

Child Labour

A Call for the Strict Enforcement of the 2003 Child Rights Act in Nigeria



with

72%
Prevalence
Rate

Child labour has become a future-threatening menace plaguing a vast number of Nigerian children

**What
can be
done?**

41%



Encourage Free education

20%



Job creation

11%



Public Enlightenment on birth control

10%



Government should improve the economy

9%



Awareness on effects of child labour

7%



Poverty eradication

CHILD LABOUR THROWBACK POLL

Child Labour; A Call for the Strict Enforcement of the 2003 Child Rights Act in Nigeria

Abuja, Nigeria. June 12th, 2018 – The World Day Against Child Labour (WDACL) was inaugurated in 2002 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and is celebrated annually on the 12th of June, it focuses attention on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it. The Day aims to protect children by promoting international standards on child labour, raising awareness on this important issue and advocating for the basic right of education for all children. According to ILO's data, hundreds of millions of children throughout the world are involved in work that deprives them of receiving adequate education, health, leisure and basic freedoms. Of these children, more than half are exposed to the worst forms of child labour which include working in hazardous environments, slavery, and other forms of forced labour, illicit activities such as drug trafficking and prostitution, as well as involvement in armed conflict.¹ It is therefore pertinent that governments, employers and workers in organizations, civil society, as well as millions of people from around the world synergize on policies and reforms to eliminate this plight of child labourers and take care action on what can be done to help them.

According to the United Nation's data, about 218 million children between 5 and 17 years are in employment globally. Among them, 152 million are victims of child labour and almost half of these child labour victims (72.1 million) are found in Africa.² Although, they are laws prohibiting child labour in Nigeria such as Child Rights Act 2003 and the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2003, Nigeria is still caught up in the issue of Child Labour as it is still on the increase due to a lack of enforcement of the law. For instance, research findings contained in the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data indicates that about 50.8 percent of Nigerian children between 5 and 17 years are involved in one form of child labour or the other.³ This figure is worrisome as the effect of child labour does not only affect the child, it affects the society in general.

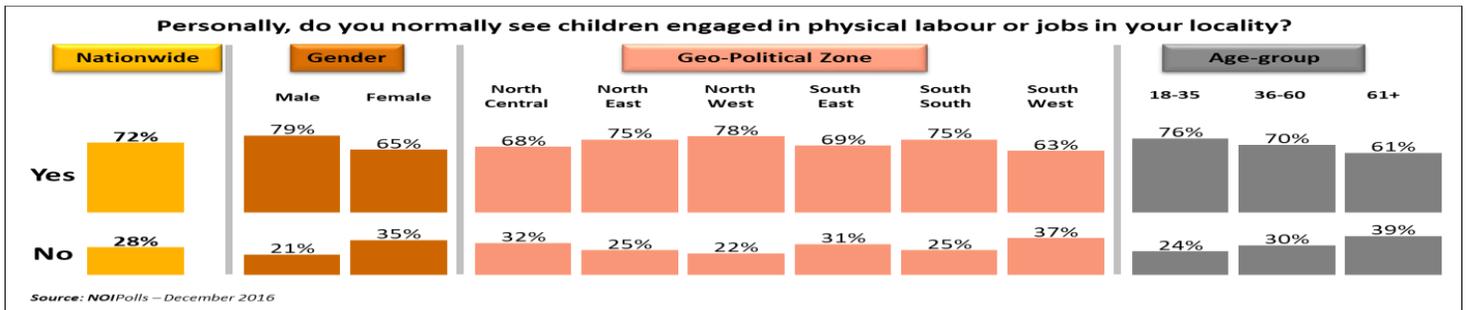
In view of the World Day Against Child Labour, NOIPolls presents findings from a previous poll on Child Labour which assessed the opinions of Nigerians regarding its prevalence, the extent of its effects and the possible solutions to reduce it to the barest minimum. The poll which was conducted in 2016 revealed that the larger proportion of Nigerians confirmed that they have personally seen children engaged in physical labour or jobs in their locality. Most respondents (70 percent) cited street hawking as the job most children engage in and a majority of respondents (45 percent) blamed it on poverty. The poll also revealed that majority (41 percent) of the respondents advocated for free education as part of the suggestions for eliminating the issue of Child Labour in Nigeria.

