STREET CHILDREN AND ACCESSING UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this mini-thesis, entitled *Street children and accessing universal basic education: A case study of Enugu State, Nigeria,* is my own work and that I have not previously submitted it at any university for a degree or examination. All sources that I have quoted have been indicated and duly acknowledged by means of referencing.

Emmanuel Ogbonna Ogbuabo

Signature:

December 2021

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the street children globally.

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of street children presents a global challenge as it continues to increase and affects almost every nation. Nigeria is no exception, with an ever-increasing population of street children, with many of them as a result of insurgence attacks in various states in Nigeria. The Nigerian government acknowledges that education is a key to development and a great tool in changing the dynamics of street children. It further recognises education as a right and not a privilege, especially with Nigeria's adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the passage into law of the Child's Right Act of 2003. The importance of basic education, which serves as the foundation of the education system, cannot be over-emphasised, particularly since the government made free basic education one of the core mandates of the Universal Basic Education Board. However, the continuous loitering of children during school hours has led to questions being asked about the implementation of the free basic education programme.

Using Enugu State as a case study, and applying the right-based approach, this study sought to find answers to why street children might not be accessing the free basic education. The phenomenon of street children not accessing this education, is contributing to their ever-growing numbers in the streets of Nigeria. This is a qualitative study that was conducted in Enugu, Nigeria. It used the purposive sampling technique, targeting children living on the streets, as well as policy makers, programme officers of the Universal Basic Education Board, administrative heads of basic education schools, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community-based organisations (CBOs) working in areas relating to street children. The study used qualitative data collection methods comprising of focus group discussion and in-depth interviews. The data collected was analysed using NVIVO Qualitative Research Software. The study sought to identify the challenges and make recommendations to relevant stakeholders, to improve policy implementation, and to present specific recommendations to ensure better access for street children and other vulnerable groups to benefit from policies such as the Universal Basic Education policy.

It is discovered that many street children will love to go to school but other factors such as poverty, poor implementation of the free education policy among others have kept these children out of school. These children aspire to be teachers, doctors, accountants, lawyers and business administrators and wish they can be sponsored or given free education.

Keywords:

children, street children, education, Universal Basic Education, child's right, children of the street,

children on the street, streetism

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ACRONYMS

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRA	Child's Right Act
ACRWC	The Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UBE	Universal Basic Education
ECCDE	Early Childhood Care and Development Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
EFA	Education for All
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences.
HSSRC	Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
ANPPCAN	African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of street children, also known as children in street situations, has multiple facets with interrelating consequences, making it very difficult to identify a single cause that can provide a blanket explanation for the phenomenon. The dynamics in local contexts are determined by the different combinations of economic, social and political factors at play. The issue of street children is a major human development problem faced globally (Nouri & Karimi, 2019). It is becoming alarming as the number of street children is on the increase globally. It is estimated that about one hundred million children are growing up on urban streets globally (John et al., 2019). It is difficult to know the actual number of children in street situations. Street children are a global concern especially with the ever-increasing number and the challenges they pose around the security and development of every nation (Milne, 2015). They also play a great role in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of every nation if their issues are properly addressed.

Street children have been described as children in difficult circumstances and researchers have categorised them as 'children of the street' and 'children on the street' (Alem & Laha, 2016; Ap & Tsoka-Gwegweni, 2015). 'Children of the street' are children who are fully living on the streets and not in contact with their parents or guardians. On the other hand, 'children on the street' are children who spend the day on the street but go back home most nights to sleep (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2014). Various factors have contributed to causing children to migrate to the streets, such as poverty and economic reasons, emotional abuse, battery, and physical and mental abuse (Lakshmana, 2019). The challenge remains today on how to tackle the menace of street children. What is the way forward? If the various factors leading to children migrating to the street are not tackled, achieving the sustainable development goal will remain a mirage.

A major cause of streetism in children in Nigeria is the lack of access to basic education, poverty, unemployment and the harsh effects of structural adjustment programmes (Abari & Audu, 2013). To bridge this gap, many states have adopted policies that promote free education. One of these policies is Nigeria's Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme, commissioned in 1999, which promotes free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age as one of the mandates (Gabriel, 2013). How are these education programmes being implemented? How accessible have these programmes made education obtainable to those children in street situations? within this context, this study is interested to establish how education programmes adopted by the national government are

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implemented. It also seeks to establish whether access to universal education programmes has enabled children in street situations to change their livelihoods.

Education remains a key social component and process in capacity building and the maintenance of society (Faegerlind & Saha, 2016). It remains a key variable in the development strategy of every nation. Education is a weapon for acquiring knowledge, skills and habits for survival in an ever-changing world. It remains a key via which the challenges of children in street situations will be defeated.

In the following sections of this chapter, this study presents the background and contextualization of the study and sheds light on the problem statement and the area of the study. Other sections show the aim and objectives of the study and the research questions. The final section presents the structure of the thesis and conclusion of the chapter.

1.2 Background Contextualization

Nigeria is a country richly blessed with human and natural resources. It boasts of being the most populous black nation in the world with over 160 million people as at the last population census in 2006 (Amao & Okeke-Uzodike, 2015). Nigeria has an under-18-years' population of over 75 million and more than 60% of these 75 million children are living in poverty (De Milliano & Plavgo, 2018). Research shows that over 15% of the total Nigerian children are not in school or acquiring education with about 12 million children between the ages of 10–14 years forced into domestic enslavement (Okeshola & Adenugba, 2018).

The Federal Government of Nigeria promulgated the Child Rights Act (CRA) in 2003 and there are many programmes emerging in addition to previous programmes, benefitting children of which the street child is a part (Owolabi, 2017). These programmes include the provision of support in the area of feeding, clothing, housing, medical care and education. These events were meant to raise significant development in alleviating the phenomenon of street children and related challenges in the country. There are also some government agencies as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs) working to support the street children in various areas in Nigeria. Despite all these efforts, the problem of street children seems to be expanding unabated while it is becoming a permanent feature of Nigerian societies. This challenge has led to various scholars conducting studies to investigate the causes of the increase in the number of the street children population; how street children cope on the street; street children's network of support in Nigeria; and street children's attitudes to available support (Owolabi, 2017).

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However, there has not been any effort to assess if street children actually benefit from the various provisions, like the government's Universal Basic Education policy.

