involved in street trading and deprived from enjoying their basic rights as stated in all the international and national child right instruments. It was also reported that labour supervisor were appointed to supervise and monitor the implementation of labour Act. But supervision and monitoring was carried out in the formal sector while it was difficult in the informal sector and rural areas where cultural practice counter the interest of child (FMWA 2004: 143).

In addition to these views by Oloko (1991: 14), Satz normative framework argued that not all work performed by children are objectionable, some work does not interfere with children's health and education but allow children to develop skills they need to become well-functioning adult and broaden their opportunities (2003: 304). On the other hand, work perform by children that violate children's basic interest can be prohibited.

### **3.3 The Question of Rights**

Rights is the ability of someone who can be said to have a duty to fulfil that right (Ladd, 2002: 91). This rights referred to universal rights of children which cannot be taken away from them. Children are said to be right owners but there are some rights that needs to be provided either by the parents, community or the state, such as the right to health care, right to education, right to food and shelter which is quite different from right to play and participation in the matter that affect their lives. State or care givers should not interfere into the enjoyment of rights of the children. Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Children recognise the right of children to be protected from economic exploitation while article 15 provides children with the right to freedom of association. It states that no restriction may be place on the exer-

cise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in the democratic society. (CRC 1989). The UNCRC sets standard which make special allowance for the economic and social problems of poor countries, and it also cover every aspects of a child's life and rights. It lay emphasis on helping countries to improve their standards rather than condemning those countries fall short on highest standards (Longford 1995:478). The interpretation of CRC posits two view among child liberationist and care taker (protectionist). The child liberation view that children should have all the right adult possess, in view of this children, are individual entitled to lead their lives as they see fit. On the other hand, children are not traditionally accorded with this right, they are not understood to possess the necessary rationality, insight or capacity to act on their own interest (Ansell 2005: 226). The problem with this view is that by making decision on behalf of children, adult shape children's future. And denying children the opportunity to make mistake may harm them when they grow up. The care taker (protectionist) view is that, children are considered to need rights which guarantee them certain form of treatment such as minimum standard of health care, education, freedom from violence and cruelty. This rights require adults to secure these condition on the part of children. If adult act on the children interest, children will also be able to act on their own interests when they grow up. Contrarily, allowing a child to make decision might have adverse effect on the child development. More so, very young children do lack the competence to exercise many rights (ibid). Comparing the two views, the child liberation views might support children to participate in economic activities while the care taker might require children to be protected from economic work. This pose the question of who should determine the children's rights- family, community, state or international body?

However, due to controversy between the liberationist and care taker (protectionist), feminist scholars argued that rather than arguing over rights of children, it would be better for those who are more concerns about the welfare of children to deliberate on the obligation and responsibilities of adult to children (Ladd 2002: 95). Furthermore, for parents to make decision on behalf of their children up to legal authority (when the children are grown up to decide for themselves), then children cannot have the right to decide for themselves. It was presumed by Ladd (2002: 97) that biological parents have special bond with their children in other words, parent are in position to protect their children because they know what is good for the children. On the part of state, the state intervene in the private lives of both children and their parents life with the legitimate interest to have health, well-educated future citizen and state have the obligatory responsibilities to provide for children when the parents are not capable to provide for the needs of children. Also there is need for government to play crucial role in protecting children against parental abuse and neglect (Satz 2003: 301).

Children have the to exercise their rights as stated in the CRC, those who are concern about the wellbeing of children must participate in open, free discussion and then good policy can be developed. On the other hand, for all the CRC, ILO, ACRWC and CRA policies to be realised, there is a need for government to strengthen the educational system, to restricting children's working hours per day so that children can attend school, encourage measures (training/organising) to raise adult wages and providing credit to poor families (Satz

2003: 305). Article 32 of the CRC is important because exploitative child labour is generally the direct result of the denial to a child of his or her other rights, such as the right to standard of living, the right to benefit from social security, the right to play and recreate to mention but few (Longford 1995: 479). Legislation that deprive children of the labour force without providing alternative income could be at the detrimental to the well-being of children, either the children are poor or orphan, some children have to work to survive at the expense of their future opportunity (Bass 2004: 9).