The chart below showed that residents from the North-West accounted for the highest percentage of Nigerians (78 percent) who have personally seen children engaged in physical labour or jobs in their locality. Also, analysis on age-group revealed that respondents aged between 18 and 35 years had the largest representation of Nigerians who acknowledged that they have personally seen children engaged in physical labour or job in their locality.

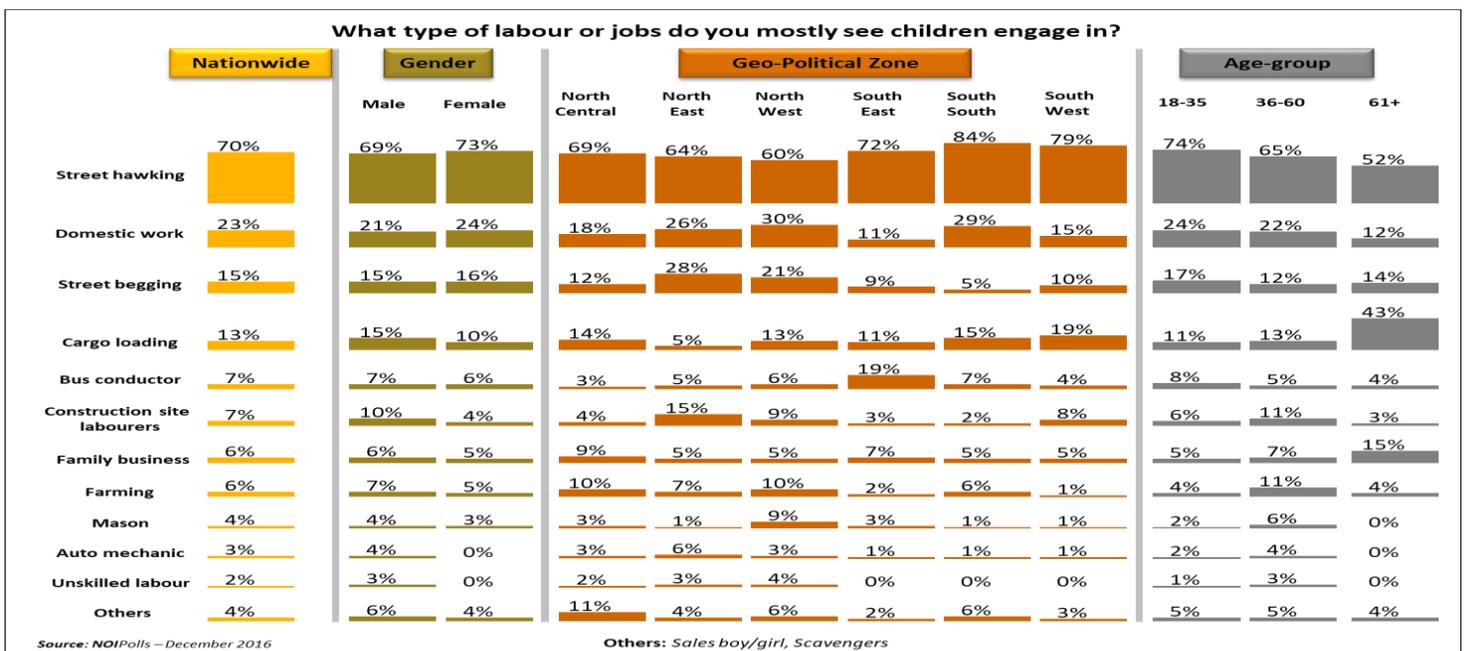
¹ <https://leadership.ng/2017/06/13/editorial-world-day-child-labour/>

