

The Relevance of Karl Marx Theory of Labour to the Development of the Nigerian Child

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Abstract: The most complex and pressing challenge of our time is how to train and develop the power of human capital to ensure that individuals at all stages of life are well equipped to fully realise their potentials and shape their own paths. Child's development is one of the biggest challenges faced by mostly the developing economies such as Nigeria. Child labour, identified to be a world-wide economic problem is seen as a threat to childhood, child's growth and development. Children are considered as the potential future of any economy. This paper therefore examined the effects of child labour on child's education, health and economy. Data used were primarily sourced and a descriptive statistics was employed in finding out the effects of child labour on the children. It was revealed that child labour is majorly caused by poverty resulting from low wages earned by parent and poor quality of life. The consequences of child labour were shown in its adverse educational, health and economic effects. These include teenage pregnancy, body pains, disabilities, social vices, rape, illiteracy, school dropout and in most cases early death. Therefore, the paper recommends the application of Karl Marx theory of labour, especially his view on education to the training, educating and employment of children as varies in age. The government on the other hand can support the non-governmental organisations to strengthen the existing laws on violence against children and also curb activities that foster child labour in Nigeria.

Keywords: Child labour; Capitalism; Exploitation; Economic; Education; Health.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many children under the age of eighteen are working across Nigeria. Many are exposed to long hours of work in dangerous and unhealthy environments, carrying too much responsibility for their age (UNICEF, 2005). Working in these hazardous conditions with little food, small pay, poor or no education and no medical care establishes a cycle of child rights violations. Working children have no time, money or energy to go to school. About six million working children in Nigeria, equally split between boys and girls, do not attend school at all, while one million children are forced to drop out due to poverty or because of parents' demand to contribute to the family income (UNICEF, 2005).

Close to eight million children struggle, to a great extent, to both continue with their education and to use their free time to do menial jobs in order to pay their fees. Due to high demands at work, these children often skip classes. Breaking off the chains of impoverishment and child labour will be unnerving task if children miss out on education. This eventually hinders them from enjoying a higher quality of life and a promising future.

The spectre of small children toiling long hours under dehumanizing conditions have precipitated an intense debate among scholars, policy makers and human right activists over the past two decades. In the middle of the 19th century, industrial revolution, policy makers and the public have attempted to come to grip with the causes and consequences of child labour. Coordination of policy response has revealed the complexity and moral ambiguity of the phenomenon of working children (Bass, 2004). Although child labour has been in existence through history, the difficult conditions under

which children work occasionally has become more evident. In the middle of the 19th century, child labour became more visible because children were forced into industrial work. Currently, child labour has become more visible because of the increase in the number of children producing goods for export in most developing countries due to rapid population growth, high rates of unemployment, inflation, poverty, malnutrition, bad leadership, corruption and low wages (Bass, 2004). Furthermore, globalization which tends to manifest itself in the proliferation of industries in many less developed countries has been cited as a cause of child labour (Cigno and Guarcello, 2002). The United Nations General Assembly, seemingly cognizant of the ills that child labour portends, put together on November 20, 1989, a resolution on the rights of a child, recognized by 198 nations, of which Nigeria was a part of. The United Nations, in a convention organized prior to 1973 by one of its auspices, the International Labour Organization, made a recommendation to member states to adopt a minimum age of employment, which is expected to correlate with the age of primary school graduation. Again in 1999, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted a more comprehensive measure by banning the use of children in what it referred to as the "worst forms" of child labour and stipulating penalties for violation (ILO, 1996). This was attributed to the astronomical level of child abuse practiced in this age. They lost confidence in most parent and most care givers which led to remark, that, when you look into a child's eyes you expect to see hope, trust, and innocence, but these signs of childhood are replaced by betrayal, hunger, fear, and suspicion. The famous author, philosopher and economist, Karl Marx, known for his works on capitalism and socialism, collaborated in 1848 with Friedrich Engels in a publication, *The Communist Manifesto*; later in life, he wrote "*Das Kapital*" (the first volume was published in Berlin in 1867; the second and third volumes, were published retrospectively in 1885 and 1894), which discussed the labour theory of value. He was dissatisfied with the condition of the working class as they were exploited by the capitalist who owns and control the means of production (Marx, 1884). He also frowned at child labour. He saw education as a catalyst to increase production and empowerment tool for the labour force (Marx, 1884). He also struggle for wages to commensurate work done.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the implications of child labour on the Nigerian child
2. To appraise the relevance of Karl Marx theory of labour to the development of the Nigerian child