In Nigeria, the number of children being displaced from their homes due to terrorist attacks, by groups such as "boko haram" in the North-East of Nigeria, and by the "killer herdsmen" in the North-Central and North West regions of Nigeria is rising astronomically (Nwagboso, 2018). Over 17.5 million children can be categorised as orphans and vulnerable (Nwagboso, 2018). Large numbers of children, including some as young as five, flee poverty, abuse and family breakdown, and end up on the streets. Children living and working on the streets are more prone to illnesses, malnourishment, accidents, drug abuse, arrest, harassment and trafficking (Cumber & Tsoka-Gwegweni, 2015). The Nigerian Forum on Rehabilitation of Street Children, an NGO, recently claimed that no fewer than 13 million children across the country live and survive on the streets.

In Lagos State alone, it is estimated that there are more than 100,000 children living on the streets. It is furthermore disturbing to learn that many more children are living 'in' the streets (Aransiola & Agunbiade, 2009). Many of these street children end up in prisons without charge just to keep them off the streets, without anyone to advocate for them, and being further brutalised and exploited (Aransiola & Agunbiade, 2009). Children end up on the streets of the former Nigerian capital and other cities for a range of reasons, from being abandoned by parents who cannot afford to keep them, to family breakdown, violence and abuse. More than 1.2 million Nigerian children have lost parents due to AIDS and resultantly have to fend for themselves when extended family members are not prepared to commit to their care (Joseph et al., 2017).

1.3 Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria

Universal Basic Education (UBE) was introduced in Nigeria by the Federal Government in 1999. It is a programme bestowed with providing free basic education for all Nigerian citizens. The UBE programme replaced other failed educational programmes, like the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme of 1976, the National Policy on Education of 1977, which was renewed in 1981 and 1990. The goal of the UBE programme is providing free, universal and compulsory basic education for all Nigerian children (Abubakar et al., 2018).

Due to the absence of the required legal backing, the UBE programme, which was initiated in 1999 only toko off in 2004 after the Universal Basic Education Act was signed into law. The UBE programme targets children between the ages of 3 to 5 years for 'Early Childhood Care and Development Education (ECCDE)', children aged 6 to 11 years for primary education, and children

aged 12 to 14 years for junior secondary school education. The UBE Act also makes provision for penalties for parents who fail to comply with the Act (Alam & Wajidi, 2014; Ayara et al., 2013).

Compliance with the UBE Act has been met with challenges, which has hindered progress in actualising 'education for all'. With regards to the Act, on the relevance of the school curriculum to the society, researchers like Abubakar et al. (2018) expressed fears due to the growing rate of poverty, which is also an indicator of challenges in the system. Suggestions have been made that for the aim of the programme to be achieved, it should be structured in such a way that, each person will be equipped to carry out some life role. Such roles include individual role, citizen role, producer role, family member role and national role. Abubakar et al. (2018) opine that where material and human resources are concerned, the Universal Basic Education programme will succeed only if adequate provisions are made to produce sufficient qualified teachers and that teachers should be adequately acknowledged in the domain of their expertise.

The UBE programme was set up to ensure that the challenge of illiteracy is alleviated or eradicated in Nigeria. In this regard, it begs the question why the number of children on the streets during school hours is on the increase. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Education for All (EFA) development index, Nigeria has recorded slight progress in basic education since the advent of the UBE programme. However, a lot more needs to be done especially in areas of quality and quantity.

1.4 Case Study Area

The city of Enugu is located in one of the 36 states of Nigeria and is the capital of Enugu State in the Eastern part of Nigeria (Williams, 2019). Enugu State was created in August of 1991 when Nigeria was divided into 30 states from its previous 21 by the then Head of State, General Ibrahim Babamosi Babaginda. It covers an area of 7,161 square kilometres and is known for its hilly nature, which led to its name – 'Enugu' means on top of the hill. Enugu State has a population of 3,267,837 based on the 2006 population census; however, researchers like Okoli and Cree (2012) are of the view that the population of Enugu State is over 5,000,000 people. The National Population Commission of Nigeria projected that the population of Enugu State will be 4,411,119 in 2016 and the population of Enugu metropolis will by 2016 be 919,367.

Enugu metropolis is estimated to have a population of 722,664 based on Nigeria's last population census held in 2006 (Ehiemere, et al., 2017). Ehiemere et al. (2017) identified the rising number of street children in Enugu as part of the development challenges facing Enugu. They posit that the health

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and education of the street children holds a key to improvement and capacity building for the children who will in turn contribute to the development of the city of Enugu.

As at 2017, the population of Enugu metropolis, which comprises of parts of three out of the seventeen Local Government Areas of Enugu State namely; Enugu East Local Government Area, Enugu North Local Government Area and Enugu South Local Government Area, was estimated to be 967,500 (Uzochukwu et al., 2017). Enugu State is one of the 22 states in Nigeria that has adopted and passed into law the Child Rights Act (CRA). It is a state that has policies that make provision for free basic education in Nigeria. Historically, Enugu is regarded as the capital of Igboland and has prominent Nigerian politicians of Igbo extraction setting up their residences there. The predominant languages in the state are Igbo and English and English is the language of instruction in schools.
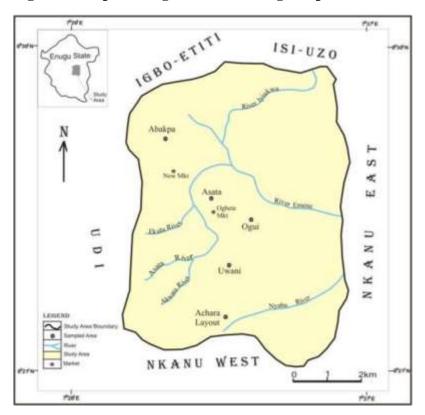
Figure 1: Map of Enugu urban showing sample area

Source: Adapted from Map of Enugu Urban: Ministry of Land and Survey, Enugu, 2015:23

1.5 Problem Statement, Aim, Objectives and Research Questions

1.5.1 Problem statement

Despite the increase in the research on street children, data concerning their access to education is very limited and seem to be unavailable. Most research concerning street children is centred on causes and factors that led children to migrate to the streets, health challenges of street children and perceptions about street children (Rahman et al., 2015). However, some scholars have looked into some issues concerning street children and education (see Jamiludin et al., 2018; Kisirkoi & Mse, 2016), but these studies do not focus on assessing free basic education policy implementation as it concerns street and vulnerable children. Research to find out and assess if and how street children are benefitting from the implementation of the free basic education programme in Enugu State, Nigeria has however yielded no results – a clear indication that this research is not available, has not been documented, or is yet to be carried out.

