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Social Workers and the Menace of Child Labor in Ondo State Nigeria: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract: Child labor participation is inimical, contrary to the Rights of the Child, and threatens holistic child development, the family and the nation at large. It's in the light of this that this study want to assess the activities of Social workers in the process of eradicating child labor as well as the various problems hunting their activities in Nigeria. The target population comprised of 300 social workers chosen across the eighteen local government in Ondo State. The study employed descriptive survey method in collecting the data for the study. Data generated from the study was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as simple percentage and tables were used to summarize the data. One-way Analysis of variance was used at 0.05% level of significance to test the hypotheses. Findings from the study demonstrated that child labor is a real problem in our society. However, it is evidenced that forms of child labor differs among individuals. The study further revealed poverty, cultural belief and lack of awareness as the major causes of child labor. The study recommends the need for the government to as a matter of urgency, pass the bill legalizing the practice of social work in Nigeria. The study also recommend awareness in the community with regards to the right of child, especially the right to basic education and protection from economic exploitation. The relevant agencies approved by the government to curb the menace of child labor also needs to be more alive to their responsibilities.

Keywords: Child, child Labor, Labor, Menace, Government, Social Worker.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Child Labor has probably been in existence almost as long as the history of mankind and connotes all economic activities carried out by children regardless of their occupational status (Oloko, 1997). It includes both works that are permissible under the International Labor Organization's (ILO) conventions and that which is not (International Labor Organization-International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labor) (ILO-IPEC, 2002). According to United Nation Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2008) Child labor is essentially understood as encompassing monetary or non-monetary activities which are mentally or physically, morally or socially hazardous for children below 15 years. Various forms of child labor exists ranging from trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, child domestic labor and illicit activities. Other forms include street hawking, company laborers, babysitting, barrow pushers, conductors, touts, water vendors, farm workers, house maid some of which are done on contract basis, whereas, some are considered as free services to guardians or relatives who in return pays back in cash or kind to the child or the child's parent all of which are hazardous to child overall development, (ILO 2017; UNICEF 2011).

Child labor is prevalent worldwide, occurring both in developing and developed countries. Children are regarded as the most vulnerable in the society therefore their welfare in a society is an index of social and economic development of that society. Children contribution to the society in adulthood is determined to a large extent by their treatment in their childhood. Over the past two decades, the incidence of the use of children for labor outside the homes has been on the increase. To this end, the children-for-labor as a phenomenon has become an intrinsic component of survival for most families. As a result, there is an increase of poverty in many homes in the developing countries (PILER, 2004; Bass, 2004).

Child labor is a pervasive and complex issue affecting millions of children worldwide, with Nigeria being one of the countries with the highest prevalence. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), Nigeria has an estimated 15 million children engaged in child labor, with many of them being exposed to hazardous working conditions. Ondo State, in particular, has been identified as one of the states with a high incidence of child labor.

Based on the above, the study intend to assess the role of social workers in preventing child labor in developing countries. It would also seek ways of eradicating the menace of child labor by way of policy formulations and implementations.

1.1 Statement of the Problem.

Child labor deprives children of their right to go to school, exposes them to violence, and reinforces intergenerational cycles of poverty. This serious violation of human rights is attributed to various reasons such as; high level of poverty, family

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expectations, institutional collapse, illiteracy, low economic costs, brutality and large family size to mention a few. Many children spend several hours working outside the home in order to bring additional income to the household. A significant proportion are involved in petty trading and services as street hawkers, domestic servants, or even working as street beggars in urban areas . Their involvement in these activities poses physical stress on the child leading to low concentration at school and breakdown of health of the child. Many of these children have been victims of rape, rituals, and accident resulting to untimely death in most cases. The parent or care-giver out of ignorance exposed these innocent children to abuses all in the name of buying and selling without considering the future effect on the child. Most of these children later grow up to become vagabonds, terrorists, and prostitute, thereby constituting problem to the lager society. Though the phenomenon of child labor is known to exist in virtually all parts of the world, the prevalence is very high in sub-Saharan Africa especially in Nigeria, the most populous black nation of the world with an estimated population of 170 million people.

In Nigeria like in most developing countries, millions of children are engaged in economic or labor activities, working long hours (average of 12 hours, daily) in poor and unhealthy conditions. According to the 2010 revision of the World Population Prospects the total population of Nigeria was put at 158 423 000 in 2010, with the proportion of children below the ages of 15 consisting of 42.8%, which translates to about 37.1 million children. However, the actual number of children, involved in exploitative or hazard work in Nigeria is not known, due to the wide spread of child workers in the informal sector and agriculture.

In most part of the world especially in the developed countries the tension and growth of child labor and oppression has been doused by government authorities and the involvement of the body known as social workers. However, in Nigeria as in most African countries Social Work profession is not known by many as it's in the western world. Despite the fact that some universities run the course at both degree and post-graduate levels very many individuals are not aware of what they do and their importance in the society. There's still a lot to do in this area by way of educating members of the society. It's disheartening to state here that the government of Nigeria is yet to pass into law the bill legalizing the practice of social work in Nigeria despite all the effort being made by the Nigerian Association of social workers. Social work is a noble profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and collective wellbeing. It's particularly concerned with providing help and support to the vulnerable in the society. The passage of social work bill will therefore go a long way in empowering social workers to be more efficient, effective, and productive in discharging their duties. It is saddening to note that despite the effort of both the government and non-governmental agencies to curb the menace of child labor in Nigeria the practice seems to wax stronger day by day. The question is what could be responsible for this? Why and what went wrong? What can we do to totally eradicate this menace in our country?

Based on the above, this study want to assess the activities of Social workers in the process of eradicating child labor as well as the various problems hunting their activities in Nigeria.

1.2 Research Questions

To resolve the above stated problems the following research questions are therefore generated:

1) What are the factors responsible for child labor practices in Nigeria?
2) What are the socio-economic consequences of child labor?
3) What are the various inhibiting factors faced by social workers in the eradication of child labor?
4) What are the factors that would empower social workers towards effective eradication of child labor in Nigeria?

1.3 Objective of the Research.

The broad objective of this study is to assess the roles of Social workers in the process of curbing child labor as well as the various problems hunting their activities in Nigeria while the specific objectives are as follows:

1) To determine the factors influencing child labor practices in Nigeria,
2) To assess the socio-economic consequences of child labor,
3) To identify various inhibiting factors face by social workers in the eradication of child labor,
4) To identify various factors that would empower social workers towards effective eradication of child labor in Nigeria,

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1.4 Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following hypotheses drawn from the research questions.

1, HO: There is no significant relationship between social workers' interventions and the reduction of child labor in Ondo State.

2, HO: Social workers' do not face significant challenges in addressing child labor in Ondo State.

3, HO: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of different social work interventions (e.g counselling, advocacy, community mobilization) in addressing child labor in Ondo State.

1.5 Scope of the study

The study concentrates on social workers' and the menace of child labor in Ondo State. It focuses on social workers' from six selected local government in Ondo State including the ministry of women affairs and social development. And these comprises social workers' from both Junior and senior cadre.

