

## **Juvenile Justice Morass in the Informal Work Sector: Nigerian Street Traders' Experience**

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### **Abstract**

Street trading, especially in urban centres, remains a persistent structural challenge facing the Nigerian socio-economic development plan. It appears the major source of child labour and, eradicating child labour, a top priority of national and global concern. Although the contribution of street trading to the Nigerian informal economy is significant, understanding its impact on children remains vague. Hence, the antinomy of child labour and survival in Nigeria requires a better understanding of various experiences of children within the informal work sector, in order to protect them from multiple forms of victimization and exclusion. While the existing literature on street trading is important in understanding the specific needs of child street traders, it is not without limitations. This study explores literature to analyse various experiences of children engaged in street trading activities in Nigeria using a rights-based approach. Thus, it was guided by the following questions: What is the nature of street trading activity? What are the hazards associated with street trading? How does street trading impact children's development and wellbeing? What is the implication of street trading on juvenile justice? What can be done to address the problem? These five questions form the key objectives of this study.

**Keywords:** child labour, Nigerian child, rights-based approach, street trading policy, workplace hazard

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Among the core objectives of the international convention on the rights of the child is protection of children against inhumane, exploitative and hazardous labour (Child's Rights Act, (CRA) 2003; United Nation Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2019). Individuals who fall within its scope and definition of childhood are not permitted to engage or be engaged in payable jobs (i.e., activities that generate income for either the employee or the employer) such as street trading. Therefore, the use of children in street trading activities like scavenging reusable and recyclables, hawking and displaying of wares in public spaces becomes highly prohibited and proscribed as forms of child labour (UNICEF, 2000; UNICEF, 2019). According to UNICEF (2019), child labour denotes the use of persons under fourteen years of age in payable jobs, while a person under fourteen years of age is considered a child. Similar protections are also accorded to young persons above childhood age who are yet to mark their eighteenth birthday (Children and Young Persons' Act (CYPA). Both the children and this other category of young persons are collectively referred to as juveniles, which is the subject of juvenile justice. As such, persons under eighteen years of age are equally not permitted to engage in payable jobs. Despite the domestication of this legal framework, it is regrettable that juveniles have become much increasingly and actively engaged in the Nigerian informal economy with no apparent policies that provide for the treatment of child labourers.

From the account of global children workforce, as provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO), there are approximately 152 million child labourers of which about 47 per cent of them work under hazardous conditions (Anti-slavery International, 2020). Despite the growing concerns about safety, health, moral and social development of child labourers (Anti-slavery International (AI), 2020), it is so worrisome a fact that over 32 per cent of persons aged 5-17 years are currently engaged in child labouring in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2019). In the search for a workable solution to child labour, UNICEF (1997) recommends improved access to basic education as one effective way of keeping children off the streets. Although Nigerian governments have made concerted efforts in getting out-of-school children back to school through programmes like funding special schools for "Almajiri" (out-of-school children who live on begging) in the Northern part of the country (Guardian Editor, 2019) – street trading among children has persisted. Both in-school and out-of-school (children enrolled in formal education and those that are not) Nigerian children involve in street trading indiscriminately.

In developed countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America, child labourers are usually seen as people with either pathological or psychological problem who need specialized attention (Ojo, 2013). With the belief that every child, notwithstanding their socio-economic background, deserves a fascinating and supportive childhood experience. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, not only are these set of children seen as indigent or/and delinquent (Ennew, 1994; Umar, 2018), the dilemma faced by most Nigerian children appears far more compounded, due to the lack of effective juvenile justice system.

As street trading becomes increasingly criminalized and punishments for defaulters gets more punitive (severe) and diffused, children engaged in street trading sometimes suffer double jeopardy in the hands of law enforcement agencies. Regardless that children are identified among the groups with special vulnerabilities (Davies et al., 2017), every individual who comes in conflict with such policies stands equal risk of criminal prosecution. In enforcing such policies, sanctions like fines, confiscation and seizure of wares, arrest and incarceration of defaulters are widely and indiscriminately applied, in order to deter people from carrying out trading activities in public spaces (Adama, 2020; Fadayomi et al., 2012). Because children constitute a good percentage of the frontline street trading workforce in Nigeria, they inadvertently become the major target of such punitive policies (Eleke, 2016; Ozoji, 2017; Okafor, 2019; Nwachukwu, 2019). Their role as frontline street traders with such activities as displaying, peddling and hawking of licit and illicit goods and services make their contact with law enforcement agents, inevitable.

