

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Empowerment of the Fatherless Girl Child: A Way Forward for Human Capital Sustainable Development of Africa

**Dr. Martina Chinelo Onuegbu**

Chief Lecturer, Department of Igbo Language  
Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria

**Ijeoma Evelyn Onuegbu**

Lecturer, Department of Early Childhood and Care Education,  
Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria

**Dr. Janet Temilola Popoola**

Lecturer, Department of Early Childhood and Care Education,  
Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria

**Nnenna Clara Okoroafor**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Early Childhood and Care Education,  
Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria

**Monisola O. Olotu**

Lecturer, Department of Early Childhood and Care Education,  
Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*All over the globe especially in Africa, there has been a clarion call for sustainable development for year 2030 through the achievement of '17' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Deprivation of the fatherless girl child's right engineered by culture, tradition and the law are not emphatically addressed and will continue to undermine the realization of the above global goals especially in Africa where double standards for the male and female child have been a major act of violence and brutality against African girl children. This paper highlights through the content analysis method, the plights of the fatherless girl child and the dangerous experiences they encounter as compared to the experiences of 50 girl children interviewed for this research. Examples are taken from an Igbo Home Video in English called Hear My Cry (2005) and Crying Mother (2014, part 1) re-titled Tears of My Daughter (2015 part 2) and others. The theory of sociology of literature based on the African feminist framework and the content analysis method were adopted to link the literary examples to real societal experience. Data collection includes oral interviews of victims, video recording and note taking. This paper suggests that unless the African government develop empowerment policies for street children, and transform the situation of fatherless girl child, the achievement of sustainable development in Africa come 2030 may not be tenable.*

**Keywords:** *Fatherless girl child, Igbo literature, Africa, sustainable development, empowerment*

### **1. Introduction**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 'universal, integrated, and transformative' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is a set of 17 global goals with 169 targets to be achieved over the next 15 years by 193 countries including African countries (UNDP, 2015). The goals if achieved are formed to transform our world and that is why the SDGs are officially known as 'Transforming our world'. The goals are (1) no poverty, (2) zero hunger, (3) good health and wellbeing, (4) quality education, (5) gender equality, (6) clean water and sanitation, ... and so on (UN 2015). The fatherless girl-child forms a part of the female population which rates half of African population and which form a great number of street children.

According to Caesay (2011), there are 30 million street children in Africa. In Nigeria, 45% of Nigerian children under age 15, live in the streets while 10.5 million of them are out of school, 1.3 Million of them have been forced out of their homes due to tribal wars, terrorism and conflicts in the north- Eastern parts of Nigeria (Omobolanle, 2018; March) Street children are children in difficult circumstances who are vulnerable to poor health, poverty, hunger, gender inequality, risky sexual behavior, substance abuse, violence, poor environment and many health hazards and insecurity threats as a result of their homelessness caused by the deprivation of their homes by one reason or the other which includes loss of one or both parents. As destitute children do not have access to education and highly paid jobs. Cumber and Tsoka-Gwegweni (2015) records that over half of the world's out-of- school children (33 million) live in Africa. UNESCO statistics (Cited in Cumber and Tsoka-Gwegweni (2015) also shows that 150 million street children in the world today are chased from home by violence. No good parent will want the child to end up in the street by chasing him or her

by violence. Such violence has to come from extended family relations mostly uncles, aunts and others as is the situation in most African countries.

For instance, Nigeria has 450,000 orphans with only 98 orphanages across the country to cater for them. The orphanages run shortage of funds, personnel and other facilities (Oloko, 1992). About 700,000 children, had lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS in year 2000. This figure is expected to rise to 2.5 million in 2010 (NPC/UNICEF 2001)

In 1986, children who slept in the streets in Lagos were estimated at 8000 in early 1990's. Over 100 hunting locations in Lagos were found occupied by children (Oloko, 1992). 'Street families' are becoming prominent in urban slums and ghettos. These destitute families are found under bridges, in public toilets and in markets. The children who maintain little or no contacts with their parents are most vulnerable to social crimes and street hazards. The fatherless girl child is subject to and is victims of traditional practices: withdrawal from school as a result of limited value put on the education of the girl child, compared to boy. There is lack of parental care and it is on the increase and children are forced to child labour (FGN/UNICEF 2001)

Fatherless girl children who are chased from home later become street children and are exposed to much violence and hostility. From researches done on street children, they experience most violence at night from police officers, security guard officers, disturbed street adults, employers, hooligans, peers and shop owners (UNICEF, 2012 and 2006, McAlphine, Henley, Mueller et al (2010), Nada and Suleman, 2010). Self-reports made by street children show a high rate of rape and all forms of sexual abuse (Owojeje and Uchendu, 2009, Wuto and Kumoji, 2006, Hills, Zapata, Robbins et al, 2011).