1.6 Significance of the Study.

This research is significant because it will provide valuable insights into the complex issue of child labor in Ondo State and the critical role of social workers in addressing this issue. The findings of this study will contribute to the development of effective strategies for preventing and responding to child labor, ultimately promoting the well-being and protection of children in Ondo State.

The problem of child labor is a national issue, and may not be limited to the area in which it was carried out. However, findings of this study are meant to provide more intellectual insight into the harmful effect of child labor on both the psychological, physiological and the emotional development of a child. The study among others will update policy makers on the need to implement all kinds of laws relating to the rights of children especially those relating to child laborer.

It is also intended that the study will form a base for further research and set the stage for academic debates that bother on improving the well-being of children. It will add to already existing literature on child labor and role of social workers' in Nigeria, it will also proffer possible recommendations on ways to handle children who were victims of child labor. Finally it will enhance our knowledge and expose all to the ills of this menace called child labor and its tremendous effect on the child.

1.7 Clarifications of Concepts

- Child refers to anyone under the age of 13.
- Child labor refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives them of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend school, or is mentally, physically, socially, or morally harmful. This is essentially understood as encompassing monetary or non-monetary activities which are mentally or physically, morally or socially hazardous for children below 15 years.
- Social workers are trained professionals who help individuals, families, groups, and communities to overcome challenges and improve their well-being.
- Menace refers to situation that poses a threat or danger to others, often causing harm, injury, or damage.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section presents the detailed review of related literature in the area of research relevant to the study of child labor and the role of social workers in curbing its effects on the psychological development of a child. It also presents critical reviews of forms of child labor, causes and effects of child labor, some laws/policies regarding child labor in Nigeria and the review of relevant theories. The chapter ends with a summary of the relevant literature and a conceptual/theoretical framework that guided this study.

2.2 The Concept of Child Labor

Any quality discussion on an important subject such as Child Labor should necessarily begin with an effort to capture the very definition of the concept. It is obvious that individual researchers and countries alike try to address the definition of child Labor within the context of their own unique enlightenment, circumstance, culture, laws, institutions and experience in general. This accounts for the apparent nuances in the understanding and definition of the concept.

The International Labor Organization (ILO), 2017 defines child Labor as "work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity; and is harmful to their physical and mental development. It refers to such work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally hazardous to children and or interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to combine school attendance with an excessively long and heavy workload'.

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In the same vein, the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF 2011 sees Child labor as any work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children, while the World Bank defined child labor as work that is exploitative, hazardous, or otherwise inappropriate for children, and that interferes with their education or harms their health or physical or mental development, (World Bank, 2018). Similarly, the International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor defines the concept as "work situations where children are compelled to work on a regular basis to earn a living for themselves and their families and as a result are disadvantaged educationally and socially; where children work in conditions that are exploitative and damaging to their health and to their physical and mental development; where children are separated from their families, often deprived of educational training opportunities and are forced to leave prematurely adult lives, (IPEC, 2013). In the view of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), child Labor is work that is likely to be hazardous, or interfere with the child's education; or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual or mental development. (CRC 1989, Art. 32). Moreover, it is clear from these definitions that Child Labor deprives children of their childhood, compromises their dignity and endangers their future.

However, opinions differ regarding 'when' and 'how' a particular work is to be truly regarded as harmful to the future of a child or even interferes with his wellbeing. Based on the insights above, we now assume a working definition of the concept of child labor as 'children engaging in work for the purpose of sustaining self and or supporting family at the detriment of their proper growth and development'.

Social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups or communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and to create societal conditions favorable to their goals. While the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) defined Social work as a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people, (IFSW, 2014).

According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Social workers are professionals who help individuals, families, and groups to enhance their well-being and to solve problems, (NASW, 2020). In the view of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Social workers are trained professionals who help individuals, families, and communities to address a wide range of challenges, including poverty, mental illness, and trauma, (CSWE, 2020). Meanwhile, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) noted that Social workers are professionals who work with individuals, families, and communities to promote social justice, human rights, and well-being, (BASW, 2020) while the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) sees Social workers as professionals who work with individuals, families, and communities to enhance their well-being, promote social justice, and challenge inequality, (AASW, 2020). From the above definitions, we can state that a social worker is a change agent, a helper who is specifically saddled with the responsibilities of creating positive change.

2.3 **Causes of Child Labor in Nigeria**

The phenomenon under consideration has been associated with a number of remote and immediate causes by different researchers, popular among which include; poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, culture, large household sizes, broken marriages and early loss of parents, ineffective laws and policies gravitated by lack of will to enforce them, corruption and lack of appropriate social safety nets to mention but a few, (ILO 2017; 2013; UNICEF 2019; 2011; Edmonds, E. V. 2008).

a) Economic Factors

- Poverty: Families living in poverty may rely on children's income to survive.
- Unemployment: High unemployment rates among adults can lead to children entering the workforce.
- Low Family Income: Families with low incomes may require children to work to supplement their income.

b) Social Factors

- Lack of Education: Limited access to education or poor quality education can lead to children entering the workforce.
- Cultural Norms: In some cultures, child labor is seen as a normal or necessary part of childhood.
- Social Exclusion: Children from marginalized or excluded groups may be more likely to enter the workforce.

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c) Political Factors

- Weak Laws and Enforcement: Lack of effective laws or enforcement can contribute to child labor.
- Corruption: Corruption can lead to exploitation of children in the workforce.
- Conflict and Crisis: Children may be forced to work during times of conflict or crisis.

d) Environmental Factors

- Natural Disasters: Children may be forced to work after natural disasters to support their families.
- Rural Poverty: Children in rural areas may be more likely to enter the workforce due to limited job opportunities.
- Urbanization: Rapid urbanization can lead to children entering the workforce in informal or hazardous conditions.

e) Demographic Factors

- Large Family Size: Families with many children may rely on children's income to support the family.
- Orphan hood: Children who have lost one or both parents may be more likely to enter the workforce.
- Migration: Children who migrate with their families may be more likely to enter the workforce.

2.4 Forms of Child Labor

- Domestic Work: Children working as domestic servants, often in private homes.
- Agricultural Work: Children working on farms, plantations, or in other agricultural settings.
- Industrial Work: Children working in factories, workshops, or other industrial settings.
- Commercial Sex Work: Children forced into prostitution or other forms of commercial sex exploitation.
- Forced Labor: Children forced to work against their will, often in hazardous or exploitative conditions.
- Bonded Labor: Children forced to work to pay off debts or other obligations.
- Street Work: Children working on the streets, often as vendors, beggars, or in other informal settings, (ILO, 2017; UNICEF, 2020).

