

PARENTS' AWARENESS OF THE CHILD'S RIGHT ACT IN OBANLIKU OF CROSS RIVER STATE AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR CHANGING COMMUNITIES

Ambrose B. Anashe; Julius A. Basake and Gani Ishaya Bako

Abstract

The paper investigates parents' awareness of child right act in Obanliku LGA and its implication for changing community. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling methods were adopted selecting five hundred respondents as sample size for the study. The instrument was a questionnaire titled "Parent Awareness of Child Right Act Questionnaire" (PACRQ) for use for data collection. A reliability estimate of 0.82 was obtained using Crombach alpha. Percentage and frequency table were used in answering the research questions why Chi-square (X^2) and t-test for testing the hypothesis at 0.5 level of significant the findings reviewed that many of the parents are not aware of the child's right act and that parents who are educated moderately are aware of the child right act but do not see it as realistic. Summary and conclusion were drawn in line with the findings, it was recommended that proper enlightenment campaign by relevant government agencies be carried out and that the law enforcement agencies should see to the persecution of offenders as deterrent to others.

In Nigeria as well as other countries of the world, education is perceived as a tool for socio-economic and political development. This position is amplified in the Nigerian National Policy on Education, which states that, "education is an instrument per excellence for effective national development (FGN, 2013) and a right for every Nigerian child".

In Africa and Nigeria in particular child birth is a proof of fertility existence and continuity of the family lineage. Children are

valued in almost all parts of the globe because they are indispensable assets of existentialism. And in Nigeria its forbidden to dehumanize a child. (Akulo and Ojogbane, 2008)

The United Nation (1990) describes a child as every human being below the age of eighteen years (18) unless under the law applicable to the child. This makes the definition of the person of a child most time culture bounds or directly subject to what the law prescribes in a particular country.

According to Amalu, (2010), the United Nation in 1989 held a Convention on the Right of the Child, following the increasing rate of child Abuse, child neglect, child labour and slavery among others. Amalu further posited that the Convention lead to the adoption of the Child Right Act on the 20th of November 1989 in Switzerland. Consequently, this has been adopted into the Constitution of various countries across the globe with a mandate to protect Rights of children through its implication.

In Africa, the African Union (AU) Assembly comprising of Heads of States and Government adopted the African Union Charter on the rights and welfare of the child in July 1990 (Amalu, 2010). Nigeria signed both children's Right and the African Union Charter of the right and welfare of the Child and rectified them in 1991 and 2000 respectively. Although the first attempt to pass a Bill on children's Right in Nigeria was in 1993 but could not be passed into law, due to military rule and opposition from religious sects

(Akiwumi, 2009). It was in July, 2003 that the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria passed the Bill into law and was subsequently assented by the then president Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in September, 2003 (Obanya, 2002).

The Child Right Act provides special legal rights specifically to children even though the general provision of the Nigerian constitution provides basic rights to all citizens with children inclusive in those provisions. These provisions according to Oshio (2006:8) includes the right to life, right to the dignity of the human person; thought to personal liberty; right to fair hearing; right to freedom of expression among others. Oshio further affirmed that the child's right Act goes beyond the general provision to provide specific provisions for the Nigerian Child. These includes that every child have an inherent right to life with the mandate that each state shall ensure to the minimum child survival and development. Parents shall have the primary responsibility for a child's up-bringing but that their states shall provide them with the appropriate assistance and develop child care institutions.

In addition each state shall protect children from physical and mental harm or neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation and that every child has right to education. Hence, Universal Basic Education is a direct offshoot to the implementation of the Child's Right Act for the overall development of the individual child and the community.

The Universal Basic Education is a reform programme in Nigerian. Delivering from primary one to Junior Secondary School Class three free schooling to reinforce the child's right to free and compulsory education. Its provides greater access and ensures quality education across the Federation since it is free and compulsory to every child of school age (Adomeh, Arhedo, Omoike, 2007).

In corroboration with the above law, the National Policy on Education (2013) noted that

education shall continue to be highly rated in the national Development plan because Education is the most important instrument of change and that any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be proceeded by educational revolution which the Child Rights Act upholds.

It is therefore the opinion of this paper that, if parents are aware of the Child Rights Act and allow their children to acquire the needed basic education, the children will develop manipulative skills that will enable them function effectively in the society within the limits of their capacity. This will no doubt bring about positive change in the communities where they live and beyond. Hence the need to investigate parents awareness of the Child Right Act and its implication for community change.

There has been a public outcry of low enrolment of learner in primary and junior secondary schools hawking by children of school age during school hours, child abuse and child trafficking in Cross River State with particular reference to Obanliku Local Government Area in spite of the state's adoption of the Child's Rights Act and the presence of the Universal Basic Education. It is against this background that the researchers deem it fit to investigate the awareness of parents about the Child's Right Act and what education can do for the benefit of the child and the community.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain the level of parents' awareness of the child Rights Act in Obanliku Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

Parents' Awareness of the Child's Right Act in Obanliku of Cross River State and Its Implication for Changing Communities

- i. What is the level of awareness of parents in Obanliku L.G.A about the Child Rights Act?
- ii. Does the level of education influence the awareness of parents towards Child Rights Act in Obanliku L.G.A?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant;

1. There is no significant deference between the mean responses of parents with aware of Child Right ct and parents unaware of the Act on the influence on changing communities.
2. There is no significant relationship between parents' level of education and their awareness about the child right act.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. It is idea for this study because the study involves collecting data from parents with a view to determining parents' awareness of the Childs Right Act and its implication to changing the community.