² <http://www.un.org/en/events/childlabourday/background.shtml>

³ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/02/50-nigerian-children-engage-child-labour-nbs/>



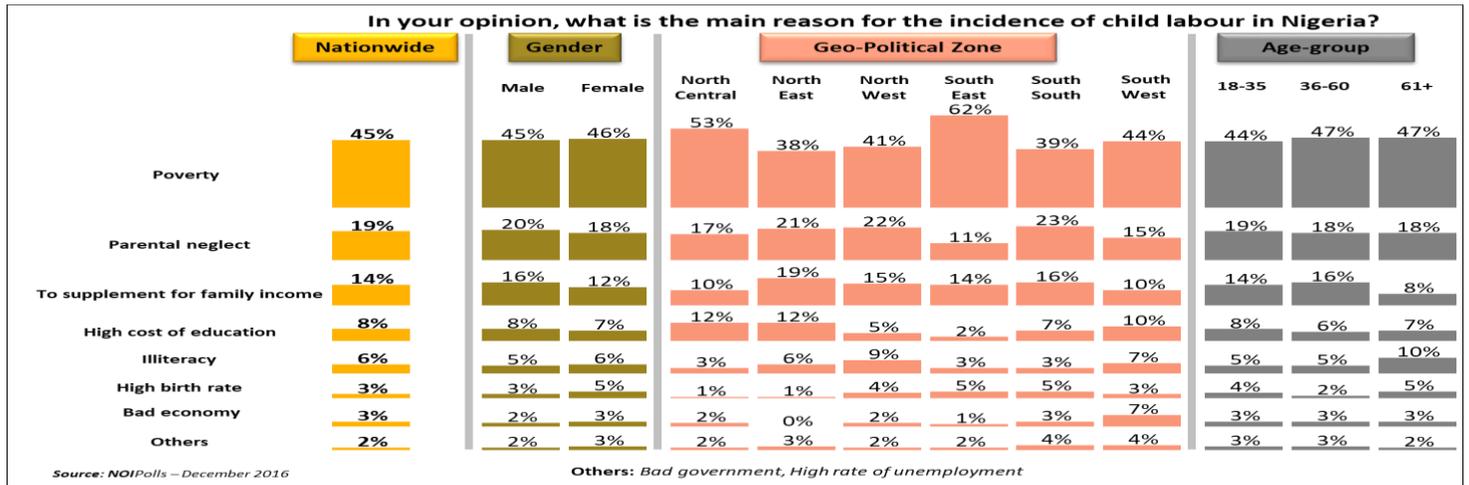
The high level of diverse and tedious jobs that children execute in dangerous circumstances is particularly worrying. Findings from this poll showed that these jobs children are usually seen working include street hawking, domestic work, street begging and cargo loading. Others work as bus conductors or construction workers, family business or farming and mason, while a meagre number work as auto mechanics and unskilled labourers. According to the International Labour Organization, the number of working children under the age of 14 in Nigeria is estimated at 15 million.⁴