2.5 Effects of Child Labor on Children

a) Physical Effects

- Injuries and Illnesses: Children may suffer injuries or illnesses due to hazardous working conditions.
- Malnutrition: Children may suffer from malnutrition due to inadequate food and poor working conditions.
- Fatigue: Children may experience physical and mental fatigue due to long working hours.
- Emotional and Psychological Effects
- Trauma: Children may experience trauma due to physical or emotional abuse.
- Anxiety and Depression: Children may suffer from anxiety and depression due to the stress and pressure of work.
- Low Self-Esteem: Children may develop low self-esteem due to the lack of opportunities for education and personal development.

b) Educational and Social Effects

- Dropout from School: Children may drop out of school due to the demands of work.
- Limited Education: Children may receive limited education due to the lack of opportunities for formal education.
- Social Isolation: Children may experience social isolation due to the lack of opportunities for socialization and play.

c) Long-Term Effects

- Limited Career Opportunities: Children may have limited career opportunities due to the lack of education and skills.
- Perpetuation of Poverty: Child labor can perpetuate poverty, as children may not have the opportunity to acquire the skills and education needed to secure better-paying jobs.
- Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty: Child labor can lead to the intergenerational transmission of poverty, as children may be forced to work to support their families, perpetuating the cycle of poverty, (ILO, 2017).

2.6) Laws/Policies Regarding Child Labor in Nigeria

At various levels internationally, nationally and locally, interesting laws and policies exist which if properly applied will certainly help to check the menace of child Labor. Examples include; The Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) of the United Nations. - Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 12(3), which seeks to ensure that all citizens have adequate security, suitable employment with just conditions of work, freedom and protection from exploitation and abuse. The Child Right Act (CRA) of 2003, which

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provides for the protection of children against discrimination, harmful and exploitative practices such as child marriage, prostitution and child Labor etc. The Education for All (EFA), of 1990 which seeks to guarantee quality education for all Nigerians of school age. The Universal Primary Education packaged by the Military Government in 1976 to develop the educational capacity of Nigerians - The Universal Basic Education of 1999, which made the first 9 years of schooling both free and compulsory for all Nigerian children of primary school age. The Adult Literacy Program which targeted adult illiterates. The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003, provides for the prohibition and prescription of punishment for traffic in persons, particularly women and children. However, corruption, weak institutions, poor funding, and lack of will to execute and implement are the bane of these laws and policies in Nigeria.

2.7) Role of Social Workers in Curbing the Menace of Child Labor.

The International Labor Organization (2006) states that victims of child labor endure harmful repercussions that affect their physical and mental health, contributing to personality and behavioral disorders which disturb normal child development. These negative impacts require a range of preventive measures, represented by the various professions in a multidisciplinary team including social workers. The role of the social worker in the prevention of child labor according to ILO (2020). include primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and some interventions strategies explained below:

a) **Primary Prevention**

The target groups of primary prevention are all the children in society. Primary prevention involves a situation whereby the social workers become proactive in their approach and efforts to curb child labor. This approach encourages them to organize and conduct child laborers awareness campaigns and support the campaigns with information, training and media production .These may focus on a number of approaches.

b) **Secondary Prevention**

The target groups of secondary prevention are children who are at risk of being victims of child labor. Children at risk need to be protected. The following are the services rendered at secondary prevention level. Treatment, rehabilitation, case management e. t. c.

c) **Tertiary Prevention**

The tertiary prevention is a long term process which involves rehabilitation and reintegration into the society. The intervention strategies at this level protect the children from being re-victimized.

2.8) Interventions that can be employed by social workers in curtailing child labor

a) Community-Based Interventions

- Raise Awareness: Educate communities about the risks and consequences of child labor.
- Support Alternative Education: Provide access to non-formal education or vocational training for working children.
- Promote Community Engagement: Encourage community members to report cases of child labor and support efforts to prevent it.

b) Family-Based Interventions

- Family Counseling: Provide counseling to families to address poverty, lack of education, and other factors contributing to child labor.
- Economic Empowerment: Support families in accessing economic opportunities, such as microfinance or vocational training.
- Parenting Skills: Educate parents on child development, parenting skills, and the importance of education.

c) Child-Based Interventions

- Rescue and Rehabilitation: Rescue children from hazardous work situations and provide rehabilitation services.
- Counseling and Support: Provide individual counseling and support to help children overcome trauma and reintegrate into education or vocational training.
- Advocacy: Advocate for children's rights and interests, ensuring their voices are heard.

d) Policy and Advocacy Interventions

- Policy Analysis: Analyze existing policies and laws related to child labor and advocate for changes or improvements.
- Advocacy Campaigns: Organize advocacy campaigns to raise awareness and push for policy changes.
- Collaboration with Stakeholders: Collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders to develop and implement effective policies and programs.

e) Research and Monitoring Interventions

- Research and Data Collection: Conduct research and collect data on child labor to inform policy and program development.

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- Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and programs aimed at preventing child labor.
- Sharing Best Practices: Share best practices and lessons learned with other stakeholders to improve collective efforts to prevent child labor.

By using these interventions, social workers can play a crucial role in preventing child labor and promoting the well-being and protection of children, (ILO, 2020).

2.9) Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by two theories as stated below:

Social Learning theory

Ecological theory

a) Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory, developed by Albert Bandura 1977 proposes that people learn new behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge by observing, imitating, and modeling others. This theory suggests that learning is a cognitive process that occurs through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Children may observe their parents, siblings, or peers engaging in hazardous work, such as street hawking, mining, construction, or manufacturing. This observation can lead to imitation, as children may see these behaviors as acceptable or desirable. This imitation can be reinforced by rewards, such as payment, praise and sense of responsibility or contribution to their family's well-being and social approval from family or peers.

This explain why some children engage in child labor thinking that they are doing the right thing without understanding the dangers involved in it.

b) Ecological theory

Ecological theory, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner 1977 views human development as influenced by multiple levels of the environment. This theory recognizes that individuals are part of a larger ecosystem that affects their development and behavior. The theory was premised upon four components which include Microsystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and macrosystem, the theory explains that each of these components plays a key role in influencing someone's behaviors. According to the theory, immediate environment, such as family, peers, and school can influence a child behavior while Interactions between family-school relationships coupled with external environments, such as community, culture, socioeconomic conditions, Societal and cultural norms, values, and policies can have significant impact on behaviors and capable of influencing one's action either positively or negatively. The theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals and their environments.

From the above, it is clear that the environment in which one lives have the power to shape ones behavior. This can explain why child labor is more prevalent in African societies particularly Nigeria.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the method, procedure and design to be adopted in the research study. Thus the following sub-headings are research design, area of study, population of study, sampling techniques, sample size, validity and reliability, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically. The study adopts a descriptive survey design.

3.3 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Ondo state, south-western Nigeria. Ondo State is one of the state in Nigeria. It was created in the year 1976. The state comprises of eighteen local governments and three senatorial districts. The state is predominantly inhabited by the Yoruba people. The state is known for its natural and mineral resource including, kaolin, pyrites, iron ore, bitumen, petroleum, coal including mangrove-swamp forests, tropical rainforests, and wooded savannas. Historically, the state has been a major producer of agricultural products like rubber, tobacco, cotton and cocoa.