Although studies attribute causes of child street trading to socioeconomic factors like parents level of income and family size (Ojo, 2013; Ozoh and Chinecherem, 2017; Umar, 2018), misconceptions still abound in public attitude towards child labouring and actual role of children across Nigerian societies. With widespread poverty and unemployment (Adebayo, 2018; Akinkuotu, 2018; National Bureau of Statistics, 2018), both adults and children are found to engage in street trading activities indiscriminately, as a means of survival. As such, children's engagement in informal work sector particularly street trading becomes very much approving across Nigerian societies (Umar, 2018; Hassan et al., 2020). This accounts for why the traditional and contemporary Nigerian societies had seen nothing wrong in engaging children, including their "own", in family businesses or in diverse trading activities elsewhere (Eboh, 2018; Ozoh and Chinecherem, 2017; Umar, 2018) as salespersons, vendors and beggars. These misconceptions, coupled with socioeconomic factors like poverty and ineffective justice system will likely perpetuate a routine for victimization of child labourers if accelerated attention is not given to child protection within the Nigerian informal work sector.

This literature review focuses on four (4) thematic areas. These are; the nature of street trading, child's level of vulnerability, child development and workplace hazards, and Juvenile justice administration in Nigeria.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Street trading has appeared a major source of child labour, which remains a top priority of national and global concern (UNICEF, 2019). Both governmental and non-governmental organisations globally have made concerted efforts in getting children out of the street by engaging them in curricular activities like formal education and providing the necessary supports they needed. Those efforts were geared towards protecting children from various hazards associated with informal work sector and, as well, giving them a lead to becoming productive citizens in the society. While a significant amount of successes have been recorded in many countries like the United States, the United Kingdom (Ojo, 2013) and a host of other countries through such efforts, the situation in Nigeria has appeared very much different and, the problem, so persistent. Owing to the hazardous nature of the informal work sector, the level of vulnerability of children and the punitive nature of Nigerian street trading policies, children engaged in street trading would be exposed to multiple forms of victimization.

Following from this backdrop, a good number of researchers like Umar (2018), Eboh (2018), and Ojo (2013) have attempted to address street trading among school-age children in Nigeria. Unfortunately, virtually all of these studies had used a needs-based approach which tends to present children as passive participants in the informal work sector, with little or no attention to their specific rights and privileges as the juveniles they are. It is on this premise that the concept of child-in-need has continued to dominate the discourse on child protection particularly in developing countries like Nigeria – where human rights is usually a reserve for the strong rather than for the weak, as illustrative of the experience of child street traders. As a result, those researchers have remained largely occupied with the antinomies of street trading and survival among children as they fail to recognize child labour as the biggest challenge to juvenile justice in Nigeria. This has, inadvertently, seen a gross negligence on the part of researchers and social policymakers in unmasking the cleavages of injustices perpetrated against children within the Nigerian informal work sector. With the trend in continual diffusion of punitive street trading policies remaining largely unchecked, treatment of the teeming population of child street traders would likely be a chimera. This study, therefore, sought to provide a workable solution that can help mitigate the impact of street trading on children by advancing an improved and supportive childhood experience for every Nigerian child.

*Objectives of the Study*

- To understand the nature of street trading.
- To explore the hazards associated with street trading.
- To understand the impact of street trading on child development and wellbeing.
- To analyse the implication of Nigerian street trading policies on juvenile justice.

## **II. THE NATURE OF STREET TRADING**

Street trading is an umbrella term for all manner of commercial or business activities that contravene the popular conventions and the ethical requirements for “transactional” engagements in any given society. According to Bhowmick (2005), it denotes the exchange of both legitimate and illegitimate goods and services in spaces and/or manners that are considered an aberration to society’s trade-norms. This involves economic activities such as hawking, vending, selling and displaying of wares, scavenging, begging for alms and peddling of illicit, illegitimate, and harmful goods and services in public spaces. Its nature, therefore, points to the centrality of the type of activities and the place where such activities are being carried out. And by its definition, street traders consist of conglomerate of producers and consumers of street goods and services.