The population of the study comprises of eight thousand parents 827988 (npc, 2006). The purposive sampling technique was used to sample 50 parents from each political ward out of the ten political wards, that makes up Obanliku Local Government Area, making a total of 500 respondents.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire tagged "Parents Awareness of Childs Right Act Questionnaire" (PACRAQ). The reliability coefficient was determined through Cronbach Alpha reliability which gave an overall reliability of 0.82.

The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistic of frequency and percentages to answer research questions and using inferential statistic of chi-square for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents on the Level of Awareness of the Child Right Act.

Level of Awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	206	44.8
Average	154	33.5
High	100	21.7
Total	460	100.0

Source: Fieldwork 2016

Table 1 shows that out of the 460 respondents who have heard and are aware of Child Right Act 44.8% have no or low awareness while 21.7% affirmed to high level of awareness of the Child Rights Act. This implies that even though a large percentage of respondents have heard and aware of the Child Rights Act, only a very low percentage of respondents are highly acquainted with the provisions of the law.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents Level of Education and Awareness of Child Rights Act.

Level of Education	Awareness of Child Rights Act		
	Yes	No	Total
Low Education	104 (22.6%)	13 (40.6%)	117 (23.8%)
Medium Education	120 (26.1%)	11 (34.4%)	131 (26.6%)
High Education	236 (51.3%)	8 (25%)	244 (49.6%)
Total	460 (100%)	32 (100%)	492 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork 2016

Table 2 shows the awareness of respondents based on the level of their education. For the purpose of this study, it is important to emphasize that the different levels of education was based on the following findings. Respondents with primary education (whether completed or not) were categorized as low education, while respondents with secondary education (completed or not) were classified as medium education. Then, respondent with tertiary education (completed or not) were categorized as high education.

Out of the 460 respondents that have awareness of the Child Rights Act, 22,6% have low education, 26.1% have medium education and 51.3% have high education. In addition out of 32 respondents that have no awareness of Child Rights Act, 40.6% have low education, 34.4% have medium education and 25% have high education.

This indicates that the higher the level of education of respondents the higher the awareness about Child Rights Act and vice-versa.

Table 3
T-Test Analysis on Parents with Awareness of Child Rights Act and Parents Without

Respondents	N	Mean	SD	P	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Dec
Parents with awareness of CRA	460	3.21	2.6	0.05	490	2.066	1.645	Re-ject
Parents with awareness of CRA	32	2.80	2.80					

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value (2.066) is greater than the table value (1.645) at 0.05 level of significance at 490 degree of freedom, based on the result the null hypothesis, therefore is rejected.

HO₂: There is significant relationship between parent level of education and their awareness about the Child Rights Act.

Table 4
Summary of Chi-Square Analysis of Parents Level of Education and their Awareness about Child Rights Act.

N	X ² -cal	DF	LS	X ² -crit	Decision
460	90.59	1	0.05	3.481	Reject

Source: Fieldwork 2016

Table 4 shows that the calculation chi-square value (90.59) is greater than the table value (3.841) at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom 1. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study revealed that even though the Child Rights Act has been in existence since 2003, only a few respondents have heard and aware of the Child Rights Act. Since only a very low percentage of 21.7% are highly acquainted with the provisions of the law. This is in line with Oshio (2006) that the Child Rights Act goes beyond the general provision to provide specific provisions for the Nigerian child.

This poses a threat to the provision of qualitative education to the Nigerian child so as to bring about the desired positive change in the Nation.

The second finding as shown in table 2 was the fact that the higher the level of education of parents the higher the awareness about Child Right Act and vice-versa. This corroborates with the view of the National Policy on Education NPE (2013) that education is the most important instrument of change and that any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be proceeded by educational revolution.

Conclusion

Education is an important factor to be examined when exploring the knowledge and awareness of Child Right Act. As a result the findings of this study have shown that there is a significant relationship between the two variables in Obanliku Local Government Area of Cross River State. Any society that is aware of the provision of the Child Rights Acts and the consequence of its violation will ensure that children of school age in that community must be in school to acquire the basic free and compulsory education which is the bedrock for fundamental change in the community. It is therefore hoped that if parents are aware of the Child Rights Act, they will ensure that all children must be in school at the appropriate time so as to be found worthy in character and learning for sustainable change and development of communities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

- Parents should be properly enlightened on the Child Right Act through the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and National Orientation Agency (NDA).
- Monitoring teams should be established along side with enforcement agency to ensure proper prosecution of offenders to serve as a deterrent to others.

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- Ambrose B. Anashe**
Benue State University,
Makurdi.
- Julius A. Basake**
Benue State University,
Makurdi.
- and*
- Gani Ishaya Bako**
Benue State University,
Makurdi.