African children driven from home also experience some health problems which includes sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). In South Africa (Cape Town), 6.3 million street children are living with HIV (Seager, 2010). In Ibadan Nigeria, street children living with Gonorrhoea are 14.2%, Syphilis 5.3%, Chancroids 0.5%, Herpes 1.7% (Olley, 2006) while 7.7% live with Virginal discharge, Genital Ulcer 4.2%, HIV 3.34% while on the whole, 3.2 million Nigerian street children live with STDs (Owojao, 2009). Ayaya (2001) also reports that over 1.6 million street children live with STDs in Eldoret, Kenya while UNICEF (2001) reports that there are 1.4 million of such children in Zimbabwe (Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru and Kadomu)

Reports of some scholars show that over 50% of street children which includes fatherless girl children, are disvirgined at night on the streets either by rape or forced sex and so many of them are exposed to hard drugs or psychoactive substances which help them to withstand violence, survival, forced sex, hunger, numb their emotions and help them forget their problems and sleep well no matter the situation they find themselves. Such drugs used also expose some of the children to mental problems. Some of the mental disorders detected in them are: schizophrenia, depression, hopelessness and suicide ideation (Cumber and Tsoka-Gwegweni, 2015).

This paper is therefore, a clarion call to both governmental and non-governmental bodies in Africa and around the globe to put the situation of the fatherless girl children who are street children into the 2030 SDGs plan for the development of Africa. Street children whom many of them are fatherless girl children must be integrated in Africa's transformation agenda if the SDGs must be met in Africa. According to this study, Nigerian fatherless girl children as depicted in two Igbo Home Videos (*Hear My Cry (2005)*, *Crying Mother (2014, part 1)* and *Tears of My Daughter (2015 part 2)*) are deprived of their rights socially, politically, economically and culturally. They are abandoned and are deprived through various oppressive, exploitative, dehumanizing and marginalizing attitudes from uncles and other humans in the society. The horrible experiences the fatherless girl child undergoes subject them to traumatic experiences, depersonalize them and cause them identity crises reducing them to the lowest poverty level, early marriage and the accompanying health implications, lack of economic and educational empowerment and so on. Such conditions of the fatherless girl child are a reflection of the patriarchal nature of African society and a sign of underdevelopment characterized by devaluation of human life. The fatherless girl child has not received the attention required and it is a major cause of crime especially prostitution in Nigeria. The paper emphasizes improvement of the situation of the fatherless girl child in Africa through various forms of empowerment to curb crime and accelerate sustainable development of African nations.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study was the content analysis and field research methods. 50 fatherless girls selected randomly from different parts of Africa especially Nigeria forms the sample of this study. Supporting primary sources: two home videos (*Hear My Cry (2005)* while the second is *Crying Mother (2014, part 1)* and *Tears of My Daughter (2015 part 2)*), a novel (*Makuachukwu* by Kammel (2006)) and two live stories of victims were adopted to drive home some points. Other secondary sources: journals, books, News Paper reports and online resources were also of great use in this study. The theory of sociology of literature based on the African feminist framework and the content analysis method were adopted to link the literary examples to real societal experiences. Data collection includes oral interviews of victims, video recording and note taking.

## 3. Synopsis of the Story

There are two major stories involved in this study; the first is the synopsis of *Hear My Cry (2005)* while the second is the synopsis of *Crying Mother (2014, part 1)* and *Tears of My Daughter (2015 part 2)*. In *Hear My Cry (2005)*, Major Okonkwo dies during the war leaving his wife Adaaku and his two children (a boy and a girl) in the hands of his brother Chika. The boy's name is Agha while the girl's name is Uju. Chika sells all the late brother's belongings including his motor cycle. He also withdrew the entire brother's bank savings and negotiated with a buyer who buys Adaaku's box of clothing. Adaaku having heard of his evil plans against her, maneuvered Chika deceived him by leaving an empty box behind while

hiding her clothing in a concerned old woman's house. Chika goes in search of the cloths but could not find them. In anger, he beats Adaaku and sends her and her children packing from her own husbands /father's house to the streets.