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the educational and health effects of child labour on the Nigerian Child?
2. What is the economic effect of child labour on economic growth or productivity in Nigeria?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive statistics using a participatory approach. The population of the study was selected from major streets, markets, motor parks, and households. The sampling size was 1,780 child workers contacted from these areas. The interview was limited to households that have at least a child between the ages of 5-18 years. Parents granted permission for the wards to be part of the interview which was organized with a great degree of discretion and confidentiality between both parties.

The instrument used for the collection of data collected was structured questionnaire and in-depth interview. The questionnaire was structured to reflect the research questions. A research assistant helped with respondents that could not read and write. The in-depth interview was recorded with an audio tape recorder. The data collected were analysed using simple percentages and frequency.

THEORICAL FRAMEWORK

Karl Marx was a philosopher, author and economist well-known for his theories about capitalism and socialism, in conjunction with Friedrich Engels, published "*The Communist Manifesto*" in 1848; later in life, he wrote "*Das Kapital*" (the first volume was published in Berlin in 1867; the second and third volumes, were published retrospectively in 1885 and 1894). He was dissatisfied with the condition of the working class as they were exploited by the capitalist who owns and control the means of production (Marx, 1884). He also frowned at child labour. He saw education as a catalyst to increase production and empowerment tool for the labour force (Marx, 1884). Where there is no equitable distribution of

resources, majority of workers (including women and children) are subjected to exploitation by their employers (Marx, 1884). Labour force is subjected to low wages for many hours given to work (Marx, 1884). Marx (1884) distinguishes one class from another on the basis of two criteria: ownership of the means of production and control of the labour power of others. From this, Marx states that "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other".

- I. Capitalists, or bourgeoisie, own the means of production and purchase the labour power of others.
- II. Workers, or proletariat, do not own any means of production or the ability to purchase the labour power of others. Rather, they sell their own labour power.

Class is thus determined by property relations, not by income or status. These factors are determined by distribution and consumption, which mirror the production and power relations of classes. The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journey man, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition with one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes (Marx, 1884). The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, and new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our era, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly faces each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

Marx established conflict as the key driving force of history and the main determinant of social flights. However, in order to understand the nature of "class conflict," we must first understand that such conflict arises from a unified class interest, also known as class consciousness. Class consciousness is an aspect of Marxist theory, referring to the self-awareness of social classes, the capacity to act in its own rational interests, or measuring the extent to which an individual is conscious of the historical tasks their class (or class allegiance) sets for them.

Marx maintained that the development of class conflict were limited to individual factories and capitalists. However, considering the progress of capitalism, the life conditions of bourgeoisie and proletariat gradually became more contrasting. This growing divergence and unification within classes nurtured an atmosphere for individual struggles to become more widespread. When growing class struggle is exhibited at the societal level, class consciousness and collective interests are also increased. Consequently, when class consciousness increases, policies are structured to ensure the duration of such interests for the ruling class. This initiates the use of the struggle for political power and classes become political forces. Considering the fact that the distribution of political power is determined by power over production, or power over capital, it is not surprising that the bourgeois class employs the use of their affluence to legitimize and protect their property and resulting social relations. Thus the ruling class is those who hold the economic power and make the decisions.

MARX OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE FACTORS IN CLASS

For Marx, class has two primary features:

Objective factors:

A class shares a common relationship to the means of production. That is, all people in one class make their living in a common way in terms of ownership of the things that produce social goods. A class may own things, own land, own people, be owned, own nothing but their labour. A class will extract tax, produce agriculture, enslave and work others, be enslaved and work, or work for a wage.

