

MODERN SLAVERY AND FORCED LABOUR AS SOCIAL PROBLEM IN NIGERIA TODAY AND ITS IMPLICATION ON EDUCATION

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Abstract

Millions of men, women and children around the world are forced to live as slaves. Although the exploitation is often not called slavery, the conditions are the same. People are sold like objects, forced to work for little or no pay and are at the mercy of their 'employers'. This paper discussed modern slavery and forced labour as a social problem in the society today. It is noted that slavery and forced labour affects people of every age, race and sex and is an obstacle to the achievement of educational goals.

Keywords: Modern Slavery, Forced labour and Social Problem.

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Introduction

Slavery is a system under which people are treated as property to be bought and sold, and are forced to work. Slaves can be held against their will from the time of their capture, purchase or birth, and deprived of the right to leave, to refuse to work, or to demand compensation. Historically, slavery was institutionally recognized by many societies; in more recent times slavery has been outlawed in most societies but continues through the practices debt bondage, indentured servitude, serfdom, domestic servants kept in captivity, certain adoptions in which children are forced to work as slaves, child soldiers and forced marriage. (Anakwe, 2017).

To be a slave is to be controlled by another person or persons so that your will does not determine your life's course, and rewards for your work and sacrifice are not yours to claim. People are enslaved by violence and held against their wills for purposes of exploitation, while people today most likely believe that slavery is a thing of the past, the practice is still thriving wherever poverty, social conditions, and gullibility can be exploited. Bale (2016), estimates that there are 27 million slaves in the world today.

Forced labour on the other hand refers to “all works or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of a penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”. This definition is set out in the ILO’s forced labour convention, (2000)(No 29) convention has been ratified by over 170 states and obliges governments to "suppress" the use of forced or compulsory labour in all its forms within the shortest possible period".

The United Nations International Civil & Political Rights (Article 8), also prohibits the use of forced labour and has been ratified by more than 160 states. China is the only country in the world which has not ratified either of these international standards. However, many countries have not passed specific laws defining and prohibiting forced labour with adequate punishments for those responsible. Where these laws exist they are often not enforced properly.

Slavery and forced labour includes:

 **The practice and institutions of debt bondage:** the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control on a security

for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined.

✚ **The practice and institution of serfdom:** This refers to the condition or status of a tenant who is by law, custom or agreement bound to live and labour on land belonging to another person and to render some determinate service to such other person, whether for reward or not, and is not free to change his status.

✚ **Servile forms of marriage:** This a practice whereby a woman without the right to refuse, in profound or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or a woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person.

✚ **The exploitation of children and adolescents:** this refers to any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 years, is delivered by either or both of his natural parents or by his guardian to another person, whether for reward or not, with a view to the exploitation of the child or young person or of his labor.

To determine exactly which practices constitute slavery or forced labour, it is necessary to consider the circumstances of the enslavement:

- The degree of restriction of the individuals inherent right to freedom of movement;
- The degree of control of the individual's personal belongings; the existence of informed consent and a full understanding of the nature of the relationship between the parties.

By these definitions and under a variety of circumstances slaves are a part of our lives - from the bread that we eat to the firewood we burn, slave labour may have contributed to the production of the goods we use daily. (Adebiyi, 2016)

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) says there are 8 main forms of forced labor in the world today. The International Labour Organisation's definitions and the countries it cites as examples of where the practice exists include the following:

- **Slavery:** This is a physical abduction followed by forced labor. This is practiced in Congo, Liberia. Sudan Mauritania and Sierra Leone.

- **Farm and Rural Debt bondage:** This is a practice whereby workers see all their wages go to paying for transportation, food and shelter because they have been booked into debt by unscrupulous job recruiters and landowners and they cannot leave because of force, threats or the remote location of the worksites. This practice is common in places like Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Cote d'ivoire, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Togo
- **Bonded Labor:** This is another form of debt bondage. It often starts with the worker agreeing to provide labor in exchange for a loan, but quickly develops into bondage as the employer adds more and more "debt" to the bargain; Bangladesh. India, Nepal. Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- **Human Trafficking:** In this practice, Individuals are forced or tricked into going somewhere by someone who will profit from selling them or forcing them to work against their will, most often in sexual trades. Many countries are both origins and destinations for victims. They include Nigeria, Italy, France, Ghana, Malaysia, Brazil, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Italy (35 countries).
- **Abuse of domestic workers:** This is a practice whereby maids and other domestic workers are sold to their employers or bonded to them by debts. This is a common practice in countries like Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, and the Middle East.
- **Prison labour:** The contracting out of prison labor or forcing of prisoners to work for profit-making enterprises. Australia, Austria, China, Cote de'Ivoire, France, Germany, New Zealand, Nigeria, Madagascar, Malaysia, and the United States of America.
- **Compulsory work:** In this institution, People are required by law to work on public construction projects such as roads and bridges: Cambodia, Central African Republic, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Vietnam.
- **Military Labour:** Civilians are forced to do work for government authorities or the Burma (also known as Myanmar military).