In the midst of their sufferings and homelessness, an old blind man and a basket maker, offers them shelter in his house. UjuAdaaku's, daughter is given out as a maid to another family in exchange for money. Agha her brother, becomes an ice cream hawker in the city. Their uncle never sent them to school like he promised at the demise of their father. Adaaku fell ill but there was no body to care for her except the old blind man. She dies and that same day, her children escape and returned home only to witness their mother's death. Agha is sent to his uncle to request for his assistance to bury their mother. The uncle turns down his request and insisted that he must not bury their mother in their father's compound.

When all hopes are lost, Uju's uncle finally forced her to marry a man who is already late. Her husband was the only child of a widow who was bent on procreating for her dead son in order to continue her husband's lineage. Uju makes all attempts to free her from her current predicament but could not because her uncle and the widow overpowered her and made her a sex slave. Her mother in-law encages her indoors and arranges some boys from their community (Christopher and Okey Japan) to have sex with her so she could be pregnant. Christopher pities her and refuses to have sex with her but Okey Japan forcefully has his way and impregnates Uju.

Out of pity for her and her unborn child, Christopher helps Uju to escape to the city where she begs for arms. She goes hungry most times even in her condition as a pregnant woman. One of the days as she begs, she comes in contact with her brother. Agha recognizes her, hugs her and takes her and her child away from the street to his home. Agha, indignantly goes home with the intention of strangling his uncle for the wickedness and torture he exposed him and his sister to.

Before his arrival, their father who was thought dead returned from the asylum where he was kept for several years. Chika their uncle lied to their father that his nuclear family was consumed in the war. Agha a fully grown man, and an achiever, arrive home and pounce on his uncle. Major Ojukwu unable to recognize his son Agha challenges Agha to a fight in defense of his brother. He puts Agha at a gun-point and is almost ready to shoot when their relation, an elderly man intervenes and told Major that Agha is his son. Major recognizing the marks on Agha, drops his gun and hugs Agha. Agha after hugging his father pounces back on his uncle and was about to suffocate him to death when his father and the old man appealed to him not to kill him. Agha lives his uncle half dead, hugs his father and promises to take him to Lagos to see Uju and her child.

### 3.1. *Synopsis of Crying Mother (2014) Part 1 and Tears of My Daughter (2015) Part2*

Mmachi loses her husband and faces the wickedness and torture of her brother in-law Maazi Ibeabuchi. Their quarrel starts with Ibeabuchi's love advances toward Mmachi. According to him (Ibeabuchi), Mmachi is his inheritance from his elder brother. Mmachi's rejection of his love advances leads him into conniving with UgonnaOkonkwo's son to implicate Mmachi as an adulterer. Mmachi was astonished and dumbfounded. Still imagining what could be the problem and why the brother in-law should accuse her with such a serious allegation, she tried to explain to him that she was innocent but her explanations fail on deaf ears. Neighbours attracted by the alarm raised by Ibeabuchi gave jungle justice immediately, accused her of killing her husband because of her witchcraft and prostitution. To them, hence Mmachi is still mourning her husband and is caught with another man; she is a prostitute and should be exiled from the land. They stoned her out of the compound and called her names. Mmachi's only child and daughter Ezinne shares out of her mother's punishment. She sojourns with her mother in her homelessness. Mmachi's brother refuses to accept her desire to return to her father's house. Ibeabuchi sells her husband's land at a cheap rate. They find a home in an uncompleted building where Mmachi roasts plantain and maize while her daughter finds a job in a restaurant where she pounds yam and washes the plates used by those who patronizes the restaurant. Ezinne's colleagues Juliet and Joy become jealous as Ezinne's boss loves her and promoted her because of her hard work. They made life and the job difficult for her, framed her a thief, tried to kill her but failed