Subjective factors:

Here the members necessarily have some perception of their similarity and common interest. Marx termed this Class consciousness. Class consciousness is not simply an awareness of one's own class interest (for instance, the maximisation of shareholder value; or, the maximization of the wage with the minimization of the working day); class consciousness also embodies deeply shared views of how society should be organized legally, culturally, socially and politically.

3. NIGERIA LABOUR SITUATION

In highlighting the precariousness of employment conditions in Nigeria (Fashoyin, Owoyemi and Chidi, 2012), described non- standard work as being antithetical to ILO's decent work agenda. ILO (1999), the decency of employment lies in how well the employment engenders respect for core international labour standards, the ability of the employment to generate decent and productive employment and finally, how well the employment facilitates social protection and social dialogue. Stuck with the job on account of fear of the unknown or fear of being left in the freezing cold of the unemployment market, the helpless employee accepts the vulnerable, insecure and low paying job with attendant great risks of employment rights abuse and stifling history of lack of job progression and non-existent career path.

The high level of temporary work means they (employees) are often unable to challenge it (Ori and Sargeant, 2013). Under normal circumstances, the workers' union had to stand up and be counted in defence of policies and programmes that are inimical to labour. However, it is becoming increasingly obvious that employers' policy of casualization of employment has stripped unions of the muscle to collectively bargain on behalf of members. Oto (2013), pointed out; that union membership across Africa is experiencing dwindling fortunes hugely on account of skyrocketing unemployment and low prospects of employment. Not only has this effectively broken the resolve of workers to fight for their rights, it has also resulted in trade unionism becoming unattractive to workers who are desperate to keep their jobs. Example is the 300 sacked Airtel workers who underscore the insecurity of jobs in the Nigerian labour market and the unfortunate fate of workers in a Chinese company at Ikorodu, Lagos in 2004 (Fapohunda, 2012).

The account in Oginni indicated that none of the factory workers could escape as the employer at close of work (on the fateful day) locked the doors to the plant and left for home (Adesanya, 2013). Workers who had no route of escape were burnt to death. Evans and Gibbs (2009), the effects of the growth of hazardous work are clear: besides the loss of protection and increase in employment insecurity, workers in precarious employment lose influence, individually and collectively, over working conditions, the pace of work and wages. Precarious work also affects individuals outside the world of work. It creates insecurity and leads to increases in inequality and poverty. Uncertainty about the future of employment and earnings affects a range of family decisions from whether to start a family, enrol in higher education, or attend training courses.

Fapohunda (2012), casualization of employment in Nigeria is growing at an alarming speed. The reality that casual workers are subjected to lower pay, striped from their right to join union, and denied medical and other benefits make it imperative that the phenomenon should be seriously checked and if possible be completely obliterated from the Nigerian employment system (Fapohunda, 2012).

One outstanding challenge facing trade unionism in developing countries as well as Nigeria is "labour casualization". Labour casualization depicts the process whereby workers in an organization are casual, temporary, seasonal, contract or part-time employees with little or no legal provisions.

Labour casualization is a function of incredible changes in the world of work- from a labour –management relationship to a commercial-employment relationship- with the workers taking the greater portion of the risks of engagement (Noon and Blyton, 2002; Statt, 2004). The history of work since the feudal society to the capitalist society, with the exemption of prehistory societies, is the history of exploitation, subjugation and oppression. This posture, according to Marx (1978), Weber (1947) and many other prehistoric scholars can be implied as marking the beginning of struggle between employers and the employees (Carris and Malloch, 2006). Marx' assumption on class struggle is relevant to Nigeria employment situation. There is need to foster workers' satisfaction and workers' right against employers' exploitation led to the formation of trade union-a voluntary organization of workers which aims to protect and promote the socio-economic interest of its members through collective bargaining with employers.