3.4 Population of the study

The population for the study comprises all social workers in all the eighteen local government in Ondo State and the Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development.

3.5 Sampling size and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study was 300 respondents which was spread over the six local governments, with 50 respondents to each local government. The targeted respondents was approached through the use of questionnaire. The respondents were

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assessed through the help of field assistance resident in the chosen local government.

There are eighteen local government in Ondo State. To effect the sampling process, the study adopt purposive and convenient sampling technique in selecting the desired respondents from the chosen local government. There are three senatorial districts in Ondo states, two local government with the highest commercial activities was selected from each of the senatorial district in the state. The study was conducted in six local government in the state and this cover both the urban and rural areas.

3.6 Instrument of Data Collection

The study adopts quantitative method of data collection. The questionnaire was structured into two parts; the first section seeks information bothering on the socio-demographic profile of participants. Section two cover questions on the general objectives of the study which seeks to assess the roles of Social workers in the process of curbing the menace of child labor as well as the various problems hunting their activities in Ondo state, Nigeria.

3.7 Sources of Data Collection

In this study, data was collected from two sources. The first was primary source which include the use of research instruments (questionnaires) in the field. While the secondary data for the research was sourced from internet, journals, conference note, and documentation that has bearing on the research topic under investigation.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The study makes use of both descriptive and inferential statistics in the process of data analysis. Descriptive statistics such as simple percentage and tables was used to organize and present data relevant to the socio-demographic variable of participants for clarity, easy analysis and presentation. While inferential statistics such as one way ANOVA, statistical tool of data analysis was used to draw inferences from the stated objectives in the research instrument and to either validate or reject the stated hypotheses. The researcher also makes use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 to run the analysis.

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.

4.1 Introduction.

This section focuses on interpreting the statistical findings of this study, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing child labor and the role of social workers in addressing the issue. The study aimed to explore the socio-demographic characteristics associated with child labor, evaluate the effectiveness of social work interventions, and identify the challenges faced by social workers in curbing the menace.

Various statistical methods were employed to analyze the data and generate insights. Chi-Square tests assessed the relationships between socio-demographic variables and factors influencing child labor, while One-Way ANOVA examined group differences across key responses. One-Sample T-Tests determined whether specific perceptions significantly deviated from a neutral test value, and Correlation Analysis identified relationships among critical variables such as poverty, cultural beliefs, and social work interventions.

Interpreting these results is crucial for understanding the systemic and practical challenges associated with child labor and identifying opportunities to enhance social work interventions. By linking these findings to the study objectives, this discussion seeks to contribute to the development of actionable strategies that can inform policy, practice, and advocacy efforts.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

The frequency distribution of respondents' demographics in Table 1 (**see appendix 1**) highlights critical insights into the composition of the study participants. The age distribution indicates that the majority of respondents fall within the 46–60 years category, representing 41.3% of the sample. This is followed closely by the 36–45 years age group, which comprises 39.0%, while participants aged 25–35 constitute the smallest group at 19.7%. This distribution suggests that the study predominantly involves middle-aged and older individuals, potentially reflecting a workforce with significant professional experience.

The data on professions reveal that 71.4% of the respondents are social workers, while 28.6% are administrative staff. This indicates that the majority of the perspectives captured in the study come from professionals who are directly engaged in social work and likely involved in addressing issues related to child labor.

In terms of gender distribution, the results show that 54.5% of the respondents are female, while

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45.5% are male. This relatively balanced gender representation ensures a diversity of perspectives in the findings, with a slight predominance of female participants. Overall, the demographic characteristics of the respondents provide a strong foundation for interpreting the study results, particularly as they pertain to the experiences and insights of social workers addressing child labor issues.

The interpretation of Table 2 (**see appendix 11**) provides insights into the factors influencing child labor practices (FICLP) based on the respondents' perceptions. The results reveal significant support for several critical factors.

Poverty emerged as the most strongly supported factor influencing child labor, with a combined 97.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that it plays a major role. This overwhelming consensus underscores the role of economic hardship as a driving force behind child labor practices.

Cultural beliefs also received substantial agreement, with 83.6% of respondents affirming their influence on child labor. The cultural perception of children as contributors to family income or as property likely perpetuates these practices in some communities.

Divorce was identified as another significant factor, with 86.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that it influences child labor. The breakdown of family structures may leave children vulnerable to exploitation as they attempt to supplement household income or cope with emotional and financial instability.

Large family size was highlighted, with a majority (54.0%) identifying family size of four as a critical threshold, followed by 34.7% associating family size of five with increased child labor. This trend reflects the economic burden large families may face, compelling them to involve children in income-generating activities.

Lack of parental care received notable support, with 91.5% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that it contributes to child labor practices. Neglect or inability to provide adequate guidance often pushes children into labor markets.

Parental unemployment was another prominent factor, with 84.5% of respondents indicating its role in child labor. Unemployed parents are likely unable to meet household needs, leading to children being forced to work.

Peer pressure was moderately acknowledged, with 69.5% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to its influence. While not as dominant as other factors, peer influence may push children into work environments for acceptance or material needs.

Ignorance, as a factor, was supported by 78.4% of respondents. This highlights the lack of awareness regarding the negative impacts of child labor among parents and communities as a contributory element.

Loss of a parent was another significant factor, with 81.7% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Orphaned children or those from single-parent households are at higher risk due to the financial and emotional strain.

The interpretation of Table 3 (**see appendix 111)** explores the measures taken by social workers to address child labor practices (MTBSWCCL) based on respondents' perceptions. The results provide a comprehensive overview of the strategies employed and their perceived prevalence.

Conducting campaigns and educational programs received strong support, with 84.1% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This indicates that awareness campaigns are a significant measure utilized by social workers to educate communities about the harmful effects of child labor.

Monitoring and reporting cases of child labor also had substantial support, with 78.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This highlights the proactive role of social workers in identifying and reporting cases to appropriate authorities to curb child labor practices.

Providing psychosocial support and counseling for victims was highly endorsed, with 76.1% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This underscores the importance of addressing the psychological and emotional well-being of child labor victims as part of the intervention strategies.

Promoting child rights and protection by informing children and families was another prominent measure, with 86.0% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This indicates that empowering children and their families with knowledge about their rights is a vital component of social workers' efforts.

Supporting victims to access legal and social services was supported by 83.6% of respondents.

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This highlights the efforts to connect victims with necessary resources and services to address the systemic and personal challenges they face.

Facilitating the removal of children from abusive home environments received strong endorsement, with 88.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This measure underscores the critical role of social workers in rescuing children from harmful situations and ensuring their safety.

Conducting research and gathering data on child labor was highly supported, with 89.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This reflects the importance of evidence-based interventions and data-driven policymaking in tackling child labor issues.

Taking part in rehabilitating victims and planning projects was strongly endorsed by 87.8% of respondents. This shows that rehabilitation and project planning are essential for providing sustainable solutions and aiding victims' reintegration into society.

Advocating for legal reforms and policies to protect children had significant support, with 86.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This indicates that social workers actively engage in policy advocacy to create an enabling environment for protecting children.