Mmachi's business blossoms, Chike, Mmachi's brother was bribed with fifty thousand naira by Ibeabuchi to search for Ezinne and give her hand in marriage to a rich old man Chief Laz who lent him five hundred thousand naira with the promise that he will marry Ezinne. All efforts to get Ezinne married to Chief Laz failed. Ibeabuchi plans with Ugonna to hit Mmachi with a car pretending it was a hit and run. Mmachi is admitted in the hospital and dies. Ibeabuchi refuses to accept Mmachi's corpse into their compound because to him they can't bury a prostitute and a witch in his compound. ChikeMmachi's brother also rejects her corpse saying she was a disgrace to their family. Ezinne's boss helps her to bury her mother and offers her ten thousand naira (#10,000) to resume life. In the end, Ezinne takes up her mother's business. Joy loses her job and is taken in by Ezinne whose progress in the business attracted enmity from Joy again. Joy plants a charm in Ezinne's shop while Richard's wife and sisters who suspect Ezinne is dating her husband/ brother, scatter her wares in the shop, call her names and beat her severely destroying her shop. Joy afflicts Ezinne with a deadly skin disease and suggests a witch doctor Okemmiri as a solution to Ezinne's disease. The witch doctor requests to marry Ezinne if she must be cured. Ezinne marries him and is healed from the disease but refuses to make love to the witch doctor that in return, afflicts Ezinne with blindness. Mmachi appears to Ezinne asks her to pray. She prays and her blindness disappears, Okemmiri dies, Joy becomes blind, Juliet is afflicted with the same skin disease which she caused Ezinne to suffer. Ibeabuchi suffers stroke, confesses to the killing of Mmachi's husband, Ugonna and others and dies. His evil ally and friend also die while Mmachi's brother suffers elephantiasis.

## 4. Causes of Exploitation of the Fatherless Girl Child

### 4.1. Inheritances of Property

In Igbo land of Nigeria, the brothers of the deceased inherit his property especially when the deceased is childless or has only female children. At times too in some Igbo communities hence the deceased does not have male children who are grown up or married, his brothers inherit his property. The cultural intention behind the practice is for the brothers to use the proceeds to cater for their late brother's family until the children are able to cater for themselves. These days many brothers who inherit their late brothers' properties are selfish and instead of caring for his family, they torture them and use all means to annihilate his family to their own gratification. They render their late brother's family homeless, hungry and leave them in abject poverty. The children drop out of school and both mother and children are exposed to menial jobs, and hawking for the hard-working ones. The lazy ones especially those who were not exposed to hardship when their father was alive go into crime: robbery, prostitution, drug abuse, drug barons, terrorism, and militarism, etc. In the home videos which form the crux of this study, the girl children were deprived of their homes and were driven to the streets. In *Hear My Cry* (2005), Uju, her brother Agha and mother (Adaaku) are driven by Chika their uncle to the streets so are Ezinne and Mmachi her mother thrown out of her father's house to the streets. Chika takes over Uju's father's property and sells all of them including his motorcycle. Ibeabuchi sells Ezinne's father's lands and moves into his house. The above form of exploitation is common to most fatherless girl children.

In confirmation of the above as a true situation of fatherless children, Angela one of the victims interviewed in this paper narrated her ordeal as follows:

When my father died, I was four years old and the only child. I and my mother were sent out of the house. We went back to Ondo where we lived before my father died and rented a house. Shortly after, they attacked my mother and she died and left me in the care of a Yoruba woman who was our neighbor then. As a small girl, the woman exploited me, assigned me to endless house chores. At the age of 15, she gave me out to an old man (a Divorcee) for marriage after receiving some money from him. My uncles never asked about me until a spiritualist revealed to them that the cause of their lack of progress was because they chased a daughter from their family away. Before they found me, I had given birth to three children. They begged me to go back home but I told them that there was no need. When I eventually went home to see things for myself, they were already occupying my Daddy's building with their families (Oral Interview with Angela 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2022).