Further review of literature revealed that some factors are accountable for the stretch of labour casualization across workplaces, societies and regions of the world. These factors include; increasing desperation of employers to cut-down organizational cost and increase capital mobility (Kalleberg, 1999; Basso, 2003; Anugwon, 2007; Okafor, 2011; Fapohunda, 2012), inability to bring effective regulations to fill the loopholes of the globalizing economy (Okafor, 2007; Kalleberg, 1999), intention of the employees to combine work with study or family responsibilities-moonlighting, unemployment and poverty rate (Okafor, 2012; Fapohunda, 2012; Bamidele, 2010).

4. MARX DISCUSSED FOUR MAIN DIMENSIONS TO ALIENATION

Firstly, there is alienation from the object of production. In what we now call the capitalist mode of production, “The object that labour produces, its product, confronts [the worker] as an alien being, as a power independent of the producer,” under these conditions this realization of labour appears as a loss of reality for the worker (Szelényi, 2009). This is the situation that most people find themselves in Nigeria. As soon as the product is produced, it is taken away from the worker. Wolff (2011), the main point that Marx is driving at here is not that the goods rightfully belong to the worker, but rather that the product of the worker’s labour comes to be regarded on an equivalence with the worker himself. “The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more goods he creates. The devaluation of the human world increases in direct relation with the increase in value of the world of things” (Wolff, 2003). Essentially, under capitalism, the worker becomes assimilated to the commodity he produces, and is objectified.

The second aspect to estranged labour is hostility from the act of production; since labour is external to the worker in that it does not belong to his intrinsic nature (Wolff, 2003). He does not affirm himself, but rather deny himself. Many feel, even today that life begins when work ends and this is exactly Marx’s point. Wolff (2011), also makes the point that labour is not voluntary, but forced; undoubtedly not in a legal sense; but if one does not wish to starve, then one needs to work. “His labour is not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague.” Work is no longer an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. Marx also makes the point that, in the process of production, the worker’s actions are not his own, in the sense that he is being directed by others, “in it, he belongs not to himself, but to another” (Marx, 1975). The worker is not really dictating his own actions as he naturally would, but is directed by his superior.

Thirdly, the worker is separated from his ‘species-being or what makes us human and distinct from animals. In the capitalist mode of production, humans produce blindly and not in accordance to their truly human powers. “Estranged labour turns thus species being, both nature and his spiritual species property, into a being alien to him. It estranges from man his human aspect” (Marx, 1975). He stated that it is work that makes us human, working to transform the material world around us to meet our human needs, with a plan. It is the fact that we have a plan, we know what we want from life that means that labour is not meaningless. However, Marx sees the capitalist mode of production as alienating labour; we are working, but we are not utilizing our human powers to our own ends, rather to the ends of the bourgeois.

The fourth facet of alienation is our communal nature and co-operation with our fellow man. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations. Alienation from our fellow man, arises because we do not appreciate our ‘species-life’ for what it is, whether or not we explicitly recognise it, human beings exist as a community and what makes human life possible is our mutual interdependence. Rather than conceiving of ourselves as members of a vast scheme of co-operation, we tend to think of ourselves as people who go to work to earn money, and then go to shops to spend it. Marx wanted our institutions to acknowledge our communal essence somehow, but capitalist institutions fell short of this, offering only a false sense of community.

Analysis of labour market outcomes suggests that apart from social stratification (such as age, sex and level of education) location tends to play a major role in differences in earnings among people (Hsueh and Tienda, 1995). Thus, individuals tend to participate in a geographically limited labour market, with boundaries quite often determined by proximity to residence. This is the basis of the postulate of the “dualistic” structure of labour market in developing countries, typified by division into “urban” and “rural” labour markets.

5. INEVITABILITY OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Marx assumes the inevitability of the revolution of capitalist society into socialist society because of the dissatisfaction of the working class. The socialization of labour, in the growth of large-scale production, capitalist interest groups and organizations, as well as in the enormous increase in the dimensions and power of finance capital provides the principal material foundation for the unavoidable arrival of socialism (Marx, 1975). The physical, intellectual and moral perpetrator of this transformation is the proletariat. The proletariat’s struggle against the bourgeoisie inevitably becomes a political struggle with the goal of political conquest by the proletariat. With the domination of the proletariat, the socialization of production cannot help but lead to the means of production to become the property of society (Marx, 1975). The direct consequences of this transformation are a tremendous rise in labour productivity, a shorter working day, and the

replacement of small-scale unified production by collective and improved labour. He also extended this redistribution to the structure of power in families. Marx imagined that with socialism women's status would increase, leading to the break-up of the patriarchal family.