Education is a basic need of a child's development (Jamiludin et al., 2018) and as such a right not only as promulgated by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UN, 1989) and the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (AU, 1990), but also enshrined in the Nigeria Child Rights Act of 2003 (FRN, 2003) and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Policy (FRN, 2004) as well as other policies enacted by the state government. It is paramount that concise efforts are put in place to foresee that children in street situations access the free basic education so that they will be able to realise and efficiently utilise their potentials (Dinbabo, 2013). In so doing, they will be able to contribute to community, state and national development.

Persistent shortcomings in the planning and implementation of policies and programmes, especially as they concern children, show that adequate plans and efforts may not be in place for such policies to benefit everyone. Invariably, vulnerable groups are left uncared for. This in turn leads to social problems and burdens to development organisations. Street children fall into this category of the vulnerable people who seem to be excluded in the provisions of policies (Jamiludin et al., 2018). The presence of street children shows that there is a decline in the enrolment of children in schools and also an increase in the number of school drop-outs (Abari & Audu, 2013). For development to be attained and for a significant reduction in the number of street children, it is important to invest in the education of vulnerable children for them to become productive citizens. Education is a key to building a favourable future and eradicating streetism in children, to ensure that they do not become deviants and pose a challenge to the society during their youthful and adult stages in life.

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Despite the provision for basic education in Enugu State, Nigeria, there seems to be an increase in the number of children out on the street during school hours. A walk through the motor parks/garages and areas around the major markets in Enugu metropolis, presents a disturbing sight of an overwhelming number of school-age children who are on the street fighting for survival through various means instead of being in school.

Within this context, this study assessed the implementation of the free education programme in Enugu State, Nigeria, to establish if and how street children were benefitting from this crucial programme and to determine ways of improving access to free basic education for street children. This study investigated the barriers preventing street children from accessing free basic education – a right to which they are entitled. This study questioned why these children are on the streets instead of in school, since basic education is free.

1.5.2 Aim of the study

This study aimed to evaluate the role of government in the provision of basic education to street children and to identify the areas of strength and weakness in order to recommend means of improvement.

1.5.3 Objectives of the study

1. To examine the literature on street children, and build a conceptual framework for the study.

2. To identify the impediments of street children's access to free basic education.

3. To assess the effectiveness of the various policies on free basic education in Nigeria.

4. To make recommendations to the government and civil society organisations working in the street children's sector.

1.5.4. Research questions

This study sought to answer the following questions

1. What inhibits street children from benefitting from free basic education programmes in Enugu State, Nigeria?

2. What are street children's perceptions about accessing basic education?

3. What are the roles of the relevant stakeholders in addressing the challenges of street children in accessing universal basic education?

1.6 Rationale and Significance of the Study

The place of children in the development and future of a nation cannot be overemphasised. As such, it is anticipated that this study will bring to the knowledge and awareness of various stakeholders, the gaps in the implementation of Universal Basic Education programme, especially as it concerns the exclusion of street children. This study will also help in enabling street children to access education where it is provided and improve their life conditions. This study will further enlighten street children on the importance of education and the role it plays in creating an enabling platform to provide them with better future opportunities. The facts that this study will unearth will serve as a guide to subsequent child development policies and help reduce the rate at which children migrate to the street.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This research was planned and written in six chapters. Each chapter covered a specific focus and is framed by an introduction and a conclusion. The chapters are detailed and focus on street children's challenges in accessing and benefitting from their educational rights as provided by various national policies and global conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC); Nigeria's Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2003; and Nigeria's Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004.

Chapter one is the introductory chapter and highlights the background to the study, the research problem and questions, study aims and objectives as well as the approach that the study embraces. This chapter brings to the fore the problem of street children and how it is a challenge for street children to access universal basic education in Nigeria. The chapter also houses the introduction to the case study area, including a clear outline of the demography of the area.

Chapter two houses the literature review, taking into consideration what has been written on the subject. This chapter elaborates on the perceptions about street children, their populations, and gender distribution as captured in other literary sources. Other issues addressed in this chapter include the fundamental rights of a child, the problems of street children, what pushes children to the streets, and

the categories of street children.

Chapter three holds the theoretical and conceptual framework. This chapter provides an exposition of the Human Right-Based Approach, and the Social Exclusion Theory in relation to street children, as it concerns access to basic education.

Chapter four covers the methodology, sampling size and sampling technique of the study as well as the means of data collection. This chapter explains qualitative data collection techniques, such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. It highlights sampling techniques, as the means of data analysis.

Chapter five will cover data presentation and analysis of the findings and the discussion of the findings.

Chapter six will show the study conclusion, recommendations and suggestions on the subject matter of the research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review has the goal of situating the study within the larger frame of literature on street children. The process of this review comprises discussion on conceptualizations of street children by different intellectuals. The literature review presents diverse perceptions and views concerning street children, including categorisation of street children and their problems. Other issues covered in the review include the fundamental rights of a child, barriers to educating street children, and the challenge in knowing the actual population of street children. Generally, this literature review is conducted to pinpoint gaps not covered in the existing literature, empirical evidence and academic arguments on the education of street children, in order to determine ways in which this study can meaningfully contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding street children.

2.2 Definition of Terms and Concepts

Children

Children are people below the age of 18 years. Children are males or females but younger than 18 years. The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 1) and the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 2) unanimously set 18 years as the benchmark for children. Both documents state that a child is any human being below the age of 18. However, this age might differ from one country to another.

Street children

Dladla and Ogina (2018) draw on the UNICEF definition of street children, when they define a street child as "any boy or girl for whom the street has become their habitat and source of livelihood with insufficient support and supervision from adult caregivers". In other words, street children are individuals who are younger than 18 years of age, for whom the street (in the broadest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become their habitual abode and source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults (Dladla & Ogina, 2018).

Education

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits (Mampane et al., 2018). Education is the wise, hopeful and respectful cultivation of learning

undertaken in the belief that all should have the chance to share in life.

Basic education

A basic education is an evolving programme of instruction that is intended to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens, to contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore and understand different perspectives, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives (Staeheli & Hammet, 2013). In Nigeria, basic education constitutes nine years of formal education, comprising of six years of primary school education and three years of junior secondary school education (Salihu & Jamil, 2015).