Another girl Fumilayo, narrated her experience as follows:

When our father was alive, he was very rich and had some buildings at Lagos so; we lived like kings and queens at Lagos. We never lacked or suffered or were exposed to any form of hardship. He died, and our world was doomed. After his burial, his elder but wretched brother took over all his possessions. He also accused our mother of being the witch that killed Daddy. He chased her out of the house, ransacked the house, took our entire Daddy's documents, locked our family house at Lagos and took us to the Village in Ekiti State. My brother and I dropped out of school and every morning he took us to work in his cocoa farm in empty stomach while his younger children went to school. Our mother whom we could have looked up to was uneducated and had nothing else to do than to remarry abandoning us to fate. Our uncle sold some of our Daddy's buildings and used the money to build himself a mansion in the village. He used the rest of the money to settle two of his sons in business.

I was sixteen then and my brother was fourteen. I could not save myself nor help my brother. Our meals were not regular and were very poor. We were made to soak and drink garri (grated and fried cassava flour) without sugar often. Eating of meat and fish were rare. We were always running errands at home or peeling cassava to be processed into garri buy us. The suffering became so much that I felt like committing suicide. One early morning, I ran to Okeosun River not too far from our house to get myself drowned. As I was about to jump into the river, people saw me and rushed to my rescue. I narrated our story to them. They blamed my uncle for his wicked deeds but he never changed he even hated me more and gave me heavier and more assignments calling me names. Later we started school in the village and passed out of the secondary school before he gave me out for marriage to his friend as a third wife after several fruitless rejection of the man. My brother joined one of his sons in Lagos. According to our uncle he did not have the money to give us a tertiary education (oral interview with Fumilayo 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2022).

In a country like Nigeria where people die on daily basis, and in many occasions, children are made orphans either by Boko Haram, kidnappers, Fulani Herdsmen, accidents, and robbery, one wonders what becomes the faith of those children. Of course, the government can never cater for every one of them. Some will certainly be exposed to some societal cruelty like those in the examples above; some will go into crime while very few will struggle to survive through genuine hard work.

### 4.2. Deprivation and Abandonment

These are major causes of poverty amongst fatherless children. A woman or children that all their lives have been living in affluence enjoying their father's wealth is suddenly thrown into the streets hopelessly without a job and any hope of accommodation. Probably an uncle has inherited the deceased property: his house, cars, bank cheque books, companies, businesses etc. Deprivation and abandonments are great setbacks for the family of the deceased. At times the children's schooling is affected and in most cases the children drop out of school and go into crime. Those that have good family background struggle to survive through hard labour. An example is Makuachukwu in Makuachukwu by Kammelu (2006). After Makuachukwu's father's death, she, her siblings and their mother suffered so much because they were abandoned by

their in-laws. Severally they go hungry, do hard labour and save money for their school fees and feeding even as tender as they are Ezinwanne's family in the same novel, also lost their father, a business tycoon in Kano. They are quite younger so could not do hard labour. Their mother was the lazy type so, gave her first daughter to early marriage to a soldier who absconded with her for so many years to a distant State without any link to her family. She the second daughter hawks to sustain the family until she is terribly sick and is helped by Dr. Makuachukwu who assists the family, takes her and her brother as house helps as she sends them to school.

#### 4.3. Socio-Cultural Reasons

Most often, the socio-cultural believe of Africans that the girl child belongs to the kitchen and should not be given equal educational opportunity with the boys often makes most cruel uncles use that as an opportunity by trading fatherless girls for money. The future and fate of such children does not matter in this case rather their personal gains do. In the case of Uju in *Hear My Cry* (2005), her uncle forcefully marries her to a widow who is in need of a surrogate mother to give her late son a child. The widow exposes her to sex with several men. Ezinne in *Crying Mother* (2014, part 1) and *Tears of My Daughter* (2015 part 2) escapes from her uncle Ibeabuchi who collected a huge sum of money from an old Chief in exchange for Ezinne's hand in marriage. Ezinne through her jealous colleagues is afflicted with a terrible skin disease. In collaboration with the witch doctor, they made her believe that she could only be cured if she marries the witch doctor. As a result of her condition of health she gave in to marrying him even against her desire. About 50% of the girls interviewed in this study were forced to marry their uncle's choice for them. 20% of them ran away to their maternal home with their mothers while 10% of them ran away from home to their friends in town who introduces them to one crime or the other. 20% of them were actually given up to secondary school under painful experiences from their uncle's wives.