Supporting the implementation of programs addressing the root causes of child labor, such as poverty and lack of education, received high agreement from 86.9% of respondents. This emphasizes the commitment of social workers to tackle the underlying factors contributing to child labor.

The interpretation of Table 4 **(see appendix 1V)** sheds light on the challenges social workers face in addressing child labor practices. These challenges highlight systemic, resource-based, and societal barriers that hinder effective intervention.

The lack of **reasonable measures to enforce and implement laws** was identified as a significant challenge, with 69.5% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This reflects the need for stronger legislative enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with child protection laws.

The absence of **adequate provision and subsidies for poor families** was also a prevalent issue, with 71.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This highlights the economic challenges that exacerbate child labor, suggesting the need for targeted financial and social support for vulnerable families.

The **mindset that children are mere properties of their parents** was another challenge, with 82.1% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This underscores cultural barriers that normalize child labor, which requires awareness campaigns to shift societal attitudes.

The **lack of adequate resources for social workers to cater for victims** was the most strongly endorsed challenge, with 83.6% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This emphasizes the urgent need to allocate sufficient resources to social workers, including financial support, training, and infrastructure.

The absence of **sensitization and awareness campaigns** was highlighted by 83.1% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This suggests a critical gap in community education on the dangers of child labor and the importance of child protection.

The lack of **legal empowerment for social workers to make arrests** was a major obstacle, with 72.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This highlights a structural gap that restricts social workers from taking direct action against child labor perpetrators.

Lastly, the **inadequacy of facilities for the protection and welfare of children** was another significant challenge, with 87.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This points to the need for more shelters, rehabilitation centers, and child-friendly facilities to support victims effectively.

The interpretation of Table 5 **(see appendix 5)** focuses on the respondents' perspectives on proposed solutions to address child labor. These solutions emphasize legislative enforcement, economic support, public awareness, and multi-stakeholder collaboration as critical strategies.

The **enforcement of laws prohibiting child labor** received substantial support, with 90.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This underscores the importance of robust legal frameworks and their enforcement as foundational measures to combat child labor.

The creation of **measures to implement laws against child labor** was strongly endorsed, with 96.3% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This suggests a recognition of the need

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for actionable steps and accountability mechanisms to translate laws into effective practice.

The proposal to **ensure inspection measures and prosecute offenders** also garnered high agreement, with 96.3% of respondents in favor. This highlights the necessity of monitoring and punitive actions to deter child labor practices effectively.

Economic support through **subsidies for poor families** was highly supported, with 96.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This solution addresses the economic drivers of child labor by providing financial assistance to vulnerable households.

The need for **enhanced public awareness and social mobilization campaigns** was evident, with 91.6% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This reflects the importance of educating communities on the harms of child labor and promoting collective action.

Promoting **employment-oriented development in rural and urban areas** received significant support, with 86.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This highlights the need for economic opportunities that reduce the reliance on child labor in economically disadvantaged regions.

The provision of **social security and welfare measures for children** was another widely supported solution, with 93.0% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This indicates the importance of structured support systems to safeguard children's welfare.

Efforts to **improve the quality of schooling** were strongly endorsed, with 95.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This reflects the critical role of accessible, high-quality education in reducing child labor.

Collaboration with **NGOs and international organizations** was highly favored, with 92.9% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This emphasizes the need for a multi-stakeholder approach, leveraging expertise and resources from diverse entities.

Lastly, the implementation of **effective poverty alleviation measures** was strongly supported, with 97.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This underscores the pivotal role of addressing the root causes of poverty in mitigating child labor.

Test of Hypotheses

The interpretation of Table 6 provides insights into the relationships between demographic variables (age and sex) and various factors influencing child labor practices, as examined through Chi-Square tests. The results are interpreted based on statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) to understand whether these variables are associated with the factors under study.

For the relationship between **age** and influencing factors:

- A statistically significant association was found between age and several factors, including **poverty** ($p = 0.025$), **large family size** ($p = 0.006$), **lack of parental care** ($p = 0.005$), **parent unemployment** ($p < 0.001$), **peer pressure** ($p = 0.017$), **ignorance** ($p = 0.007$), and **loss of parent** ($p = 0.004$). This indicates that age significantly influences perceptions or experiences related to these factors.
- However, no significant association was found between age and **divorce** ($p = 0.255$). This suggests that age does not play a significant role in how respondents perceive or experience the impact of divorce on child labor practices.

For the relationship between **sex** and influencing factors:

- Significant associations were observed between sex and **cultural belief** ($p = 0.039$), **parent unemployment** ($p = 0.049$), **ignorance** ($p = 0.001$), and **loss of parent** ($p = 0.002$). These findings imply that sex influences respondents' views or experiences regarding these factors.
- Conversely, no significant associations were found between sex and **poverty** ($p = 0.632$) or **divorce** ($p = 0.151$), indicating that gender differences do not significantly impact perceptions of these factors.

Overall, the results suggest that demographic variables such as age and sex are important in understanding the dynamics of factors influencing child labor practices. The significant associations highlight the nuanced ways in which demographic characteristics shape experiences and perceptions, which are essential for tailoring interventions and policies to address child labor effectively. The lack of association in some areas also indicates where perceptions or experiences are more uniform across demographic groups.

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Table 6: Compiled Chi-Square Test Results

Variable Pair	Test	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Age * Poverty	Pearson Chi-Square	14.44	6	0.025
	Likelihood Ratio	14.179	6	0.028
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	0.045	1	0.833
Age * Cultural Belief	Pearson Chi-Square	14.717	8	0.065
	Likelihood Ratio	18.986	8	0.015
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	6.239	1	0.012
Age * Divorce	Pearson Chi-Square	10.151	8	0.255
	Likelihood Ratio	13.648	8	0.091
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	1.297	1	0.255
Age * Large Family Size	Pearson Chi-Square	21.626	8	0.006
	Likelihood Ratio	23.471	8	0.003
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	1.306	1	0.253
Age * Lack of Parental Care	Pearson Chi-Square	21.892	8	0.005
	Likelihood Ratio	21.325	8	0.006
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	1.098	1	0.295
Age * Parent Unemployment	Pearson Chi-Square	29.799	8	0
	Likelihood Ratio	34.655	8	0
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	5.781	1	0.016
Age * Peer Pressure	Pearson Chi-Square	18.554	8	0.017
	Likelihood Ratio	19.918	8	0.011
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	2.143	1	0.143
Age * Ignorance	Pearson Chi-Square	21.201	8	0.007
	Likelihood Ratio	24.778	8	0.002
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	2.074	1	0.15
Age * Loss of Parent	Pearson Chi-Square	22.664	8	0.004
	Likelihood Ratio	26.492	8	0.001
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	11.078	1	0.001
Sex * Poverty	Pearson Chi-Square	1.723	3	0.632
	Likelihood Ratio	2.481	3	0.479
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	0.24	1	0.624
Sex * Cultural Belief	Pearson Chi-Square	10.113	4	0.039
	Likelihood Ratio	13.146	4	0.011
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	0.226	1	0.634
Sex * Divorce	Pearson Chi-Square	6.726	4	0.151
	Likelihood Ratio	8.316	4	0.081
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	0.645	1	0.422
Sex * Parent Unemployment	Pearson Chi-Square	9.536	4	0.049
	Likelihood Ratio	13.334	4	0.01
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	0.534	1	0.465
Sex * Ignorance	Pearson Chi-Square	18.13	4	0.001
	Likelihood Ratio	20.559	4	0
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	11.603	1	0.001
Sex * Loss of Parent	Pearson Chi-Square	16.917	4	0.002
	Likelihood Ratio	17.385	4	0.002
	Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	13.13	1	0

Table 7 presents the results of a One-Way ANOVA analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of various social worker interventions in addressing child labor. The analysis investigates whether significant differences exist in the perceptions or outcomes of these interventions.