2.3 Perceptions about Street Children

Globally, the street children phenomenon is on the increase at an alarming rate (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2014). These children in street situations are faced with or are running away from issues such as maltreatment, exploitation, and exclusion and even getting maimed and killed (Alem & Laha, 2016). According to Heinze (2018:34), street children as the offspring of the complex contemporary urban environment, represent one of our most serious global challenges.

Globally, the record of the number of street children varies and for more than two decades, most researchers and scholars have estimated the population of street children to be between 100 million and 150 million (Salihu, 2019:3; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2018). This number of street children has also been forecasted as far back as in 2004 to increase dramatically to over 800 million by 2020 (UNICEF, 2016). Presently, there is virtually no major city in the world without street children, especially in developing nations.

The street children's problem is a global one. It affects both males and females and is not limited to developing and underdeveloped countries (Kisirkoi & Mse, 2016). Even if the most developed nations decide to claim that they do not have street children, studies carried out in previous years prove otherwise. Among 31 nations studied by the Council of Europe Study Group on Street Children, only San Marino, Cyprus, and Liechtenstein showed a lack of street children (Benitez, 2011). The study group also projected that the street children phenomenon in Europe will become more visible over the years as the street children situation keeps deteriorating. In Latin America, street children are common features of urban areas. These children in street situations are regarded with a fusion of pity and dread. These children are continuously becoming targets of violence and murder (Seidel et al., 2018).

In nations such as Hungary and Poland, there are children who live in desolate buildings, railway stations and cellars. Some scholars argue that the collapse of the Soviet Union, which caused an economic crisis, played a major role in the emergence of street children in former socialist nations (Ewelukwa, 2014). In other words, they are of the view that children were well provided for and protected during the Soviet Union era and that capitalism contributed immensely to the emergence of street children.

Most scholars attribute the rise of street children phenomenon to economic and poverty factors. However, Harnani et al. (2018) maintain that the contribution of HIV/AIDS, civil unrest and complete breakdown of the extended family system cannot be overlooked especially in developing nations and in Africa as a whole. The characteristics of street children remain the same globally. These are children with little or no contact with family, without adult care, and their peer group is their most important support structure. Their basic needs generally are unmet. They beg for food and money, do odd jobs, are not enrolled in school or dropped out of school, are easily and in most cases, exploited by their employers and other unscrupulous adults. Most street children, as asserted in various literary sources, want to be educated, as they believe that good education holds the key to improving their life conditions (Ansell, 2016).

2.4 Who are Street Children?

The term 'street children' has evolved over the years. The ways street children are seen differ from people to people, organisation to organisation. While some people regard street children as miscreants, cheap labourers, thieves, and witches – as in the case of some areas in Nigeria – others regard them as children who are poor, neglected and vulnerable (Ekpenyong & Udisi, 2016). Organisations are drawn in categorising and re-categorising them, based on the 'street' component of street children. It is a big challenge to come up with a generally accepted definition of street children.

Street children are those children, under 18 years of age, connected to the street, usually due to living and/or working there, even on a seasonal or transitory basis. Other forms of the definition of street children include:

a) Children who carry out informal work in the street to be able to meet their basic needs; children who spend the day in the street begging for alms.

b) Children involved in sexual activities for economic gain.

c) Children in conflict with the law who are involved in street crimes such as drug transportation or sales (Hai, 2014).

Some organisations regard street children as those for whom the street more than their family has become their home, a situation in which there is no protection, supervision or direction from responsible adults.

2.5 Numbers of Street Children

The number of street children is not actually clear as it seems to vary from scholar to scholar and from organisation to organisation. The number of street children globally is estimated to be in the region of 100 million to 150 million (Salihu, 2019; Seidel et al., 2018). Some scholars like Salihu (2019) and Hai (2014) argue that there is a myth concerning the number of street children due to the records of the numbers of street children that seems to be static from decade to decade. They cite the number discrepancy of UNICEF publications of 1989 and 2002 which both estimated the number of street children to be about 100 million (Salihu, 2019).

While the number of street children globally is still being debated, most studies including Unicef (2016) and Alem & Laha (2016) show that it is on the increase. The discrepancy in the number may be as a result of no clearly acceptable definition of street children. Currently, irrespective of the acknowledged increase in the number of street children, the estimated number of 100 million to 150 million is still being used in lieu of an actual number.

2.6 Gender Distribution of Street Children

The distribution of street children based on gender varies from country to country, but most literature agree that over 70% of street children are boys (Consortium for Street Children, 2017). In fact, Seidel et al. (2018) argue that the number of male street children is over twice the number of female street children. However, other studies such as Salihu (2019) and Glauser (2015) have found that at most times and in most places, female street children are generally less visible than their male counterparts, are difficult to trace, and they are also the most vulnerable (see for example, …).

Owoaje et al. (2009) in their article, *Socio-economic characteristics of street children in rural communities undergoing urbanisation*, also uphold the argument that there are more male street children than females. They add that, the reason for the smaller number of female street children might not be far-fetched, as many females end up in relationships and co-habit with the people they are in a

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relationship with (Owoaje et al., 2009). As stated above, female street children are less visible than the male ones, but they are more vulnerable and are more likely to be discriminated against and sexually abused than their male counterparts.

2.7 Causes and Problems of Street Children

There are many push and pull factors leading to children migrating to the street. Some of these factors may have left the child with no other choice. Such factors include, abandonment and loss of parents with degrading values of the extended family system (Ekpenyong and Udisi, 2016). Other factors that leave the child with no option other than becoming a street child, include children thrown out of their homes, and children whose families are on the street. There are also children who chose to be on the street as a result of maltreatment, neglect, or lack of basic necessities.

The economic factor is one of the most talked about reasons why there is an increase in the street children phenomenon. While many scholars agree that the economic motivation is the major reason for the increase in the street children population, they have failed to adequately consider factors such as HIV/AIDS; civil wars, communal disputes and fights – particularly in countries like Syria; and environments dominated by terrorist groups like "boko haram" and "killer herdsmen" in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. Yet other factors that have contributed to this challenge, include physical and emotional abuse and the quest to escape from chores at home.

Street children are faced with problems which in most cases are more severe than those faced by other children who are under adult supervision. The problems faced by street children are categorically grouped into three, namely, physical, social and psychological (Obioha, 2009). Physical problems include injuries, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, etc. The social problems include illiteracy, poverty, stigmatisation, violent environment, discrimination and poor access to resources. Psychological problems faced by street children include substance abuse, mental health, poor self-esteem, transitory lifestyle and stressful past.