Fadayomi et al. (2012), in their study on “occupational health and safety for informal sector workers in Nigeria, identified two major categories of street traders based on the type of their trading activities. These are; sedentary, those who make use of temporary points like vegetable sellers and newspaper vendors, and roving street traders such as street hawkers. Their findings revealed two major types of workplace hazards encountered by street traders. The first is associated with nature and type of work being carried out that exposes street traders to workplace hazards – like road accident, air pollution such as carbon emission from poorly serviced vehicles, dust particles and obnoxious smell from lapidated sewage system, which are very common in developing countries like Nigeria where infrastructures are largely inadequate. They observed that unlike sedentary street traders who use stationed facilities, like table, mat and any other temporary structures for display of wares, roving traders who usually hawk their wares along the streets and in busy traffics are more susceptible to physical injuries like road accident. The second; is harassment from law enforcement agencies who are often sent to pursue street traders off the streets by enforcing street trading laws. Their study considered harassment to include any of seizure or destruction of wares, and arrest and detention of street traders in a police cell in their trading career life. From the findings provided, it was observed that 79% of the total number of 3839 respondents are young persons. 52 persons representing (1.5%) of the total number of respondents were persons under 14 years and 1343 (37.7%) in the age bracket 15-25. Out of 3839 interviews completed, 1885 (49.1%) respondents admitted having been harassed by law enforcement agents, while 950 (24.7%) of the same number of interviews conceded to having been injured while trading on the streets. Some reports equally suggested that in attempt to escape these harassments and arrests, some fleeing traders often, but accidentally, got crushed by moving vehicles (The Cable News, 2016).

Similarly, in their mixed-method research on the implication of street trading activities on the residents within Central Business Districts in Nigeria, Taiwo and Akinyode (2017) identified three categories of street traders based on nature of their activities. The first category; are those that hawk their goods from station to station with wheelbarrows. The second; are those that sell perishable food items, like fruits and vegetable, who intentionally display their wares on mats or tables positioned by the roadside. Their third category of street traders are those that carry their wares about on the head. Such classification, however, can sometimes be misleading because it represents only a fraction of street trading activities as they have appeared exclusive of some other categories of street traders. As Hassan et al. (2020) observed, there are some street traders who neither hawk nor display wares but peddle illicit or stolen goods, scavenge for “reusable” (items that can be used without recycling) or recyclables, and those that beg for alms along busy streets. However, the convergent point in these contributions is that all street trading activities, regardless of the mode through which they are being carried out, whether mobile or stationed, constitute a health and public safety hazards. These as Taiwo and Akinyode (2017) noted, include obstruction of vehicular and pedestrian traffics, facilitation of the spread of infectious diseases, and exposure of young persons, as young as six, to criminal influences of the street environment. It is also very much likely that most street traders live on vended foods because such foods are relatively cheap and very much accessible. Both safety and hygienic level of vended foods have remained a major health concern for health experts, national and international organizations like the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

## **III. CHILD’S LEVEL OF VULNERABILITY**

In their book “victims, crime and society: An introduction” by Davies et al. (2017), so many contributions explained vulnerabilities among different groups, of which Hazel Croall’s contribution on “unequal impact of victimization” (p. 200-264) is of great significance. Croall, a co-author of the book and a retired professor of criminology at Glasgow Caledonian University, asserts that some people would suffer the impact of victimization more than others. She identified four factors that influence victimization in contemporary societies to include; socio-economic status of individuals, age, gender and global inequality. As she had noted in her earlier work on “white-collar crime, consumers and victimization: Crime, Law and Social Change”, age and socio-economic status can be both mutually dependent and independent in terms of the level of vulnerability of individuals (Croall, 2010). For example, children who are grown in affluent families will less likely engage in child labouring while their peers from poor homes will most likely. Invariably, the former set of children will most likely escape the impact of workplace hazards. She identifies global inequality as one of the sources of vulnerability in developing countries like Nigeria. Although, she originally use this concept to study white-collar crime, Croall (2010) revealed that there is an inherent danger in global trend in the transfer of waste generation hazards from richer to developing countries. This could be responsible for unsurmountable inorganic waste dumps across markets and streets of Nigeria cities. In such a condition, there is little or no doubt that children will be endangered disproportionately, owing to their level of vulnerability. On gender-based inequality, she posited that men and women, including boys and girls, can also experience workplace hazards differently. This position is very much consistent with research on street trading in Nigeria. For instance, Amoo, et al. (2012) and Umar, (2018) found that workplace hazards affect the female child disproportionately.