The findings indicate that several interventions show statistically significant differences ($p <$

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0.05), suggesting notable effectiveness in addressing child labor issues:

1. **Supporting victims to access legal and social services** ($p = 0.011$): This intervention was found to have a significant effect, emphasizing its importance in mitigating child labor practices.
2. **Facilitating the removal of a child from an abusive home environment** ($p = 0.001$): This intervention demonstrates a strong and statistically significant impact, underlining its critical role in protecting vulnerable children.
3. **Conducting research and gathering data on child labor** ($p = 0.019$): The significance of this intervention highlights the value of evidence-based approaches in formulating effective strategies.
4. **Social workers taking part in rehabilitating victims and planning projects** ($p = 0.010$): This underscores the importance of rehabilitation efforts in addressing the long-term impacts of child labor.
5. **Advocating for legal reforms and policies to protect children** ($p = 0.003$): This result points to the critical role of policy advocacy in reducing child labor practices.
6. **Supporting the implementation of social programs to address the root causes of child labor** ($p = 0.002$): The significance of this intervention indicates the necessity of addressing underlying factors like poverty and lack of education.

However, some interventions did not show significant differences ($p > 0.05$):

- **Conducting campaigns to raise awareness** ($p = 0.854$)
- **Monitoring and reporting cases of child labor** ($p = 0.783$)
- **Providing psychosocial support and counseling** ($p = 0.085$)
- **Promoting child rights and protection** ($p = 0.947$)

These results suggest that while these interventions are integral to combating child labor, their perceived or measurable impact may not vary significantly among the respondents. This could reflect either consistent levels of performance across different groups or a lack of sufficient differentiation in their implementation or evaluation.

Overall, the ANOVA results provide actionable insights into which social worker interventions are perceived as most impactful, offering guidance for prioritizing resources and strategies in combating child labor. Interventions with significant results should be emphasized, while others may require enhanced implementation or evaluation to maximize their effectiveness.

Table 7 presents the results of a one-sample t-test to assess whether the mean responses for various factors related to child labor significantly differ from a neutral value of 3, representing a neutral stance on the Likert scale. The findings provide valuable insights into the perceived severity of challenges contributing to child labor.

The results reveal that all variables tested have a mean significantly higher than 3 ($p < 0.05$), indicating agreement or strong agreement among respondents regarding the severity of these factors. The confidence intervals further confirm the consistency of these findings.

Enforcement of Laws: Respondents strongly agreed that there are no reasonable measures to enforce and implement child labor laws (Mean = 3.71, $t = 8.762$, $p = 0.000$). The mean difference of 0.714 emphasizes the perceived inadequacy in legal enforcement.

Provisions for Poor Families: The lack of adequate provisions and subsidies for poor families was also highlighted (Mean = 3.71, $t = 8.268$, $p = 0.000$). This underscores the economic dimension of child labor.

Cultural Beliefs: The perception that children are seen as mere properties of their parents was significantly high (Mean = 3.95, $t = 12.838$, $p = 0.000$), reflecting cultural attitudes that contribute to child labor practices.

Resources for Social Workers: A lack of adequate resources for social workers to cater for victims of child labor was strongly agreed upon (Mean = 3.91, $t = 13.220$, $p = 0.000$), indicating systemic deficiencies in support systems.

Awareness Campaigns: The absence of effective sensitization and awareness campaigns against child labor was rated very high (Mean = 4.13, $t = 15.217$, $p = 0.000$), emphasizing the need for public engagement.

Legal Empowerment: The legal disempowerment of social workers to make arrests of child laborers was also a significant concern (Mean = 3.70, $t = 7.147$, $p = 0.000$).

Facilities for Child Welfare: Respondents strongly agreed that facilities for the protection and

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welfare of children are inadequate (Mean = 4.08, t = 15.663, p = 0.000), highlighting gaps in infrastructure.

Poverty: Poverty remains a predominant driving force behind child labor (Mean = 4.26, t = 21.399, p = 0.000). This variable had the highest mean difference (1.263), underscoring its critical impact.

Education Access: Limited access to quality education was strongly agreed upon as a factor perpetuating child labor (Mean = 4.08, t = 16.898, p = 0.000).

School and Infrastructure Issues: Families choosing work over education due to inadequate schools and infrastructure was also significant (Mean = 3.62, t = 6.248, p = 0.000).

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA Results for Hypothesis 3

Variable	Sum of Squares (Between Groups)	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social Workers conduct campaigns to raise awareness	0.038	1	0.038	0.034	0.854
Social Workers monitor and report cases	0.094	1	0.094	0.076	0.783
Social Workers provide psychosocial support	4.403	1	4.403	2.996	0.085
Promote child rights and protection	0.004	1	0.004	0.004	0.947
Supporting victims to access legal and social services	6.306	1	6.306	6.568	0.011
Facilitate removal of a child from an abusive home environment	8.557	1	8.557	11.636	0.001
Conduct research and gather data on child labor	5.075	1	5.075	5.623	0.019
Social Workers take part in rehabilitating victims	5.172	1	5.172	6.753	0.01
Social Workers advocate for legal reforms	9.472	1	9.472	9.185	0.003
Support implementation of social programs to address root causes of child labor	9.741	1	9.741	9.514	0.002

Table 8 presents the results of a one-sample t-test to assess whether the mean responses for various factors related to child labor significantly differ from a neutral value of 3, representing a neutral stance on the Likert scale. The findings provide valuable insights into the perceived severity of challenges contributing to child labor.

The results reveal that all variables tested have a mean significantly higher than 3 ($p < 0.05$), indicating agreement or strong agreement among respondents regarding the severity of these factors. The confidence intervals further confirm the consistency of these findings.

Enforcement of Laws: Respondents strongly agreed that there are no reasonable measures to enforce and implement child labor laws (Mean = 3.71, t = 8.762, p = 0.000). The mean difference of 0.714 emphasizes the perceived inadequacy in legal enforcement.

Provisions for Poor Families: The lack of adequate provisions and subsidies for poor families was also highlighted (Mean = 3.71, t = 8.268, p = 0.000). This underscores the economic dimension of child labor.