2.8 Fundamental Rights of a Child

Access to child education has been recognised as one of the fundamental rights of a child in the CRC, the ACRWC and the CRA as ratified by the Nigerian government. The Nigerian education system is steered by national objectives, which are entrenched in the national policy on education whilst the financing of basic education is the responsibility of states and local governments (Salihu & Jamil, 2015). Taking a cursory look at the Nigerian education history, in 1976, the military government of

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Nigeria instituted the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme, a six-year educational scheme designed to provide free and compulsory education to children at the primary school level (Salihu and Jamil, 2015). Consequently, the UPE scheme was replaced with the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme in 1999. The UBE was introduced to help meet Nigeria's commitments under the Education for All (EFA) programme and the Millennium Development Goals. The UBE bill was passed into law on 26 May 2004. The 2004 UBE Act stipulates the provision of free and compulsory schooling for the first nine years of all Nigerian children of school age. The emphasis here is on the term 'free and compulsory' schooling.

While the Nigerian government appears committed to global initiatives in promoting child education, studies have shown that the existing national situation in primary education, suggests that the UBE's commitment to free education really only exists on paper as most children face severe constraints in attending school due to the hidden and the apparent costs of education, let alone the impacts of poorly paid and unmotivated teachers (Salihu and Jamil, 2015).

Lack of education is also closely related to the phenomenon of street children (Tilak, 2018). It can be a cause but also a result of working on the streets. Children may drop out of school because they need to earn money or they may drop out because they are already working on the streets and therefore have no time to continue their education (RSA, 2009). Lack of education also limits job opportunities and children end up working long hours doing hard and odd jobs such as trading (selling food and drinks), truck pushing, load carrying, shoe shining etc. Millions more children are still denied access to education simply because their parents are poor or from a stigmatised group, because they were born female, or because they are growing up in countries affected by conflict or chronic crises. And even though poverty is falling globally, nearly half of the world's extremely poor are children, and many more experience multiple dimensions of poverty in their lives (UNICEF, 2016).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises that every child has the right to go to school and learn. That right begins in early childhood, which is one reason why the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call on governments to "ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education." (UNICEF, 2016:42).

2.9 Convention on the Rights of the Child and Education of Street Children

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a United Nations Convention document that sets out a series of rights for children (UN, 1989). Many national governments are signatories to this United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CRC has become a base, which many countries

use in enacting laws concerning children. The CRC of 1989 was set out to benefit all children, including street children. Over 193 countries – excluding the United States of America and Somalia – ratified and agreed to enforce and stand by the rights contained in the CRC (Helman, 2019; Dinbabo, 2011; September & Dinbabo, 2008). Various articles of the CRC talk about various rights of children. Article 28 specifically talks about children's right to education. It willed on governments to make education of children compulsory by making basic education free for all children.

Various engagements with street children have showed that some of them are interested in getting education. Many street children are of the view that education holds the key to earning societal respect and uplifting of their status and situation, that with education, they will be able to provide better living conditions for themselves. Street children also aspire to be teachers, doctors, engineers, accountants, business managers, etc. (Alam & Wajidi, 2014). The street children have voiced out challenges hindering them from acquiring education. Some of the challenges include stiff enrolment criteria, hidden costs of education, stigmatisation, etc. Education is a child's basic right and of which many street children are deprived. As such, there is the need to consider this deprivation as a violation of the child's human right.

2.10 Barriers to Education of Street Children

There are unique barriers hindering street children from accessing education. Children without guardians or legal identification most times are unable to get admission into schools. Older children who have spent years on the street and have not been in school, are excluded from joining younger children in the level they need to start from (Ford & Russo, 2016). This action makes it difficult to meet up with children their age. However, street children who overcome the challenges mentioned above and get enrolled in school, still get to face other challenges like discrimination, stigmatisation and marginalisation from students and teachers. These actions negatively impact their performance and well-being. It sometimes forces them to drop out of school and return full time to the street (Howarth & Andreouli, 2015; Skovdal & Campbell, 2015). Other barriers hindering street children from accessing basic education, include: poverty, conflict, ill health, inadequate educational facilities, substance abuse amongst street children, institutional nature of formal schooling, migration, parent's literacy, enrolment requirement, etc.

2.10.1 Enrolment requirement

Requirements relating to documentation such as identity, birth certificate, and proof of residence, are part of the basic requirements in most countries' educational system. Failure to provide such

documents might lead to denial of admission into school. On the other hand, most street children are not in possession of such documents and based on that, they are denied access to basic education (Kauffman et al., 2018).

Furthermore, some administrators shut the doors of education to street children for fear that the street children will disrupt the classroom progress and cause a decline in the performance rate of the standardised test scores of the school (Ingram et al., 2017). In addition, enrolment requirements that include the presence of parents or guardians also hinder street children from enrolling in schools. This is because, many of the street children are not under the care or supervision of any adult, as they live and fend for themselves on the street.

2.10.2 Poverty

With hidden costs of education even in cases where education is free, accessing education will be difficult. Poverty is a core factor pushing children to the street. It brings about hunger, among other challenges. The quest for what to eat consumes the bulk of the time the street child should have spent learning in school (Abiodun et al., 2019). Moreover, hunger and lack of food affect concentration and academic performance of children (Anderson et al., 2018). Poverty poses a huge challenge to street children's education as they find it difficult buying school uniforms, textbooks, exercise books and other needed educational materials. Street children will rather spend time meant for schooling on other activities they feel will provide the necessary funds for their upkeep and well-being.

2.11 Categories of Street Children

The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) in 1984 categorised street children into three categories, namely: children of the street, children on the street, and children at risk (Stoecklin, 2017). 'Children of the street' is a hydra-headed category. They comprise of children who are abandoned, run-away children and orphans. Studies have shown that children of the street see the street as their home. The street is their place of living, working, and bonding with their people. They disassociate themselves from family ties as they have negative attitudes toward their families (Conticini, 2016; Hills et al., 2016).

'Children on the street' are children who work on the street for survival, however, they return to their families at the end of each day and are under the protection of their parents (Conticini, 2016). Their work contributes to their family's income as they are part of the sources of livelihood for their families (Manjengwa et al., 2016). For this category of street children, household poverty is the push factor that

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forces them to the street. Children on the street account for over 30% of income of households (Anderson et al., 2016; Manjengwa et al., 2016). Children at risk are children of the urban poor. They form a pool of street children. Furthermore, it is argued that there is a link connecting the three categories of street children. Children on the street feed the population of children at risk, who in turn, feed the population of children of the street (Bhukuth & Ballet, 2015).