Fadayomi et al. (2012), in their referenced study, tested the correlation between the experience of their youngest and the oldest age cohorts using a binary logit regression statistics. They used primary data they collected for the 2011 National Survey of Street Traders (NSST), which was funded by the Covenant University Centre for Research and Development (CUCERD), Nigeria. Sample population were selected from four cities spread across the old regional divisions of the country. Lagos from the west, Aba and Port-Harcourt from the East, and Kano from the North. A total of 3,873 respondents were interviewed using a questionnaire and focus group discussions (FGD) sessions. Both Sedentary (stationed) and roving traders were captured using a combination of sampling techniques. They used on-the-spot sampling frame for sedentary traders because they are stationed and very easy to recruit. A combination of observation and random sampling techniques were employed for roving traders to mitigate the challenges of recruiting a highly mobile set of respondents. From their findings, it was revealed that the correlation between the ways these two groups suffer workplace hazards is the strongest among age cohorts studied. This finding, however, is very much consistent with Nile Christine’s “ideal victim” victimological doctrine, which identified women and the girl child, children, and elderly people as ideal victims of crime and victimization on the account of their level of vulnerability (Davies et al., 2017). However, children have appeared largely exposed and more easily recruited in street trading in Nigeria than other age cohorts with comparable level of vulnerabilities like the elderly.

A similar study on “perceived effects of street hawking on the wellbeing of children in Anyigba, Dekina local government area of Kogi state, Nigeria” conducted by Eboh (2018) revealed the social and physical impact of street trading on children. His study used cross-sectional survey design. Questionnaires and interview were administered to 162 persons consisting of parents and guardians of street hawkers the local government area with 92% response rate. He recruited these respondents through snowballing, which involves contact tracing (i.e. identifying people with required characteristics) through their ward. Four hypotheses were drawn and tested using the chi-square to understand the social implication of street hawking on children’s moral behaviour and physical consequences of street hawking on children’s health status. His findings revealed that children engaged in street trading are likely to witness hazards such as physical injury and accident, kidnapping, murder, harsh weather conditions, chronic illness, rape, death and so on. This is also consistent with the findings of several other studies on street trading, like Umar (2018). However, the unattended gap in the level of guardianship accorded to children in Anyigba implies that parents and guardians who are very much aware of the inherent dangers in street trading have abandoned their role in child protection.

#### **IV. CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND WORKPLACE HAZARDS**

In their descriptive research on the influence of street hawking on socio-emotional development of primary school pupils in Cross River State, Nigeria, Bosah, et al (2015) opined that developmental changes that occur in human beings usually start, as early as, during prenatal life. They see prenatal development as an essential part of child development. Unfortunately, it has been observed that the hazardous conditions associated with informal work sector affects women disproportionately, especially pregnant women (Amoo, et al., 2012). From challenges of competing with their male counterparts in busy streets and traffics, contending with waste generation and poor sanitary conditions, living on unhygienic foods, to vehicular accidents and contracting infectious diseases. Such position is fundamentally essential because whatever happens to a child at prenatal life may influence their postnatal development, and other stages of child development. Using a simple

percentage analytical tool, set at 2.50 significance level, the results of Bosah, et al' (2015) study revealed that workplace hazards can hamper children's social development. These hazards include lack of time for leisure and visit to peers, exposure to alcohol, armed robbery, early prostitution for the girl child, and anti-social behaviours. On the aspect of children's psychological development, the study shows that children exposed to street trading easily fight, have low self-concept, exposed to pornographic materials and early sex and lack self-confidence. Their findings, however, suggest that street trading can negatively influence children's socio-psychological development, including their behavioural pattern. This study can be very helpful in understanding behaviour pattern among children who were either born or/and raised in streets across Nigerian cities. Most of such children would rarely live in protected homes nor enrol in formal education. As Panter-Brick (2002) had noted, such children often lack access to birth certification, self-identity, proper education and diet, and adequate housing and health care. The inherent danger in socio-psychological related hazards is that such children would also be deprived of both their human rights and citizenship rights, which are also essential for child development.