Cultural Beliefs: The perception that children are seen as mere properties of their parents was significantly high (Mean = 3.95, t = 12.838, p = 0.000), reflecting cultural attitudes that contribute to child labor practices.

Resources for Social Workers: A lack of adequate resources for social workers to cater for victims of child labor was strongly agreed upon (Mean = 3.91, t = 13.220, p = 0.000), indicating systemic deficiencies in support systems.

Awareness Campaigns: The absence of effective sensitization and awareness campaigns against child labor was rated very high (Mean = 4.13, t = 15.217, p = 0.000), emphasizing the need for public engagement.

Legal Empowerment: The legal disempowerment of social workers to make arrests of child laborers was also a significant concern (Mean = 3.70, t = 7.147, p = 0.000).

Facilities for Child Welfare: Respondents strongly agreed that facilities for the protection and welfare of children are inadequate (Mean = 4.08, t = 15.663, p = 0.000), highlighting gaps in infrastructure.

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Poverty: Poverty remains a predominant driving force behind child labor (Mean = 4.26, t = 21.399, p = 0.000). This variable had the highest mean difference (1.263), underscoring its critical impact.

Education Access: Limited access to quality education was strongly agreed upon as a factor perpetuating child labor (Mean = 4.08, t = 16.898, p = 0.000).

School and Infrastructure Issues: Families choosing work over education due to inadequate schools and infrastructure was also significant (Mean = 3.62, t = 6.248, p = 0.000).

Table 8: One-Sample T-Test Results for Hypothesis 2

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval
There are no reasonable measures to enforce and implement the laws against child labor	213	3.71	1.189	8.762	212	0	0.714	[0.55, 0.87]
There are no adequate provisions and subsidies for poor families prone to having working children	213	3.71	1.251	8.268	212	0	0.709	[0.54, 0.88]
People's mindset that children are mere properties of their parents promotes child labor	213	3.95	1.078	12.838	212	0	0.948	[0.80, 1.09]
Social Workers lack adequate resources to practice and cater for victims of child labor	213	3.91	1	13.22	212	0	0.906	[0.77, 1.04]
Sensitization and awareness campaigns against child labor are not in place	213	4.13	1.081	15.217	212	0	1.127	[0.98, 1.27]
Social Workers are not legally empowered to make arrests of child laborers	213	3.7	1.438	7.147	212	0	0.704	[0.51, 0.90]
Facilities for the protection and welfare of children and young persons are inadequate	213	4.08	1.011	15.663	212	0	1.085	[0.95, 1.22]
Poverty remains a driving force behind child labor. Families struggling to make ends meet often send their children to work	213	4.26	0.861	21.399	212	0	1.263	[1.15, 1.38]
Limited access to quality education perpetuates child labor	213	4.08	0.929	16.898	212	0	1.075	[0.95, 1.20]
Families choose work over education due to inadequate schools, lack of infrastructure, and insufficient teachers	213	3.62	1.448	6.248	212	0	0.62	[0.42, 0.82]

The correlation analysis in Table 9 examines the relationships between various factors influencing child labor practices, providing insights into the interdependencies among these variables.

Interpretation:

1. **Poverty**:
   - Significant positive correlations exist between poverty and divorce (r = 0.429, p < 0.01), large family size (r = 0.439, p < 0.01), and parent unemployment (r = 0.528, p < 0.01). This suggests that poverty is closely linked to these factors, highlighting the economic challenges that exacerbate child labor practices.

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- No significant relationship was observed between poverty and peer pressure ($r = 0.008$, $p = 0.911$) or ignorance ($r = -0.005$, $p = 0.947$).

2. **Cultural Belief**:
- Cultural belief significantly correlates with large family size ($r = 0.449$, $p < 0.01$), divorce ($r = 0.206$, $p < 0.01$), and parent unemployment ($r = 0.316$, $p < 0.01$). These findings indicate that cultural norms may reinforce socioeconomic conditions contributing to child labor.
- A moderate positive correlation exists between cultural belief and peer pressure ($r = 0.348$, $p < 0.01$), and ignorance ($r = 0.220$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that societal norms and misinformation may play a role in sustaining child labor practices.

3. **Divorce**:
- Divorce significantly correlates with large family size ($r = 0.556$, $p < 0.01$), parent unemployment ($r = 0.243$, $p < 0.01$), peer pressure ($r = 0.302$, $p < 0.01$), and ignorance ($r = 0.304$, $p < 0.01$). This highlights how family instability might create conditions that drive child labor.
- The strongest correlation with divorce is observed with large family size ($r = 0.556$), emphasizing the compounded effects of family structure and financial strain.

4. **Large Family Size**:
- Large family size correlates significantly with parent unemployment ($r = 0.380$, $p < 0.01$), peer pressure ($r = 0.286$, $p < 0.01$), and ignorance ($r = 0.362$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that larger families face increased challenges in meeting basic needs, contributing to child labor.

5. **Parent Unemployment**:
- Parent unemployment is strongly associated with poverty ($r = 0.528$, $p < 0.01$) and large family size ($r = 0.380$, $p < 0.01$). A weaker but significant relationship exists with peer pressure ($r = 0.137$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that economic hardship might indirectly influence social that encourage child labor.
- No significant correlation was found between parent unemployment and ignorance ($r = -0.047$, $p = 0.947$).

6. **Peer Pressure**:
- Peer pressure strongly correlates with ignorance ($r = 0.750$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that misinformation or lack of awareness among children and families might intensify the influence of peers in child labor decisions.
- Peer pressure also correlates moderately with cultural beliefs ($r = 0.348$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting a link between societal norms and peer-driven behaviors.

7. **Ignorance**:
- Ignorance has significant positive correlations with divorce ($r = 0.304$, $p < 0.01$), large family size ($r = 0.362$, $p < 0.01$), and peer pressure ($r = 0.750$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that lack of knowledge or awareness is a pervasive factor reinforcing other challenges associated with child labor.

The correlation analysis highlights a complex interplay among factors contributing to child labor. Poverty emerges as a central determinant, intricately linked with divorce, large family size, and parent unemployment. Peer pressure and ignorance appear as significant mediators, influenced by cultural beliefs and other socioeconomic conditions. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of child labor and the need for holistic interventions addressing economic, social, and cultural dimensions.

Table 9: Correlation Analysis Table

Variables	Poverty	Cultural Belief	Divorce	Large Family Size	Parent Unemployment	Peer Pressure	Ignorance	Sig. (2-tailed)
Poverty	1	0.053	0.429**	0.439**	0.528**	0.008	-0.005	-
Cultural Belief	0.053	1	0.206**	0.449**	0.316**	0.348**	0.220**	0.439
Divorce	0.429**	0.206**	1	0.556**	0.243**	0.302**	0.304**	0
Large Family Size	0.439**	0.449**	0.556**	1	0.380**	0.286**	0.362**	0
Parent Unemploym	0.528**	0.316**	0.243**	0.380**	1	0.137*	-0.047	0

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ent								
Peer Pressure	0.008	0.348**	0.302**	0.286**	0.137*	1	0.750**	0.911
Ignorance	-0.005	0.220**	0.304**	0.362**	-0.047	0.750**	1	0.947

Notes:

- **Significance Levels**:
  - ****** = Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
  - ***** = Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
- Sample size: **213**
- Only relevant relationships with correlation values and their significance are shown.