#### 4.4. Poverty

From the oral interviews conducted, 60% of the girl children who suffered under the care of their uncles were those whose uncles were poor. Their uncles used the death of their father to better their lives. 30% of the girl children had reach uncles whom 20% of them cared for their nieces while 10% were not ready to invest on their nieces.

#### 4.5. Covetousness

In most cases, uncles who covet their late brother's property do not do it out of complete lack. Some do so because it is their cultural right. Some also feel that it is the best way to get back at the wife of their late brother especially if she rejected their sexual advance. In the case of Ibeabuchi, Mmachi rejected his sexual advances. He has a wife and has some fortune but desired to have sex with the late brother's wife badly. Her rejection brought out the devil in him.

#### 4.6. Vengeance

Most wicked uncles maltreat their late brother's children to avenge their anger against either one of the parents for one reason or the other. To some, their late brother never helped them when they were in need. To others, their late brother's wife blocked their brother from helping them. She most has bewitched their brother and now is a payback time.

### 5. Effects of the Exploitation of the Fatherless Girl Child

Fatherless girl children whose mothers did not remarry but are not educationally and economically empowered are in one way or the other exposed to societal cruelty. Some of the effects of such exposure are as follows:

#### 5.1. Early Marriage

From the literary examples above supported by the responses of 80% of the samples collected for this study, fatherless girls are often married off earlier than usual.

#### 5.2. Forced Marriage

Most fatherless girl children are often forced into marriage at times by their uncles or mothers. Some poor widows feel that the best way to reduce their family burden in the absence of the father is to give out the girl child even against her will to marriage, to some uncles; it is the easiest way to reduce their financial responsibilities and even make profit from the bride price paid on the girl child and from the gifts and other assistance that the girl's husband may offer them.

#### 5.3. Social Vices and Crime

Some fatherless girl children in despair and hopelessness fall into wrong hands who introduce them to social vices and crime which includes prostitution. In Onuegbu (2011) some of prostitutes interviewed in that study lost either parents or their father and went into prostitution out of frustration. In support of the above assertion, NPC/UNICEF (2001) reports that commercial exploitation of the girl child has grown in scale and is linked to commercial trafficking in women and children with its role in increased HIV/AIDS pandemic in Nigeria. Child prostitution is common in some states in Nigeria: Port Harcourt, Owerri, Calabar, Makurdi Ilorin, Maiduguri, and Lagos. Family destitution has forced many youths to join gangs and criminal groups resulting in a high wave of urban crime and the consequent killing of youth offenders. There are also increased youth activities in cultism and political thuggery as well as drug peddling, use and addiction (Kolo 1998, Eneh 2008).

A country-to-country account narration of women trafficking in Africa reported in *Trafficking in Persons* (2004) record depicts that:

Cameroon is a country of source, transit, and destination for women trafficked to Europe for sex work and forced labour. The women are lured to Europe through fraudulent marriage proposals made by Swiss and French prostitution networks or marriage brokers.

Cote d'Ivoire is a destination for women trafficked from Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Asian countries for sexual exploitation in Abidjan and other urban areas. There, trafficked women prostitute to pay off their debts to their traffickers so that they can be aided to their final destination which may be Italy, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Some of them are trafficked to Europe, North Africa, Lebanon and Syria for forced labour.

Ethiopia is a source country for sexual work, forced and commercial labour, young women are trafficked to Lebanon for commercial labour and from Lebanon, they are transferred to Europe.

Ghana is a source, transit and destination country. Expatriates returns to Ghana, marry young girls and prostitute the girls upon arrival in Europe (German, Italy and the Netherlands). Ghanaian women are also deceived into sex work by traffickers who falsely promise them European jobs back at Europe.

Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for trafficked women. Nigerian women are trafficked to Europe, the Middle East and other African countries for forced labour, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. Some are trafficked to Italy, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Cote d'Ivoire and South Africa. Nigeria is a destination country for Togolese, Beninese, Ghanaian and Cameroonian children trafficked for forced labour.

Other countries in the list of traffickers according to the report are: Angola, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Kenya, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. All these countries serve as source, transit or destination countries or are engaged in all.