Another study carried out by Ubah and Bulus (2014) on the effect of street hawking on the academic performance of junior secondary school students of social studies in Nassarawa, State, Nigeria was designed to answer three key research questions. The first question was on the effect of hawking on the performance of social studies students of junior secondary schools in the State. The second question examined the differences between the academic performance of female students of social studies class who engage in street trading and their peers in the same class who do not. And the third, the differences between the academic performance of female students of the class who engage in street trading and their peers in the same class who do not. Three hypotheses were drawn from these questions. A quasi-experimental research design was used and questionnaires were administered to a pool of 100 participants, 50 males and 50 females, who were purposively selected from two secondary schools in Akwanga LGA of Nassarawa State. The t-test statistics was used for the analysis of test scores of the respondents which were the primary data used in the study. Their findings, however, revealed that street trading has a significant effect on the academic performance of students. While it also revealed the same pattern of academic performance among the respective cohorts of male and female students who engage in street trading and those that do not – the disparity in the differences in the t-test results of these cohorts shows that female children are disproportionately affected by street trading. They linked street trading to the causes of school dropout among in-school female child street traders. However, this appears the major setback of their study as it ignored the lived experiences of children in street trading environment, which might also contribute to high rate of school dropout among female child street traders.

In contrast to Ubah and Bulus' (2014) finding on the causes of school dropout among female child street hawkers, Umar (2018), in his study on "street hawking and the girl child in Northern Nigeria", revealed that the girl child would be more exposed to sexual-related abuses than their male counterparts. The latter held sexual related abuses, which he believed can cause the arousal of sexual urge among female child street hawkers. These abuses according to him range from sexual harassment, to sexual defilement and rape. He maintained that the causes of school dropout among female-street children are basically as a result of their exposure to sexual-related violence. Umar (2018), also observed that the female child street traders are more likely to be forced into a criminal career like sex work (i.e. prostitution), at teenage. This could be linked to an increase in the number of teenage pregnancy, teenage prostitution and high rate of spread of infectious disease in Nigeria.

Hassan et al. (2020), in a cross-sectional study on "the nexus of street trading and juvenile delinquency in Chanchaga Local Government area of Niger State, Nigeria" revealed a strong relationship between street trading and juvenile delinquency. They arrived at the result using two hypotheses. The first; is whether young persons who engage in street trading are more likely to become delinquent. Their second hypothesis sought to elicit answer to the question; whether persons who are engaged in street trading were juvenile delinquent. The result of their first hypothesis shows that young persons who engage in street trading are more likely to become delinquent. Similarly, their second hypothesis revealed that delinquent children are more likely to be used in street trading, especially for more serious offences like drug peddling, sex work (prostitution). What was not explained in the study is what was responsible for the initial delinquency and the processes through which it was being transferred among children. However, Lucchini (1997) had identified contact with the street environment as one of the major factors in learning of delinquent behaviour among children. This might suggest the need for further investigation on consumer-focused street trading to validate Hassan et al.' second hypothesis because children are both producers and consumers of street goods and services like illicit substances and criminal ideologies. Although, the latter has been largely understudied in the Nigerian context. The inherent danger in consumption of street goods and services can reflect the ideologies behind the proscription of sale of alcoholic drinks, drugs and exposure of sensitive videos to juveniles with the belief that such products and services can negatively influence their behaviour. This suffices to suggest that their role in consumer focused aspect of street trading can equally influence behaviour pattern among children, owing to their level of consumption of street goods and services. Hassan et al' (2020) contribution, however, can be helpful in explaining delinquency in

occupational mobility among street children, like the process of initiation and recruitment of school-age children into cultism and youth gangs. For example, report has suggested that majority of children and young persons engaged in cult war in Anambra State, Nigeria were juveniles who ply different types of trading activities in streets across its metropolitan centres (Eze, 2018).

## **V. JUVENILE JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA**

The primary aim of juvenile justice administration, globally, is to protect and preserve the rights and interests of children and young persons. Juvenile justice is a concept designated to values, processes and procedures for treatment, protection and correction of persons under eighteen years of age. It serves as a guiding principle for juvenile justice administration. These values, processes and procedures are enshrined in the Nigeria child's rights Act (2003) as a way of ratifying and domesticating the international conventions on the rights of the child. For the ease of administration of justice, this very Act was incorporated into the wider framework for juvenile justice administration in Nigeria with specific provisions for children. Both The CYPA and CRA (2003) provide for treatment of children who come in conflict with the law. Section 204 of the CRA (2003) for example, states that;

*no child shall be subjected to the criminal justice processes or to criminal sanctions but a child alleged to have committed an act which would constitute a criminal [...] offence if he were an adult shall be subjected only to the child justice system and processes set out in this Act(p.127).*

The Act provides for, among others, the procedures for investigation (Section; 211), adjudication (Section; 213), and correction of child offenders. It also stipulated professional requirements and competence expected of all persons who deal with child offenders. In their empirical study of the impact of Nigeria's child's rights Act on alternative dispute resolution and the criminal justice system, Ogbuabor and Nwosu (2014), identified important provisions of the CYPA regarding the treatment of children who come in conflict with the law. These include a range of instruments like the juvenile courts and services of specialized personnel such as probation officers, social workers and social welfare officers who are well trained in attending to specific needs of children and young persons.