6. CHILD LABOUR IN NIGERIA

Any work that a person engages at full-time at too early an age and works too many hours or when the work puts excessive physical, social and psychological strains on the person and hampers the person's social, physical and psychological development is considered as child labour (UNICEF 2006; ILO, 1992).

Child Labour involves time and energy commitment which affects children's ability to participate in leisure, play and educational activities. Child labour is work which impairs the health and development of children.

"Children work in backward regions of the economy where unemployment is highest and poverty most severe. In these circumstances children work to alleviate their family's hardship" (Lavalette, 1994).

About fifteen million children under the age of eighteen are working across Nigeria. Many are exposed to long hours of work in dangerous and unhealthy environments, carrying too much responsibility for their age (UNICEF, 2005). Working in these unsafe conditions with no education or medical care, little food and small pay creates a cycle of child rights violations.

Traditionally, children have worked with their families, learning skills they would need as adults, but today children are forced to work for their own and their family's survival (UNICEF, 2005). Poor families' income has become significantly made up of money earned by a child family member.

Working children have no time, money or energy to go to school. About six million working children in Nigeria, equally split between boys and girls, do not attend school at all, while one million children are forced to drop out due to poverty or because of parents' demand to contribute to the family income (UNICEF, 2005).

Close to eight million children struggle, to a great extent, to both continue with their education and to use their free time to do menial jobs in order to pay their fees. Due to high demands at work, these children often skip classes, fail their exams and consequently repeat classes. Breaking off the chains of impoverishment and child labour will be scary task if children miss out on education. This eventually hinders them from enjoying a higher quality of life and a promising future.

7. THREAT TO CHILDHOOD

In Nigeria, child labour mostly occurs in a semi-formal and informal business with hundreds of thousands of young domestic servants, mainly working for prosperous urban families (UNICEF, 2005). Domestic servants are the least visible category and often sexually harassed. Generally, precarious works in quarries, private households, fields and on the streets expose children to abuse and exploitation and pose severe threats to their health and development.

"The world of work (employers and other unscrupulous people) seems to pull children because they are very cheap and obedient, can be easily exploited, do certain things more efficiently and effectively which adults fail to do" (Herath and Sharma, 2007). The Soviet educational theorists who contributed significantly in the initial formation of the Soviet educational system, were to a lesser or greater extent motivated by the ideas of Marxism.

This shows that some businesses are not socially responsible and breaching the acts provided to protect the children from exploitation, and therefore should follow the steps to correct their actions. This could be what Karl Marx proposed in the communist manifesto. His view was simple, that all companies should abolish child labour and children should be entitled to have free education and by following and providing this, it would help offset the business's image as child employers to an image of socially and ethically responsible.

Additionally he advocated that the company should take care when sub-contracting to make sure that no child labour is associated with them and not just within its own business.

8. RESULTS OF FINDINGS

The data on table 1 show the age categories of the children within the sample size in percentages as shown below. 10% (182) children are between the ages of 5-7 years, 14% (248) are 8-10 years old, 21% (380) are between 11-13 years, 26% (462) are 14-16 years, and 29% (508) are 17-18 years.

Table 1: Sample Size and Age Rate

S/N	Age	Sample Size	Percentage
1	5-7	182	10
2	8-10	248	14
3	11-13	380	21
4	14-16	462	26
5	17-18	508	29
	Total	1780	100

Table 2: Reasons for child labour

S/N	Reasons for child labour	Sample Size	Percentage
1	To make a living	218	12
2	I have no one to help	224	13
3	That's the only option for survival	306	17
4	My parent are poor	380	21
5	Out of compulsion	230	13
6	It is the trend in the society	162	9
7	To pay my school fees	260	15
	Total	1780	100

The data on table 2 indicates that 21% representing 380 children work due to poverty. 13% (224) respondents do child labour due to lack of help, 17% (306) work because it is the only option for survival, 12% (218) children work to make a living, 13% (230) work out of compulsion, 9% (162) are engaged to child labour because it is the societal trend while 15% (260) work to pay their school fees.