A report made in the *Daily Monitor* on Sunday September 1st (2013) by Bamaturaki Musinguzi states that East African region is threatened by the vice; human trafficking which is the human slave trade which was abolished decades ago but which has transformed itself in a modern form which continue to exist in shadows and beyond the reach of the law putting millions at risk ([www.monitor.co.modernformofslavery/.1689844/1974562/.rj815s/-/index.htm](http://www.monitor.co.modernformofslavery/.1689844/1974562/.rj815s/-/index.htm))

According to an annual *Trafficking in Persons* (TIP) Report (2015) by the US State Department, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi are among the nations that remain sources and destination countries for men, women, and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking.

#### *5.4. Jobs with Low Economic Status*

Many mothers who lose their husbands prefer their children helping out in economic activities to letting them go to school so do most uncles. Some give their children mostly females as house helps in the cities, as nannies, and other domestic chores (Okechukwu, 2013). According to NPC/UNICEF (2001:) report, 'girls stay out of school due to engagement in economic activities such as helping parents on the farm, taking care of younger children at home, fishing, household chores, market day activities, early marriages, pregnancy and religious values'. It was for reasons of this nature that (Eneh and Nkamnaebe, 2011 cited in Okechukwu, 2013).

Other effects are increased premature death, poverty, and infections from sexually transmitted diseases as recorded by some scholars at the introductory part of this paper.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

There should be Child Rights Advocates in all nations in Africa like the National Child Rights Advocates of Nigeria, NACRAN, which was established in 2001. Other child rights laws should be implemented and strengthened in African nations to curb the oppression and subjugation of African children especially the girl child.

There should be Legal Education taught as a subject both in primary, secondary schools, and tertiary institutions in Africa to enable the child be aware of his/ her rights from childhood. This is the great difference between a child from the Developed countries and those of the Developing countries like Africa.

All the African and United Nations Charter for example: Charter on the Rights of the child, CRC, and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW and others, must be domesticated and implemented in all African nations and states.

All African countries should reflect powerful policies which will be accountable and more financially committed to the care of children both at their national, state and local government areas. Such policies should be monitored for effective provisions and care of fatherless children and orphans while stringent legal measures should be laid out for child abusers and wicked relatives.

There should be a Ministry of Children's Affairs which will be in charge of retrieving property of late parents from uncles and other relatives. Such ministries should have local government offices which will spread to various communities for easy accessibility by victims.

Children whose uncles or relatives have thrown to the streets should report to the human right advocates who will in turn assist them in retrieving their father's possessions.

There should be Micro-finance establishments to cater for orphans and the fatherless at all levels of government and all communities in African nations which should aim at empowering orphans and the fatherless educationally and economically. Such governmental support will hasten manpower sustainable development and curb social evils and crimes in the African Societies.

There should be a law enacted to punish people indulging in child marriage and forced marriage. Victims who are the brides in question should be encouraged to report such cases to the law enforcement agents or child rights advocates. Finally, African men and women are enjoined to write their wills which will state clearly how their property should be shared in the event of death as this will absolve their children from disinheritance and other harmful traditional practices. It will also secure the future and welfare of their children. Nigerian working-class men are to update their records with their employers, insurance companies and other relevant records like shares holding records to reflect their children as their next of kin.