2.12 Conclusion

Education is a fundamental right of a child and street children should be benefitting from this right. The literature has revealed that countries adopted the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and by rectifying and adopting the CRC, they have accepted in principle to offer free education to children. Furthermore, people's perception of street children is not ideal and poses a challenge to how these children are treated, excluded and disenfranchised from benefitting from various policies being enacted in their country.

This review asserts that education is an empowering tool, which vulnerable groups such as street children need in order to be able to change their stories and predicaments and make them more useful to the society and the nation at large. Findings from various studies show that education is important and useful and educating street children will help in reducing the number of children in street situations. The myth concerning the population of street children still remains as the numbers vary from researcher to researcher, not only because it is difficult to go around counting these children, but also because of differences in the definition of who a street child is.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the research. This study aims to evaluate the role of government in the provision of basic education to street children in Enugu State, Nigeria and in so doing, discover the areas of strength and weakness and means to improve. To better comprehend this, a theoretical stand-point through which impact will be defined will be important to be considered.

This chapter explains the theoretical framework and sheds light on the various approaches the study used to develop an understanding of the study. The human right-based approach was used to form an understanding from the viewpoint of the rights of a child. Also, this chapter applies the social exclusion theory to bring to bear the effect of excluding street children from accessing basic education.

3.2. Theoretical Frameworks

Tracey and Morrow (2017) postulate that the use of theory serves as a lens for finding answers to the research question as well as providing broad explanations. Thus, the theories serving as the explanatory framework for the present study, are the human right-based approach and the social exclusion theory. Different schools of thought have contributed to the question of street children. On the basis of these schools of thought, different arguments have been provided and methodological perspectives discussed. The following part provides a discussion about the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study.

3.2.1 Human right-based approach

A number of United Nations conferences following the end of the 'Cold War' aided in fostering the understanding that social development, democracy, sustainability and human rights are interdependent (Broberg & Sano, 2018). The human right-based approach, also known as the right-based approach (RBA) is a conceptual framework that brings together norms, values, standards and goals of international human rights systems, to promote and protect human rights (Dinbabo, 2013; Dinbabo & Carciotto, 2015). This approach explores and analyses inequalities, which is the basis of developmental challenges. It also tackles discrimination and unfair distribution of power that inhibits progress of development. In this approach, strategies, policies and procedures of development are anchored in a system of rights and obligations established by international laws (Broberg & Sano, 2018). This aids people's empowerment. With the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, education became recognised as a human right. Other human right treaties such as the 1960

UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (CDE), the 1966 International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and even the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) all affirmed the right to education and created the claim to free compulsory basic education for all children.

The development of the human rights-based approach, bring about respect for human rights in education. A right-based education demands the actualisation of access to education, quality education and human rights in education (Dinbabo, 2013). These three demands are interdependent and interlinked dimensions to the human right-based approach to education.

The right to education needs an undertaking to ensure universal access in addition to taking great measures to see that even the most marginalised and vulnerable children are not excluded from benefitting from this right (Dinbabo & Carciotto 2015). The RBA advocates for the need for a comprehensive approach to education, matching the acceptance and support for all human rights. The RBA gives consideration to human rights and as such creates an avenue to understand the value of education as a fundamental human right. It also seeks to protect everyone, including marginalised and vulnerable groups, of which street children can be categorised under. This RBA framework stresses the importance of education being accessible and of good quality, which are two areas that this study wants to investigate about street children in Enugu State, Nigeria.

The RBA has potential in addressing access to education for street children. Street children's access to free basic education is realisable if measures are implemented to protect street children from physical violence, sexual abuse and the right to freedom of discrimination is addressed (Dinbabo & Carciotto 2015, Ile & Dinbabo, 2014). It is paramount to note that the right to education is important and helpful in the actualisation of other rights (Grant & Gibson, 2013). Applying the RBA to the study of street children and access to free basic education in Nigeria will create the required avenue to assess, analyse and identify the claims of human rights in education and government's obligations and the immediate challenges to the non-actualisation of rights. The RBA will also help in accessing the capacity of street children in claiming their rights from governments in meeting their obligations (Singh et al., 2011).

3.2.2. Social exclusion theory and street children

Social exclusion theory provides a useful framework within which to examine the phenomenon of street children in relation to the public perceptions. Social exclusion is posited to be an important theme. Even though there are still debatable concerns on the precise meaning of social exclusion (Glauser, 2015; Greenberg and Folger, 2012), some definitions have sought to highlight that social exclusion is hinged on one's inability to participate properly in social, cultural and economic life and in some other situations, estrangement and aloofness from mainstream society (Giddens, 2013). This is to say that the idea of social exclusion is vital because social exclusion captures the procedures of estrangement and disempowerment. In opposition to unemployment and poverty which target people and families, social exclusion is basically concerned with the understanding between people and society, and the subtleties of that understanding.

Glauser (2015) buttressed a new view to the discourse by focusing on social exclusion in a right-based fashion when he addresses social exclusion from the point of denial or non-realisation of political, social and civil rights of the people. Approaching social exclusion from a right-based method shows the closeness the method has with the capability theory. Social exclusion in relation to capabilities would be seen as people not having equal access to basic capabilities, like the ability to participate in community and public life, enjoy the social base of self-respect and, integration in the community.

3.2.2.1 Social exclusion among children

Within what situation can it be said that children are being socially excluded? Resonating with the capability theory, social exclusion can be seen as the incapability to partake in and be acknowledged by society. Attitude surveys have shown that participation and societal acknowledgement are considered by people in the West as a life necessity (Manstead, 2018). Another way of viewing this capability let-down is to outline more precise rights and capabilities that are important for children to be able to relate equally in society and also to be acknowledged as equals by the rest of the society. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which many countries including Nigeria have ratified and passed into law is a related starting point, focusing precisely on children. Articles 2, 3, 7, 9, 17, 23, 27 to 31 of the CRC expounds on the rights that might be pertinent to social exclusion and inclusion.

A state's failure to meet any of these rights irrespective of any reason, is evidence of social exclusion because these rights concern children's ability to relate within society, on equal terms. The advantage of aligning the discourse of social exclusion and children on the United Nations CRC is hinged on the

acceptance that the UN CRC has gathered on the strength of ratifications, signatories and monitoring process. The clauses of the child's rights cited earlier, deal with different aspects of the lives of children. Most of the cited clauses relate to legal rights of inclusion. These clauses can be actualised via passed and applied regulation. Others, particularly Articles 23, 27, 28, 30, and 31 deal with the interaction of economic and social forces and governmental action, where governments are required to correct exclusion that may otherwise be created as a result of economic or social forces.