In spite of all these provisions, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2009) has appeared highly pessimistic about Nigerian juvenile justice system as a whole, and as such, has described it as largely underdeveloped. Likewise some other studies on the effectiveness of treatments meted out to juvenile offenders in Nigeria (Ajah and Ugwuoke, 2018; Atilola et al., 2019). It was on this premise that Atilola et al. (2019) have argued that the chances of successful rehabilitation, reformation and reintegration of juvenile offenders in Nigeria is less probable. The dilemma, however, is much obvious on street children as they appear the most vulnerable to police arrests, prosecution and imprisonment. Reports from local dailies, Oracle Newspaper (Ozaji 2017), ThisDay News (Eleke, 2018), and Punch News (2016) revealed government tendency towards mass incarceration of street traders in Anambra state and Lagos State. Because the respective governments believe that street trading poses a serious threat to state security and city-streets beautification projects. Although, raiding of street children in their numbers might seem one easy solution, at least to ensure "disappearance" of children from major streets across Nigeria, the consequences of such policies on the society at large are rarely envisaged. As indicated by Ajah and Ugwuoke (2018), this can lend the society open to reproduction of more criminals through ill-equipped justice system.

Notwithstanding the fact that such policies are directly in conflict with Section 221 of the CRA (2003) which prohibits punitive penalty (harsh punishment) for children and young persons under the age of eighteen, its multiplier effect on crime rate has also been ignored. It is on this premise that Ajah and Ugwuoke (2018) maintained that what is required for the treatment of juvenile offenders is correction and not incarceration. This has provoked a growing level suspicion that a sizable number of Nigeria's child prisoners would be non-serious offenders whose offences might include larceny, non-violent property crime, and hawking of commodities in the street (Atilola, 2014; Atilola et al, 2017; Ozaji, 2017, Alamu, 2017; UNICEF, 2020). It has also attracted an overwhelming attention and public outcry on the condition of children across the Nigerian correctional institutions. With regards to the provisions of the juvenile justice, all these offences mentioned above are classified as juvenile delinquency and shall be treated as such. As Adeboye (2015) noted, the concept of juvenile delinquency was developed to exonerate young offenders from full criminal liability. Unlike the "adult" criminal justice system which emphasises punishment, the Juvenile justice system emphasises love care and correctional treatment (Ajah and Ugwuoke, 2018). Unfortunately, child street traders under 14 years of age equally confirm being harassed by law enforcement agents in different parts of the country (Fadayomi et al., 2012). This suffice to argue that the punitive nature of treatment meted out to children and young offenders in Nigeria has no rudiment of ideals of juvenile justice.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The literature reviewed in this study reveals a routine activity for victimization and exclusion of Nigerian child labourers. Against the backdrop of the provisions of the Child's Rights Act (2003), the roles children play, conditions under which they perform those roles, together with the level of protection accorded to them in Nigerian informal work sector depicts a juvenile justice morass. Literature has shown that children engaged in street trading in Nigeria are exposed to various types of hazards and, at the same time, lack the necessary protection and treatment they deserve as victims of child labour. Even assolution to child labour in Nigeria is nowhere in sight, current interventions on street trading have tended to put children in more dangerous and precarious situations. This points to gross negligence on child's rights and unimaginable level of ignorance on the wider social concerns about the child's level of vulnerability and the need for facilitated attention to child protection. Children who involve in street trading are found to be exclusively treated as violators of street trading policies with little or no regard to their legal rights and privileges.

The paper, therefore, recommends facilitated attention to child protection within the Nigerian informal work sector by adopting child-specific and child-friendly policies that articulate the rights of children – for effective treatment and reintegration of child labourers. And, as well, direction of more research on juvenile justice within the informal work sector for improved and supportive childhood experience for vulnerable Nigerian children. These, certainly, will help mitigate the impact of street trading on the teeming population of Nigerian child street traders.

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