Table 3: Educational effects of child labour

S/N	Educational effects of child labour	Sample Size	Percentage
1	I miss classes	218	12
2	Sleeping in the class	224	13
3	Attend afternoon school	306	17
4	I do not have time to read	380	21
5	I dropped out of school	230	13
6	I cannot read nor write	162	9
7	I repeat classes	260	15
	Total	1780	100

The data on Table 3 revealed that the most severe educational effect of child labour on children as shown below. This is the group of children who do not have time to read, with 21% (380) children affected. The second categories are the children who attend afternoon school, which are 306 (17%). The third in rank is 15% (260) children who do not have time to read or do home studies. The fourth constitutes the sleeping in the class and the drop out of school with equal percentages of 13% (224) and (230) respectively. Second to the last in severity are those who miss class whenever they have worked to do. They constitute 12% (218) of the respondents. The last constitute 9% (162) respondents who cannot read nor write.

Table 4: Economic effects of child labour

S/N	Economic effects of child labour	Sample Size	Percentage
1	High mortality rate	218	12
2	Increased level of illiteracy	224	13
3	Increased level of social vices	306	17
4	Adverse health effects	380	21
5	Effects of disabilities	230	13
6	Child abuse	162	9
7	Low productivity	260	15
	Total	1780	100

The data on table 4 clearly show that 21% (380) children are faced with adverse health effect, 17% (306) involved in high level of social vices, and 15% (260) and their inputs are basically low resulting to low level of productivity. There is also the effect of disabilities which captured about 13%. If these children constantly miss classes, it will affect their performances; some would therefore have no option than to drop out of school. The economic effects are that the number of illiteracy will be progressively high and productivity will be low.

9. DISCUSSION

The research findings depict that child labour increase with age. For instance, the higher the age of a child, the more strength he/she develops and the higher the rate of labour as shown on table one. The data on table one indicated that child labour activities increase as the age of the children increases. This is because those children are used for different type of labour such as hawking, house helps, agriculture, in some cases robbery and begging. The most prevalent are house help and street hawking business which exposes the children to all forms of social vices.

The data on table 2 showed that children engage in child labour due to poverty, no one to help them, which makes it the only means for them to make a living and survive. And that has become the societal trend. Therefore, poverty being a major factor in child labour supports the UNICEF findings that poverty is the major cause of child labour in Nigeria. The data on table 3 identified hawking, begging, working in agricultural sites, quarries, hotels, carrying of loads and domestic services as magnitudes of child labour. Many of these children are also abused morally, mentally, psychologically, physically and sexually.

The data on table 4 reveals the economic effects of child labour on the child labourers. Findings revealed that 12% of the children (218) die prematurely from hunger, dangerous task and excessive beaten from their task masters. The data also show high level of social vices resulting from child labour activities that threatens the peace of the society. Some of these children end up becoming armed robbers as many of them grow up on the street. Research indicated 9% (162) of the child workers are exposed to all forms of child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse and societal abuse. The findings also showed that 13% representing 230 respondents usually become disabled, especially for children who work in factories and quarries. The overall adverse economic effect is increasingly rate of illiteracy which affects the level of productivity, resulting to poor economic growth and development of any of such society.

An economy cannot be progressive and growing if the number of enrolment and opportunity to school is low, if the future active population are demoralised, disabled and some instances die premature. Beggars as a matter of fact are usually exposed to bad weather without providing any form of warm for them. From such environment they contract ailments like cough and pneumonia. Educationally, every child labourer has one academic problem or the other ranging from children who attend school in the afternoon because they need to be at the shop or go the farm in the morning, to those who attend morning school and switch over to business or work immediately they come back from school, to those who do not attend school at all. This is very serious and disheartening. UNICEF has been fighting for children's education all over the world including Nigeria. Studies by UNICEF Nigeria [36] indicate that child labour is a serious threat to children's education and economic development.