3.2.2.2 Social exclusion and education

Education is a key factor in children's development. It has a huge essential importance, as accessing education is a key right (see Article 28 of the UNCRC and Section 15 of Nigeria's Child's Right Act 2003). Also, to be educated is an essential and treasured capability. Furthermore, going to school is an essential participatory process for any child and equal access for all children to this process makes way for participation in society and also respect by society.

Contrarily, education can also be a source of exclusion. For some children, this is the case if education fails to meet the standard mapped out in the UNCRC (UN, 1989) and the Child's Right Act 2003 (FRN, 2003) for development of the child's personality, physical and mental abilities. Also, education is exclusionary when the education process does not promote equal access and participation.

In Nigeria, children – especially street children – are constantly being excluded from the rights to education as provided for by the UNCRC which Nigeria is a signatory, Nigeria's Child's Right Act of 2003 and the Compulsory Free Basic Education Act of 2004. To buttress this fact, Olatunji (2018) states that free education in Nigeria is a fallacy:

> According to the Compulsory, Free, Universal Basic Education Act of 2004, in addition to tuition, the services that will be provided free of charge include books, instructional materials, classrooms, furniture and lunch. This clarification from the outset as to what governmental free education program connotes, sets the limit as to what the citizenry should expect from the government in free education package. However, despite this clarification, it must be emphasized that the talk about free education itself is a fallacy as a result of the fact that free education does not exist in the real sense of the word. This is because the cost of education is not limited to the direct cost of education to the individual but also the opportunity cost to the individual for receiving education (Olatunji, 2018:139).

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CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the approaches employed in the collection and analysing of the research data. It begins with details of the research design. This chapter also provides details of the sampling procedures, methods used in collecting data, the process of data analysis and also the ethical statement that guided the research. It also gives a brief overview of the validity and reliability of the data and reflects on the field experience and problems encountered during the fieldwork.

4.2 Research Design

Kumar (2011) posits that research design sets out the plan on how the study will be carried out. It is a rational structure of the study that enables the investigator or researcher to answer the research question. In the context of this study, the research design outlines the study methodology, focus area of data collection, tools for data collection and data analysis process.

4.3 Methodology

Within the area of social science studies, there are two basic research approaches, namely the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach (Hennink et al., 2020; Dinbabo, 2011). The choice of methodological approach depends on the purpose of the research and can either be qualitative or quantitative. In a bid to discern between quantitative and qualitative methods, Choy (2014) shows that the quality concept is important to the nature of settings. Likewise, quantity is elementally an amount of something. In quality, researchers seek to find out about the what, when, where and how of a research interest – its crux and feel. Therefore, qualitative research raises answers, definitions, concepts, meanings, description of things, etc. (Choy, 2014).

On the other hand, quantitative research denotes measures and numbers of things. Researchers employ a quantitative approach when they seek to count or measure a phenomenon (Landrum & Garza, 2015). Furthermore, Edmonds and Kennedy (2016) posit that qualitative approaches give the complex details of issues that can hardly be conveyed using quantitative approaches (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016). Qualitative methods highlight in place of quantitative methods statistical representation and scientific objectivity, richness, depth, understanding and quality of findings. However, this does not take away the research rigors from the qualitative approach, neither does it make the quantitative approach less important.

According to Landrum and Garza (2015), qualitative approaches could be applied to understand and reveal feelings underneath any phenomenon which much is not known about at that moment. Qualitative approaches also help in discovering novel and new viewpoints about issues that are already known. It can also be said that qualitative approaches search for answers to research questions by scrutinising different social settings and the people resident within the settings.

The choice of research methods usually flows conceptually and logically from the research questions (Hennink et al., 2020). There are numerous motives behind a researcher's quest for a qualitative research approach. Some of such motives include the researcher's belief built upon research experience. Also, the nature of a research problem sways researchers into opting for the qualitative approach (Tracy, 2019). The area of this study leans more towards a qualitative approach because it attempts to determine street children's perceptions about going to school and stakeholders' perceptions about street children accessing universal basic education.

The qualitative approach explores the perceptions, understandings, knowledge and feelings of people through observation, discussions or interviews. It is increasingly employed by social scientists to learn more about the intricacies of life, to get a better perception and understanding of the processes that shape our social surroundings (Mays & Pope, 2006). This study made use of the qualitative approach.

4.4 Methods of Data Collection

Primary and secondary sources were used in collecting data for this study. The researcher used mainly interviews and focus group discussions in obtaining the primary data for this study. The combination of interviews and focus group discussions brought about rich and in-depth information related to issues surrounding street children's access to universal basic education in Nigeria. The secondary sources, on the other hand, comprised of reviewing the extant literature concerning street children.

4.4.1. In-depth interviews

Simply put, interviewing can be seen as a dialogue with a purpose, normally between two people. The basic purpose of interviews is information gathering and understanding the knowledge of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Britten, 2006). From qualitative interviews, a researcher gets to gather new information that sheds light into the respondent's experiences. Through the method of interviews, a researcher understands the people's experiences and can reconstruct the happenings even though they did not participate in it.

Qualitative interviews have three key features that differentiate them from other methods of data

collection (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Qualitative interviews are reforms of ordinary conversations with important distinctions. Also, the interest of the interviewer is in the knowledge, insight and understanding of the respondent, rather than in classifying individuals or happenings in relationships according to academic theories. Another feature is that the interview content, together with the course and choice of issues, changes to meet what the individual respondent feels and knows.

With the help of an interview guide, this study conducted in-depth interviews with 15 respondents, comprising of officers from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Gender and Social Development, the Universal Basic Education Board, school teachers, and members of child-focused non-governmental organisations. The interviews were conducted mainly in private offices of the respondents where they felt comfortable and free to talk. They were carried out at times convenient to the respondents. The setting for an interview is important, as it could have an influence on the respondents and potentially interfere with their responses. Usually, interviews are piloted in the absence of other individuals and in surroundings where the respondent is at ease and feels free to air their perceptions and views (Berger, 2015; Pugh, 2013; Tufford & Newman, 2012).