## Chapter 4 : Views of Households and Street Hawking Children

### 4.1 Introduction

In Ifo local government, the level of poverty is high due to less productivity of farmers because many of the farm produce is less profitable. Many families see their children as economic assets and send the children out to hawk. When the children hawk they face a lot of challenges during the course of their duty. Nevertheless, they do not stop hawking because they are doing this to assist their household.

**Table 1: The Household Characteristics**

No of household	Sex	Educational level	Source of Income	Children Hawking
1	F	O	Petty trader	Yes
2	M	Standard six	Unemployed	Yes
3	F	Standard six	Sewing mistress	Yes
4	F	O	Petty trader	Yes
5	F	O	Petty trader	Yes

Source: Researcher's computation from household interview conducted in August, 2012

Note:

O = No education

Yes = household that have children hawking

### 4.2 Parental Socioeconomic Condition and Decision on Street Hawking Children

Table 1 above shows the parental educational and income status. It was revealed during the interview that most of the household heads are petty trader with a low income. Some of the husbands are either farmer, unemployed or have migrated to the city. These households explained that they sent their children out to hawk in the light of poverty. Their children hawk in order to supplement the household income. Mrs B (not real name) said "they hawk to support the family income, their father works as a private driver with a low wage, so we are managing ourselves". She went further and said "with the money realized from the goods I sell and their father's income, we use it to run the affairs of the home".

However, the death of one of the household heads led the children in the household to hawk. Mrs Bakare shared how the death of her husband subjected her to send her children to hawk. She revealed that:

"ever since I lost my husband, life has been so difficult for me and my children and my job is only fetching me little or no income at times. I have to let the children assist me to raise the household income in order to make ends meet".

Some of these household wished their children are in school but since there is not means for them to send the children to school they had to send them to hawk. Mrs C(not real name) explained that

“I wish that he further his education but there is no means to send him to school, ever since my husband left for north he only come home twice a year and send little money home which is not enough to cater for the household”

Mr Taiwo lost his job as a driver in a private company and explained how he preferred to send his children to hawk rather than to school. His story goes as follows:

“the children are not just hawking but learning trading at the same time. What is the essence of sending them to school when they will not have good job at the end of the day?”

It is believed by this male headed household that children can also gain knowledge that will make them beneficial when growing up through hawking.

Parents make decision for their children either to hawk or to attend school in the light of poverty, that is, parent have authority and full control over their children, The view of Mrs B (not real name) shows that some parent want their children to take after their occupation. She said that “I learnt trading from my mother, so I want my daughters to also learn how to sell, so that they can support their household as wives and mother” and went further to say “those children who go to school, at the end they look for money (job hunting) and those who hawk/trade are also looking for money (profit) is the same thing”. This scenario shows that this female headed household sees nothing wrong with children hawking.

Poverty, as was argued by many scholars is to be one of the reasons why most parents send their children to hawk in Ifo local government because most households find it difficult to meet up with the subsistence needs of the households. The alternative they have is to send their children out to hawk. The story of Ajibola a thirteen year old boy who took part in the group discussion shows that, the household poverty compelled her parents to withdraw all the children from school except for the first born who is about to write his senior school examination. She said the following:

“After the loss of my father’s job as a gateman in one private sector, we are unable to have our three square meal in a day, buying our school books is difficult, we go to school with tattered school uniform. My daddy withdrew us from the school and we started helping our mother to sell so that we can have money to eat”

**Table 2**  
**The Children's Characteristics**

Respondents	Age	Sex	Household size	Educational Background	Parental Occupation	Passion for Education
1	10	M	6	Dropped out	Unemployed	Yes
2	9	F	8	Illiterate	Petty trader	Yes
3	12	F	5	Illiterate	Petty trader	No
4	7	F	8	literate	Employed	Yes
5	9	M	7	Illiterate	Petty trader	No
6	15	F	6	Illiterate	Trader	Yes
7	11	F	9	Dropped out	Unemployed	No
8	8	F	13	Illiterate	Farmer	No
9	13	F	8	Dropped out	Petty trader	Yes
10	15	F	5	Illiterate	Hair dresser	Yes
11	12	F	8	Illiterate	Welder	Yes
12	9	M	5	literate	Employed	Yes
13	9	F	10	Illiterate	Trader	Yes
14	6	F	7	Illiterate	Petty trader	Yes

Source: Researcher's computation from household interview conducted in August, 2012