THE RELEVANCE OF MARX AND ENGELS' WORKERS' EDUCATION TO THE NIGERIAN CHILD

Marx and Engels linked the radical reform of education to the need to educate workers to be able to manage the productive forces of industrial capitalism is very relevant to Nigeria economy. The appropriation of these forces is itself nothing more than the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves (Marx et al, 1976).

The education of the Nigerian youth is perceived as a multi-faceted development of competencies which will allow them as future workers to outdo the enslaving division of labour in order to manage the system of production as a whole.

Education empowers young people quickly to go through the whole system of production, it also enable them to pass from one branch of industry to another according to the needs of society or their own inclinations. Thus the communist organization of society will give its members the chance of an all-round exercise of abilities that have received all-round development (Engels, 1976).

It is a fact that the references of Marx and Engels to the education in a socialist society are especially scarce. In a brief statement in the first volume of the Capital, Marx claims that the education of the future; will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings (Marx, 1976).

Marx therefore proposes the organization of labour for the working class children of his era, as follows:

We have only to deal with the children and young persons of both sexes divided into three classes, to be treated differently; the first class to range from 9 to 12; the second, from 13 to 15 years; and the third, to comprise the ages of 16 and 17 years. We propose that the employment of the first class in any workshop or housework be legally restricted to two; that of the second, to four; and that of the third, to six hours. For the third class, there must be a break of at least one hour for meals or relaxation (Marx, 1975).

Marx distinguishes three essential aspects for children's education: mental education, bodily education, "such as is given in schools of gymnastics, and by military exercise" and technological training which "imparts the general principles of all processes of production, and, simultaneously initiates the child and young person in the practical use and handling of the elementary instruments of all trades" (Marx, 1975).

Marx proposed that the labour movement in the capitalist society should call for the significant improvement of working class children's education, stating that the combination of paid productive labour, mental education, bodily socialism, labour and Education.

Marx refers to working class children education as a type of labourer who represents mainly a manual worker, a machine or manual tools operator. Moreover, Marx includes actual work experience in children's education, considering it indispensable, in conditions of big industry. "A general prohibition of child labour is incompatible with the existence of large-scale industry and hence an empty, pious wish" (Marx, 1975).

Marx of course has in mind the first stages of the industrial revolution, when child labour in unskilled positions was extensive and self-evident. Thus, in conditions where the type of manual worker as direct producer prevailed, Marx believed that the combination of the self-evident participation of children in the productive process with the polytechnic education and the school education would provide the working class the skills necessary for its emancipation and management of the social means of production.

That is why he states that "an early combination of productive labour with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present-day society" (Marx, 1975).

However, his position in labour process is taken over by the labour of highly specialized employees, whose formation requires long-term education, systematic acquisition of scientific knowledge and cultivation of intellectual abilities.

10. CONCLUSION

Karl Marx theory of labour no doubt is applicable to the Nigerian economy to contest against the precarious state and condition of the Nigerian working class, the high rate of exploitations, unpaid and low wage rate that encourages child labour. A worker or employee needs to be paid wage that commensurate value of work done under a favourable condition. If the family of the working class could provide for their children from the reward of their labour, it will limit the rate to which children are given out to the street, extended families, factories for upbringing. Also, every Nigerian child needs education and training or skills to equip them against capitalism or the exploitation activities of the bourgeois. If action is not taken quickly to curb exploitation, increase the minimum wage rate and end child labour in Nigeria, there might be economic revolution in the near future between the bourgeois and the working class. Also, the future of the Nigerian child might be at great risk. Therefore, the paper recommends the application of Karl Marx theory of labour, especially his view on education to the training, educating and employment of children as varies in age. The government on its part can strengthen the existing laws on violence against children and child labour to curb activities that foster child labour in Nigeria. Every child beyond Nigeria should be given a desirable and equal opportunity to fully enjoy childhood, go to school, be educated, acquire relevant skills and live life with no regret.

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