The International Labour Organisation estimates that there are at least 20.9 million people in forced labour worldwide. This figure means that, at any given point in time, around 3 out of 1,000 persons worldwide are suffering in forced labour.

Some more detailed International Labour Organisation's statistics are:

- ✓ 18.7m (90%) people are in forced labour in the private economy, exploited by individuals or enterprises. Out of these 4.5m (22%) are into forced sexual exploitation, and 14.2m (68%) in forced labour exploitation in activities such as agriculture, construction, domestic work and manufacturing.
- ✓ Women and girls represent the greatest share of forced labour victims 11.4m (55%), as compared to 9.5m (45%) men and boys.
- ✓ Adults are affected than children 14% (15.4m) of victims fall in the age group of 18 years and above, whereas children are 26% of the total (or 5.5m child victims).
- ✓ 2.2m (10%) work in state-imposed forms of forced labour for example in prisons under conditions which violate ILO standards, or in work imposed by the state military or by rebel armed forces.
- ✓ In around 10% of cases, the state of the military is directly responsible for the use of forced labour. Notable examples where this takes place are Burma, North Korea and China. However, in the vast majority of cases, force labour is used by private individuals who are seeking to make profits from the exploitation of other people

Effects of Slavery and Forced Labour

Forced labour affects millions of men, women, and children around the world.

Some of the major effects of slavery and forced labour include the following:

1. Child labour deprives a child of proper childhood and education.
2. Victims of slavery and forced labour suffer physical and mental torture.
3. He/She becomes mentally and emotionally mature too fast which is a dangerous sign.
4. Slavery and force labour creates and perpetuates poverty.
5. It condemns the child to a life of unskilled, badly paid work.
6. Ultimately, slavery and forced labour leads to child labour with each generation of poor children undercutting wage.

Victims of Slavery and forced labour

Victims of forced labour are frequently from minority or marginalized groups who face institutionalized discrimination and live on the margins of society where they are vulnerable to

slavery practices. Forced labour is a global social problem, although some regions have larger numbers of people affected than others. The regional distribution of forced labour according to ILO is:

- Asia and Pacific: 11.7m (56%),
- Africa: 3.7m (18%)
- Latin America & the Caribbean: 1.8m (9%)
- The Developed Economies: US, Canada, Australia, European Union, New Zealand, Japan): 1.5m (7%)
- Central Southeast and Eastern Europe (non EU) and the commonwealth of Independent states (CSEE): 1.6m (7%)
- Middle East: 600,000 (3%).

Implications of Modern Slavery and Forced Labour to Education

Slavery and forced labour is an obstacle to the achievement of educational goals. Children who are victims of slavery and child labour get deprived from the basic education since they would be forced out of school. Slavery and forced labour also takes up time that could have been used for studying, playing and resting by the child thereby depriving the child of a proper childhood. Children who cannot will against child labour cannot have a decision of their own to things that are wrong in school. Adults who are victims of slavery and forced labour cannot take care of their families therefore the education of their children is in jeopardy.

Summary and Conclusion

Slavery and forced labour exist today despite the fact that it is banned in most of the countries where it is practiced. It is also prohibited by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1956 United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the slave Trade and Institutions and Practices similar to slavery. Women from Eastern Europe are bonded into prostitution, children are trafficked between West African countries and men are forced to work as slaves on Brazilian agricultural estates. Contemporary slavery takes various forms and affects people of all ages, sex and race. The types of slavery that exist today are bonded labour, early and forced marriage, forced labour, slavery by descent, trafficking, child labour and child domestic work.

Besides ILO, government of every country, religious bodies, human rights organisations and all cultures of the world should step up efforts to bring to an end these inhuman and ugly practices

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