Note:

F=female

M=male

Yes= children who wish to have education

No= children who wish to learn vocational skills

**Figure 1**  
**Children Hawking on the Street**



Source: Google Images

### 4.3 The Hawking Children's Condition

The above picture represents the street hawking condition among the children. It also show their pattern of hawking by carrying trays filled with wares on their heads. It was captured from Google images to give a clearer picture of street hawking children. The fourteen street hawking children who participated in the focus group discussion, their ages ranged from six to fifteen years. The sex distribution was as follows: the majority were girls, some are from a polygamous and extended family. Most of the street hawking children hawk for long hours that is not less than four hours. Some of these children are from households whose adult head has little or no formal education and is unemployed. The following section elaborate more on the socioeconomic characteristics of the street hawking children.

In reacting to about question of their working conditions, the majority of the street hawking children who took part in the group discussion responded that they hawk for many hours. Some said they hawk from early in the morning to early evening while Bisola (A 9year old girl) said she hawks heavy food stuff such as yam for long hours and it affects her health. A 15year old girl explained how she has to walk extra miles to sell half or almost all the items that she is hawking. Sara (a 6 years old girl) said she has body pain all the time she hawk. Femi (a 9 years old boy) hawk food items in the morning and hawks rubber slippers in the evening. For these street hawking children hawking for many hours in a day is a regular routine in which they carry out every day. The health of these children is of main concern because they do get tired as a result of long walks with heavy loads on their heads. Also shouting to advertise what they sell affects their voices.

School attendance among the street hawking children interviewed in the focus group discussion is very low. Only two out of the fourteen children attend school. The children that attend school usually get to school late and return back home early to hawk. Nevertheless, it can be said that street hawking deprives these children from formal education. Research done by Umar (2009) shows that children forfeit education for hawking. Comparing these two set of children that goes to school and those that do not go to school, there is just little different that differentiate those that are hawking and those that are attending school. The reason is that they go to school late because they have to do household chores before they go to school in the morning and return immediately after school to hawk. When asked the reason for their lateness to school, Waliat (a 7 years old girl)said

“I do household chores before I go to school in the morning and on getting to school, I would have missed two two periods. My teacher gives me punishment for coming late to school. While my other classmates wait for after school lesson, I have to rush home to hawk. When I return from hawking in the evening, I assist my mother in cooking dinner after that I would have been tired all I need to do is to go to bed”

While listening to this girl story, it is clear that such girl might not be academically sound because she has no time to revise what she has been taught in school. In order to maintain the ethics of the study, the researcher did not ask about the academic performance of the girl, so that she will not be moody and

not share other parts of her story. Twelve of the children do not go to school. Among those that do not go to school, some dropped out of school as a result of their parent's inability to afford the school expenses. Some others did not go to school at all.

Among the fourteen street hawking children interviewed during the focus group discussion, expressed that they wish to go to school and become professionals while three of the children wish to learn vocational skills. 12 year old Kemi shared the following:

“I always like to see my friend when she is reading and doing her school homework with lots of beautiful books. She told me that her parent tells her that her parent said that she can become a doctor, lawyer, nurse, accountant if she reads her books. I also want to be like her.”

#### **4.4 The Views of Street Hawking Children on How to Improve their Situation**

During the focus group discussion, the street hawking children reacted to the question how their situation may be improved. Some of the respondents want government to make school free for them without any need for their parents to buy school items. Three children want government to provide jobs for their parents so that they can afford sending them to school. Apart from the street hawking children that want government to make school free and provide jobs for their parents, three children also want government to build a skill acquisition centre so that they can acquire necessary skills in order to achieve their dreams.

#### **4.5 Local Ngo Effort to Assist Children from Low Income Household**

A structured interview conducted with one of the local NGOs in the community reviewed that the organization was founded by one of the churches within the community named Our Children, Our Pride Foundation. The organization was established to train children between the ages of six to ten how to read and write and also to organize skill acquisition for children between the ages of ten to fifteen. When asked the reason for this grouping, the program officer, Mr Adams, explained that:

“These are the ages of children who need attention. By six to ten years they must have learnt the basics on how to read and write, then at the age of ten they can be introduced to some skills acquisition like soap making, beads and hat making to mention but few. Then at fifteen, they can be able to make use of what they learnt to make money.”