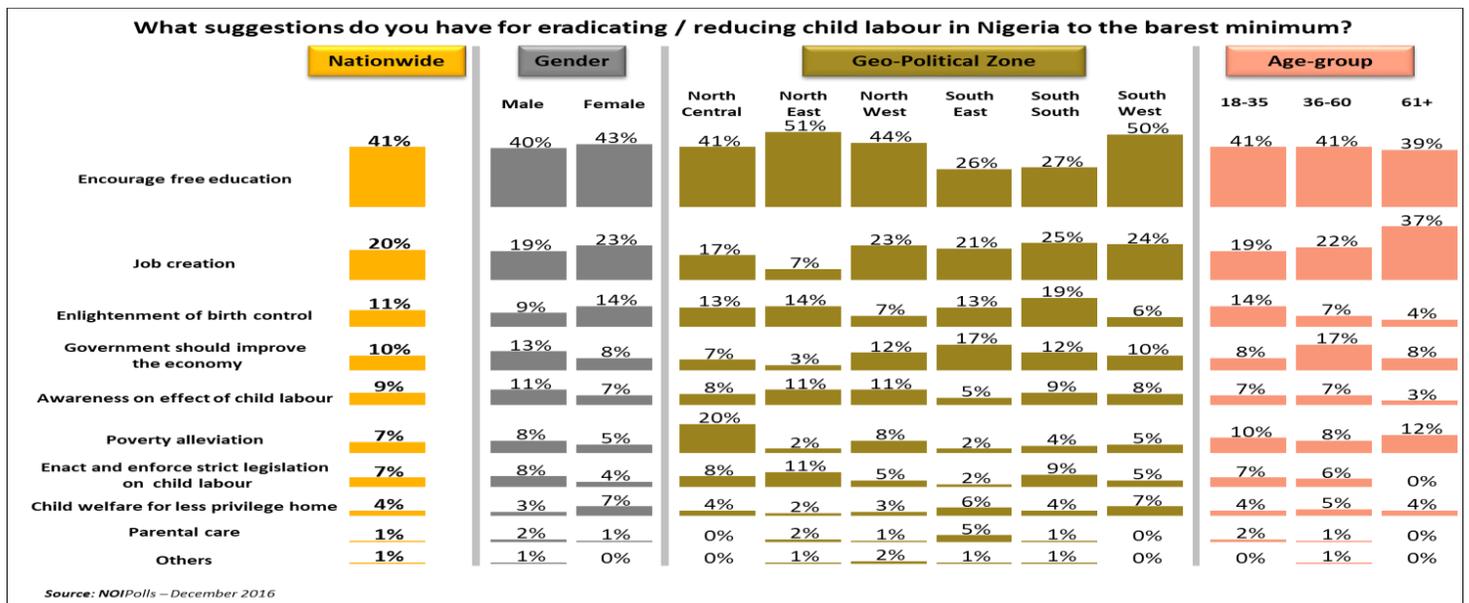
Child labour is closely connected with poverty (45 percent) and other types of marginalization as revealed by respondents. Research shows that child labour often increases during an economic downturn, as parents remove their children from school to supplement family income.⁵ Traditionally, children have worked with their families, but today children are forced to work for their own and their families' survival. The money earned by child family members have become a significant part of the families' income.

⁴ https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/children_1935.html

⁵ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/single-view/news/world_day_against_child_labour_12_june



Furthermore, the survey also revealed that free education topped the list of suggestions given by majority (41 percent) of the respondents surveyed and residents from the North-East zone (51 percent) accounted for the largest proportion of Nigerians who advocated for free education. Also, 20 percent of the respondents mentioned job creation and the South-South zone had the highest percentage (25 percent) of respondents in this category. In addition, 11 percent was of the opinion that parents should be enlightened on birth control measures to curtail number of children born without adequate and proper care.



In conclusion, as Nigerians join the world today in commemorating World Day Against Child Labour, it is pertinent for government and other stakeholders to address issues pertaining to child labour. Protecting and ensuring child education is a compulsory step towards tackling child labour as advocated by majority of respondents surveyed, along with measures to reduce poverty and promote social and economic development. Government and other stakeholders must synergize to

enact policies that adopt a progressive approach with focus on rehabilitation of children working in hazardous occupations.

Additionally, government need to enforce strict enforcement of Nigerian laws on child labour as well as development programmes to address its root causes of child labour such as poverty. Finally, it is important to ensure that children around the world, especially in a developing country like Nigeria, get the benefit of free and quality education, which would shape them into productive individuals for a better society. Children's rights cannot be fulfilled and protected unless the Governments and international organisations look behind the broad averages of development statistics and address the urban poverty and inequality that characterize the lives of so many children.

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