## 7. References

- i. Ajaegbu, N. (2005). *Hear My Cry* Kammelu, N. C. (2006). *Makuachukwu*. Ondo: Crofess.
- ii. Nwosu, U. G. and Ogedengbe, T. (2014). *Crying Mother*. Guniks Limited.
- iii. Nwosu, U. G. and Ogedengbe, T. (2015). *Tears of my Daughter*. Guniks Limited.
- iv. Ayaya, S.O. (2001). Health Problems of Street Children in Eldoret, Kenya. In *East African Medical Journal*. [https://www.ajol.info/index.php/...893078\(12\):624-630](https://www.ajol.info/index.php/...893078(12):624-630).
- v. Cumber, S. N. AND Tsoka-Gwegweni (2015: Aug.17). In *Journal of Public Health Africa*. Doi
- vi. 10.4081/jphia.2015.566. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/.../2015/06/2015.566](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/.../2015/06/2015.566)
- vii. Daily Monitor (2013: Sunday, September) Report by Bamaturaki Musinguzi. [www.monitor.co.modernslavery/.../1689844/1974562/.../rj815/-/index/htm](http://www.monitor.co.modernslavery/.../1689844/1974562/.../rj815/-/index/htm)
- viii. Eneh, O, C. (2000). A Tear of the Nigerian Child of the 1990's. *WIPRO International*. Enugu, Nigeria
- ix. Eneh, O. C. (2008). Cultism in Nigerian Educational Institutions: Incidence, Causes, Effects and Solutions. *Knowledge Review* 17:126-135.
- x. Eneh, O, C. and Nkamnebe, A. N. (2011). Gender Gap and Sustainable Human Development in
- xi. Nigeria: Issues and Strategic Choices. *Asian Journal of Rural Development*, <https://scialert.net/abstract/?doi=ajrd2011.1:41-53>.
- xii. Hills, S. D., Zapata, I., Robbins c. I. et al (2011). HIV Seroprevalence Among Orphaned and Homeless Youths: No Place Like Home. *AIDS* 2011; 26:779-92 (PubMed Google Search).
- xiii. Kolo, I. A. (1998). Protection and Violation of Children's Rights in Northern Nigeria. Report for UNICEF, Lagos
- xiv. McAlphine, K, Henley R., Mueller M. et al (2010). A Survey of Street Children in Northern
- xv. Tanzania: how abuse or support factors may influence migration to the street. *Community Mental Health*, 2010; 46:26-32. (PubMed Google Scholar).
- xvi. Nada, K. H. and Suliman, E.D. A. (2010). *Violence, Abuse, Alcohol and Drug Use, and Sexual Behaviours in Street Children of Greater Cairo and Alexandria*, Egypt. *AIDS* 2010; 24:539.
- xvii. NPC/UNICEF (1997-2001). *Master Plan of Operations Country Programmes of Cooperation*, National Planning COMMISSION, Abuja, Nigeria.
- xviii. NPC/UNICEF (2001). Survey Report on Gender Gap and Sustainable Human Development in Nigeria. <https://scialet.net/fulltextmobile/?doi>. Retrieved on 19th April, 2019.
- xix. Okechukwu, A. M. (2013: May). Gender Equality in Educational Opportunities for National Development. In the *International Journal of Gender and Development Issues* 1 (1) by the
- xx. Centre for Women, Gender and Development Studies, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria.
- xxi. Olley, B. O. (2006). Health Profile of Street Children in Africa. In *Journal of Public Health in Africa*, by Degree Diss..., Ohio University, USA. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/.../>
- xxii. Omobolanle, V. L. (March, 2018). Taking Nigerian Children off the Streets. In *Financial Development and Finance, Nigeria*. [www.financialnigeria.com](http://www.financialnigeria.com).
- xxiii. Owoaje, E. and Uchendu, O. (2009), Sexual Risk Behaviour of Street Youths in Southwest
- xxiv. Nigeria. *East Africa. Public Health* 2009; 6:274. (PubMed. Google Scholar)
- xxv. Seager R. R. Tamasane T. (2010). Health and Wellbeing of the Homeless in South African Cities and Towns. *In Develop South Africa* 2010:2763-83.
- xxvi. Soubottina, P.T. (2004). *Beyond Economic Growth. An Introduction to Sustainable Development*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- xxvii. Trafficking in Persons Report (2004). The Offices to Monitor and
- xxviii. Combat Trafficking in Person Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S.A. Department of State.
- xxix. Trafficking in Persons Report (2015). U.S.A. Department of State.
- xxx. UNICEF, (2006). The State of world's children. *United Nations Publication Report. Excluded and Invisible*. Available from: <http://www.unicef.org/publicationsindex-30398.html>.
- xxxi. UNICEF (2009). Social Protection to tackle Child Poverty in Ghana Briefing Paper. In *Social Policy*. Dakar: UNICEF and UNICEF Ghana (Google Scholar)
- xxxii. UNICEF (2012). The State of world's children. *United Nations Publication Report*.
- xxxiii. United Nations (2015). *United Nations Development Programme Report*. [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org).
- xxxiv. Wutoh, A. K. and Kumoji, E. K. and Xue z.n. et al (2006). *HIV Knowledge and Sexual Risk Behaviours of Street Children in Takoradi, Ghana*. *Aids Behav* 2006; 10:209-15.