With this local NGO in Ifo local government, the prevalence of street hawking children is still high due to organization lack of resources to achieve its aim. Majority of the trainers employed are from out the community and always complain about low salaries, ‘No one want to do voluntary job again’ (Adams).

Despite the work of this NGO in Ifo local government, the prevalence of street hawking children is still high due to the organization's lack of resources to achieve its aim. The majority of the trainers employed are from out of the community and always complain about low salaries. 'No one want to do a voluntary job again' (Mr Adams).

This NGO seems to assist the low income households by voluntarily help to educate the children in their own little way, but is subjected to lack of funds and resources. The government of Ogun state's legislation to protect these children is ineffective as it was reported in the Business Day Newspaper, (May 20, 2011). For the incidence of street hawking among the children in Ifo local government to reduce, it will take the political will of the state and local government to make use of the legislation against exploitation of more children effectively and efficiently. Also, in collaboration with the local NGOs, the prevalence of street hawking children in Ifo local government might be reduced

## **4.6 Final Observation**

Findings review that the decision making of parents is binding on the children. The socioeconomic conditions of these children makes them to hawk because they have to help their parent(s) in other for the household to survive. Children hawk in order to supplement household income. Illiteracy of parents and ignorance of the need to pursue skill development make them send their children to hawk. The focus group discussion among the street hawking children revealed the underlying factors of poverty, unemployment, large family size and low educational level of the adult head of the households.

The focus group discussion among the street hawking children revealed that some of these children are from a large family. In turn, one can assume that in this part of the state, the issue of family planning has not really gained ground so that a family with low or no income will not be able to minimize the number of children they give birth to. They generally see these children as assets, so they are giving birth to these children so that the children can work for them.

Additionally, street hawking among the children in this study is a continual process and dangerous to their health and safety. They hawk under harsh weather condition (raining and sunny) which adversely affect the children's physical development. Street hawking and lack of education can be detrimental to children's mental development. Most of the children complain of various health hazards such as constant tiredness, neck pain body pains to mention a few during their course of hawking. These children hawk from morning to early evening when it start to get dark. Some of them carry heavy items that affect their health. They have to shout on top of their voice to attract the attention of the neighbour who might be willing to buy from them, and they also walk on a long distance in order to sell their goods.

Some of these children would wish to become professionals but since the means are not there for them and their parent being the decision maker could not make these children achieve their dreams.

Kemi (a 12 years old girl) revealed that some of these children wish to go to school and acquire education but they are subjected to their present situation because of the socioeconomic situation of the household and also their parental decision.

On all the five households visited, all the women are petty trader and see nothing wrong in sending their children to hawk in order to assist the household. They sell from the house but because there are many petty traders around they make little or no sales at all. As a result the parents have to ask the children to hawk for additional earnings. The male headed household did not bother to send his children to school rather than to hawk because he see no reasons for sending his children to school when in the end, the children would still become a liability to him. This shows that parents are the decision maker on whether their children go to school or hawk/work. When asked Mr Taiwo the reason why he did not send his children to school, he responded:

“Look at my neighbour’s children, after their parents had struggled and suffered to send them to school out of poverty, they still ended up not finding job. The daughter has started learning hair making while the boys are roaming about the street. Assuming their parent had taught them how to trade, it would have been difficult for them like this. ‘There is no gain from the children.’

It can be argued that the household that suffered to send their children to acquire education could get a return from the children if the country’s economy were buoyant as was argued earlier by Edmond (2003: 1) when per capital income increases there will be a decline in child’s work. The children will be able to attend school and when they grow up they start contributing to the economic development of the nation and the household’s higher income. This kind of work is gender biased because it is mostly females that are doing this work. When asked about the reason why the girls are the ones hawking, one of the (female) parents responded that “female children are to learn trading so that they will be able to assist their household when in economic shock as an adult”.

The health hazard and other effects of street hawking among the children in this study call for effort on the part of government, NGOs, community awareness and parents to constitute measures that will regulate and reduce the occurrence of street hawking in Ifo local government. It also require legislation that will protect the rights of the children as well as measures to eradicate or reduce poverty in the society.