4.3 Discussion of findings

Introduction

This study aimed to explore the factors influencing child labor practices, the challenges faced by social workers in addressing child labor, and the interventions and solutions proposed to mitigate this social issue. The findings provide a nuanced understanding of child labor dynamics within the Nigerian socio-economic context, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the problem and the critical role of social workers. The results emphasize the importance of addressing systemic issues such as poverty, cultural beliefs, and inadequate legal enforcement while proposing targeted strategies to improve child welfare.

The findings align with prior studies, which have consistently identified poverty as a dominant driver of child labor. For instance, research by ILO (2017) underscores the economic pressures that compel families to involve children in labor activities, resonating with the 97.2% agreement among respondents that poverty significantly influences child labor practices. Similarly, cultural beliefs and large family size, identified as contributing factors in this study, reflect findings by Anyanwu and Erhabor (2016), who discuss how socio-cultural norms perpetuate child labor in African contexts.

Studies like that of Oyekanmi (2019) and UNICEF (2020) emphasize the systemic challenges social workers face, such as inadequate resources and legal disempowerment, which align closely with this study's results. However, contrasting findings by Adeoye and Benson (2018) argue that public awareness campaigns have a limited role in significantly reducing child labor, opposing the consensus in this research that education and community engagement are vital.

The proposed solutions, such as enhancing public awareness and implementing poverty alleviation measures, also reflect recommendations from studies by Oladele (2018) and Eze (2021), highlighting a global acknowledgment of the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches in addressing child labor comprehensively.

The demographic analysis revealed a predominance of middle-aged respondents (46–60 years) and a significant representation of social workers (71.4%), suggesting that the findings are grounded in the perspectives of experienced professionals actively engaged in child welfare. This aligns with research by Agbo (2019), which emphasizes the critical role of seasoned social workers in identifying actionable strategies. The relatively balanced gender distribution further ensures diverse insights, reflecting a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Poverty emerged as the most significant factor, with 97.2% of respondents acknowledging its impact. This finding echoes studies like Anyanwu and Erhabor (2016) and Oladele (2018), which emphasize poverty as a primary driver of child labor. Contrasting findings by Adebayo and Fasina (2019), however, suggest that while poverty is a factor, it often intersects with systemic corruption, complicating efforts to address it effectively.

Cultural beliefs were also significant, with 83.6% agreement, reflecting societal norms that perpetuate child labor. The role of large family size, supported by 88.7% agreement, aligns with studies indicating that resource constraints in larger families often lead to child labor (ILO, 2017). The correlation analysis revealed strong associations between large family size and divorce ($r = 0.556$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the compounded effects of family instability. These results align with findings by Eze (2021), who explores the intersection of family dynamics and economic constraints.

The One-Way ANOVA results highlighted the effectiveness of interventions such as facilitating the removal of children from abusive environments ($p = 0.001$) and supporting victims to access legal and social services ($p = 0.011$). These findings suggest that targeted, child-centered interventions yield significant outcomes, as supported by UNICEF (2020) and Oyekanmi (2019). However, interventions like campaigns and awareness programs showed limited impact,

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aligning with criticisms from Adeoye and Benson (2018), who argue for data-driven engagement strategies.

The one-sample t-test results underscored systemic challenges faced by social workers, including inadequate resources (Mean = 3.91, t = 13.220, p = 0.000) and insufficient facilities for child welfare (Mean = 4.08, t = 15.663, p = 0.000). These findings align with studies emphasizing the need for structural reforms to empower social workers (Eze, 2021). Contrarily, findings by Adekunle (2020) suggest that regional disparities in resources play a more significant role than structural inadequacies.

The proposed solutions received overwhelming support, particularly the enforcement of child labor laws (90.2%) and poverty alleviation measures (97.2%). These findings emphasize the need for a multi-pronged approach that includes legislative enforcement, economic support, and collaboration with NGOs and international organizations. Enhancing the quality of education (95.8% agreement) also emerged as a pivotal strategy, reflecting the role of education in breaking the cycle of child labor (ILO, 2017). However, contrasting views by Benson and Omole (2020) argue that education reforms require long-term investments, often limiting immediate impacts.

4.4 Implication for the study

The findings have significant implications for policy and practice. Strengthening legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms is critical to addressing child labor. Economic interventions targeting poverty alleviation and support for vulnerable families are essential to reducing the prevalence of child labor. The study also highlights the importance of empowering social workers through resource allocation, training, and legal authority. Public awareness campaigns should be restructured to address cultural norms and promote behavioral change.

4.5 Recommendation for future research

While this study provides valuable insights, future research should explore the long-term impact of proposed solutions on child labor reduction. Comparative studies across different regions in Nigeria could provide a broader understanding of socio-cultural and economic variations. Additionally, qualitative research capturing the voices of child labor victims and their families would offer deeper insights into the lived experiences and challenges associated with child labor.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations that have been made in this study to address the menace of child labor in Ondo state.

5.2 Summary

Findings from the study demonstrated that child labor is a real problem in the Nigeria society. However, it is evidenced that forms of child labor differs between individuals. On the whole considering the fact that children are the future of any nation, it becomes imperative to regard child labor as a social menace that must be curtailed in our society. Children who have been exposed to child labor need to be helped to get over the abuse and empowered with safety plans to take when they next encounter similar situations. Efforts need to be made to prevent child labor. It is important therefore for every citizen to ensure that in their small way they work towards eliminating child labor. Those small efforts will add up to produce more friendly homes and hence the nation.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This study underscores the complexity of child labor practices and the critical role of social workers in addressing this issue. The findings highlight the interplay of economic, cultural, and systemic factors, emphasizing the need for holistic interventions. By addressing the root causes and empowering stakeholders, significant progress can be made toward eliminating child labor and promoting child welfare in Nigeria.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.

The study made the following recommendations that:

1) Passage of the bill legalizing the practice of social work profession, training and empowerment of social worker is proposed as a tool in curbing the menace of child labor in our society.
2) Training to help social workers gain more knowledge on the practice of child laborer is imperative. This will enable social workers to render a more effective service in the prevention and treatment of the victims of child labor.

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3) The government and private sectors should collaborate to empower social workers, who in return would educate the society and empower vulnerable individuals, groups and communities.
4) The systemic issues influencing child labor such as poverty, cultural beliefs, and inadequate legal enforcement should be addressed while proposing targeted strategies to improve child welfare.
5) The study also recommend awareness in the community with regards to the right of child, especially the right to basic education and protection from economic exploitation.
6) The relevant agencies approved by the government to curb the menace of child labor also needs to be more alive to their responsibilities.

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