## Chapter 5 :

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The issue of child labour is pervasive problem in Nigeria, as it is in many parts of the world, it is complex that there is no single solution (Ibanga 2007: 10). As it was stated by Ibanga, it cannot be isolated from education and poverty. This study attempted to shed light on street hawking in Ifo Local Government, Ogun state, Nigeria and find a link between socioeconomic factors and street hawking among children between the ages of six and fifteen. The findings and results, show that street hawking is linked with poverty, illiteracy of the household heads, high fertility rate and low level of the child's education. All these social problem contribute to the prevalence of street hawking among the children in Ifo local government, Ogun state

This study also found that parental job history influence the economic activities. Parents that hawk during their youth also want their children to hawk or learn trading in order to assist their household when they grow up as adult. Yet the country is moving away from the rural economic system. The country is moving towards urbanization and industrialization. The children need to be more enlightened in a way that will make them meet up with the trend of industrialization in order for the children to be more beneficial to their nation and themselves. In other words, parents need to be reoriented towards the need of children to be educated and not in full time hawking. This will require a change in perception of household heads in favour of child education.

The study also reveal that parents force their children to work, and parents will have more children if the household income depend on the income of the children. Street hawking as a form of child labour displace children's education and hinder economic development (Sagawara 2010: 592). The study also show that there is high incidence of children in economic activities in developing countries because of the low educational level in, economy fall into poverty trap due to lack of education (ibid).

Furthermore, it is possible that street hawking will reduce if there is an increase in household head income. The need for child work will then gradually or totally reduce because the head of the household will find child work unnecessary if the household head's income is able to meet up with the subsistence needs of the household.

With lots of international and local advocacy against the exploitation of children in the informal sector, the situation seems not to be attended to the way it should have. Many households subject their children to economic activities that hinder the children from education and future development. Ending street hawking can only be achieved, if the causes of the problem are attended to, and the condition of these children and their family members can be improved. It was noted by Admassie (2003: 183) that immediate elimination of child exploitative work is neither feasible nor desirable in the light of children's contribution to household income and household production systems but there is a need to reduce the undesirable children's work that affects their schooling attendance. However, also the rights of the children need to be pro-

tected, if truly as it is stated in article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Children that ‘all state parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest potential’ (CRC 1989).

Efforts to curb child labour and introduce protective child rights policies should be intensified (Ikechebebu et al 2008: 118). Policy intervention that will assist street hawking children cannot be limited to education alone because in a situation whereby education is free and compulsory on paper but poor parents still have to buy books, uniforms and lots of other school items, poor households will be hindered in sending their children to school. Since the study found that some children would like to go to school while a few would like to acquire vocational skills, both should be made available attractive and free in practical terms. Through the establishment of vocational skills acquisition centres, those children that wish to learn vocational skills can be assisted. The Nigerian government should show practical commitment to the welfare of children in the country.

Wasir (2002: 615) asserted that only few micro/local NGOs have achieved recognition in the field of reducing children economic activities. The success of micro NGOs is influenced by different factors, for example, the variety of background, overarching consideration ranging from buoyancy of economy to the availability of resources and the prevailing legal and institutional framework. The reason is that all these factors are outside the control of micro NGOs but stand as a constraint to their activities (ibid). In Ifo local government the effort of the local NGO is less recognised, in order to commend their effort, local, state and national government has to collaborate with the NGO so that the aim and objectives of the NGO can be achieved.

This study suggests that, rather than eliminating children’s participation in economic activities, there is a need to support the children’s working lives, that is, looking into their working conditions and seeking ways to find solution to their working conditions. This could happen either by regulating or restricting their long hours of work in a way that will allow the children that would want to go to school or acquire skills to do so, while still be able to assist their parents with hawking. Because banning children economic activities may make parents choose the worst option for their children. Policy can be aimed combining school attendance and work instead of eradicating child labour in the rural communities like Ifo local government in order to allow the children to assist their household financially. The type of child labour that require highest priority should be the worst form of labour that is detrimental for future development

Furthermore, the problem of street hawking should be addressed with multidimensional approaches through advocacy, public awareness raising, community mobilization and empowerment, devising strategies for balanced and sustainable economic growth, improving conditions in the adult labour market and finding out more about the root causes which make children end up in the labour force (Admassie 2002: 271)

Advocacy for reduction in family size and promotion of adult education and household empowerment such that parents will have no course to employ their children in full time hawking would also be useful. There is also a need

for more active local, national and international NGOs to collaborate with the local and national government in realization of the Child Rights Act. And also, enlighten the general public about the negative effect of street hawking by children.

For the prevalence of street hawking children to reduce, there is a need for the government to enact policy that will increase the household income, like poverty alleviation measures to improve the general socioeconomic status of the majority of the population, by so doing, parents will have little or no cause to send their children out to hawk, making education free and compulsory for all children in practical terms would be greatly beneficial also. A more effective and efficient policy will be positive for both the working children and their poor households.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

**Table 1**  
**Household Characteristics**

No of household	Sex	Educational level	Source of Income	Children Hawking
1	F	O	Petty trader	Yes
2	M	Standard six	Unemployed	Yes
3	F	Standard six	Sewing mistress	Yes
4	F	O	Petty trader	Yes
5	F	O	Petty trader	Yes

Source: Researcher's computation from household interview conducted in August, 2012

**Table 1**  
**The Children's Characteristics**

Respondents	Age	Sex	Household size	Educational Background	Parental Occupation	Passion for Education
1	10	M	6	Dropped out	Unemployed	Yes
2	9	F	8	Illiterate	Petty trader	Yes
3	12	F	5	Illiterate	Petty trader	No
4	7	F	8	literate	Employed	Yes
5	9	M	7	Illiterate	Petty trader	No
6	15	F	6	Illiterate	Trader	Yes
7	11	F	9	Dropped out	Unemployed	No
8	8	F	13	Illiterate	Farmer	No
9	13	F	8	Dropped out	Petty trader	Yes
10	15	F	5	Illiterate	Hair dresser	Yes
11	12	F	8	Illiterate	Welder	Yes
12	9	M	5	literate	Employed	Yes
13	9	F	10	Illiterate	Trader	Yes
14	6	F	7	Illiterate	Petty trader	Yes

Source: Researcher's computation from household interview conducted in August, 2012

## Appendix 2 Interview Guide

**Fieldwork interviews conducted with five households, community leader, street hawking children and local NGO staff.**

Interview conducted in different Households on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2012

- a. What is the household size?
- b. What do you do for a living?
- c. What is the level of your education?
- d. What is the educational attainment of your children?

- e. Why did you choose that your children should hawk and not something else for instance schooling?
- f. Is it that you don't want them to go to school at all?
- g. Why did you send the children to school and not full time hawking?
- h. What is the hawking condition of your children?
- i. What other thing do you think your children can do apart from hawking?

**Focus Group Interview Conducted with the Street Hawking Children on 27 August, 2012**

- a. What is your name?
- b. How old are you?
- c. What is your household size?
- d. What is your parents occupation?
- e. How many of you go to school?
- f. What is your street hawking condition?
- g. What is it like combining schooling and hawking?
- h. What many of you wish to go to school or learn hand work?
- i. What do you think the government should do to make you achieve what you want to become?

**Interview conducted with the Ifo local Government community leader on 22 August, 2012**

- a. Can we meet you Sir?
- b. Can you tell us the history of Ifo community?
- c. How come people that are not indigenous are residing in Ifo?
- d. If we look around, children are selling things within the community; can you tell me why these children are selling in this modern day?
- e. Does that means the children are used to hawk in order to get money for the household because these children are meant to be in school?
- f. Sir, according to Ogun state legislation, children of school age is supposed to be in school, how did you see the law?
- g. Can you say, you are in support of street hawking by the children?
- h. What has been your effort to let the parents send their children to school rather than hawking?
- i. What advice will you give to parents that send their children to hawk?

**Interview conducted on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August, 2012 with Local NGO programme officer Mr. Adams; Our Children, Our future Foundation.**

- a. As the programme officer, can you tell us about the organization?
- b. What has been your effort on street hawking among the children?

- c. What kind of skills are we talking about here?
- d. What are the ages of the children we are talking about?
- e. All of them acquire skills at the same time?
- f. Is it all the skills the children learn at once?
- g. If I may ask, why this age grouping and not all at the same time?
- h. How do you approach the problem of street hawking in the community?
- i. How has been the response of the people?
- j. What can you say is the reason for the low response of children to participate in the programme?
- k. If I may ask, how does the organization generate funds?
- l. How come the organization lack fund?
- m. Has there been any success of the programme?