4.4.2. Focus group discussions (FGDs)

According to Woodyatt et al. (2016), focus group discussions are resolute dialogues on a definite issue or topic with a group of people. A focus group discussion (FGD) is a type of approach for collecting data in qualitative research. This technique makes provision for the opinions, attitudes, and views of the people in the discussion to be captured. It is an interview style designed for small groups – usually around 10 persons – who are brought together to discuss a particular topic chosen by the researcher(s) (Alderson & Morrow, 2020). It is an open discussion amongst invited people and the facilitator of the FGD. The FGD is a discussion on a subject matter in a group, facilitated in such a way that the facilitator, who can be the researcher or a person trained to facilitate research interviews, raises subjects of discussion or asks questions that arouse the discourse amongst the group. It is a widely used method in the hunt for information in most professional paths and fields in academia due to its cost-effective nature. FGDs have four basic features, namely: a facilitator, a FGD guide or outline, multiple participants, and group interaction.

Focus group discussions share related advantages with interviews. They also have further advantage of aiding the researcher to probe more on how experiences and understandings are raised and discussed amongst participants (Nyumba et al., 2018). However, scholars note that focus group discussions are more revealing than a casual group interaction (Krueger, 2014). This dialoguing feature of FGDs,

enables the researcher to have access to different understandings that depict social behaviour. During this research, the FGD strategy was quite beneficial in the exploration of diversity in views on different concerns. The researcher conducted three focus group discussions – one for male street children, one for female street children, and one for male and female street children. The FGD was worthwhile for deep probes of street children's perceptions, main concerns, problems and concerns in their lives.

4.5 Secondary Sources

Secondary data sources that were relevant for the study were sourced from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) library, online publications, and NGOs working with street children, such as the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) Nigeria Chapter. Additionally, reports, publications, brochures, etc. were obtained and reviewed.

4.6 Study Sample

Sampling is the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organisations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample, researchers may fairly generalise their results back to the population from which they were chosen (Kumar, 2011). The logic of using a sample of subjects is to make inferences about some larger population from a smaller one. There are two major types of sampling, namely, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is associated with the quantitative approach while non-probability sampling is associated with qualitative approach. In quantitative research, researchers are more concerned with probability sampling (Blanche et al., 2006). Qualitative research concentrates on small sample size, that has been purposefully selected. Sampling in qualitative research is more concerned with the richness of information collected than in the amount of information collected.

Since studying the entire population of people involved with issues relating to street children in Enugu State, Nigeria was practically impossible, a manageable size had to be chosen for the survey. There are various types of non-probability sampling, but for the purpose of this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, researchers choose a sample with a *purpose* in mind. They usually would have one or more specific predefined groups they are seeking. This study sought information concerning predefined groups, such as street children, education authorities and people working in organisations involved with street children. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting officials of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Gender and Social Development, the Universal Basic Education Board, child-focused non-governmental organisations, school teachers, and street children themselves, for the interviews and focus group discussion.

4.7 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the array of procedures through which researchers transcend from data they collected via focus group discussions, in-depth interviews etc., to some form of interpretation, understanding and explanation of the findings from the collected data. According to Flick (2013), qualitative data analysis is the interpretation and classification of audio or video or picture material, to produce meaningful statements from the inherent and clear parts of the collected data. In this study, the researcher applied the thematic data analysis (TDA) approach in analysing the data collected. The TDA is a method of qualitative data analysis. It is applied to texts like FGDs or interview transcripts. In applying it to the transcript, the investigator studies the data in order to pinpoint common themes, ides, patterns and topics that pop up recurrently (Terry et al., 2017). There are six identified steps used in applying thematic data analysis: familiarisation, coding, theme generating, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up.

Familiarisation – Step one in TDA is getting to know the data. Getting a concise overview of all the data collected before starting the analysis, is important. Familiarisation involves the transcription of interviews and focus group discussions, reading through the transcripts, noting points and knowing the information collected. As the main person collecting data for this project, the process of conducting interviews allowed for familiarisation with the data. This process involved the taking of interview notes on potential analytic interests. Data familiarisation was also accomplished via listening and re-listening to the audio recordings in the process of transcribing.

Coding – Coding comprises the underlining of segments of transcripts – like phrases or sentences – and forming a code to explain the content. Coding is the second step in TDA. It involves the identification of codes in the data collected. Codes are the most basic elements of the data collected that can be assessed in a meaningful way in relation to the phenomenon being studied. They identify interesting features about the data in relation to the subject being studied (Terry et al., 2017). The process of coding can either be data-driven or theory-driven (inductive/deductive). In data-driven coding the derived codes depend on the data, but in the latter, the coding is done with specific questions in mind that the researcher wishes to code around (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study employed the latter. Codes were developed based on a pre-existing coding frame for specific research questions. The coding process was aided by Atlas TI – computer software for qualitative data analysis.

Generating themes – This step involves combining different codes into themes. Themes differ from codes in that they are broader (Braun & Clarke, 2006:89). In this research, themes were identified

based on their prevalence in the data set or because of their significance to the research question.

Reviewing themes – This is a deeper level of generating themes. Here, the researcher questions whether to separate, combine, discard or refine the themes developed in stage three above (Braun & Clarke, 2006:91). To accomplish this in the current research, the themes developed in the above section were checked against the coded excerpts as well as the overall data set to ensure that the themes developed were relevant to the research subject.

Defining and naming themes – In this step, the researcher provides clear names for themes and identifies working definitions for those names. A complete story of the data needs to emanate from the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006:92). In this research, the themes identified were grouped as per the research questions posed to enable the development of a coherent story of the findings that met the research objectives.

Writing up – This step involves the translation of the analysis into a report. This must go beyond a description that conveys the results and include an analysis that is supported by empirical evidence (Braun & Clarke, 2006:93). The drafting of the report for this thesis was done in two stages. The first stage involved the generation of a descriptive report, based on the themes identified. This descriptive report conveyed the findings of the study. It relayed the surface meanings of the data that had been analysed, showing patterns in the data and responding to the research questions. Vivid examples of quotations were used to elaborate the points being discussed within each theme and sub-theme.

4.8 Validity and Reliability of Data

Reliability is the point to which the discovery is independent of the research circumstances, while validity is the point to which the discovery is construed in the exact way (Walliman, 2015). Respondents' understanding about the relevance of the study and their willingness to participate affect the validity of the data. In this study, a broad explanation about the research was given to the respondents. This was to empower them to feel free while responding. The researcher familiarised himself with the respondents by introducing himself and the reason for the research.

4.9 Reflexivity Statement

According to Palaganas et al. (2017), reflexivity has to do with a scholar's perception of the influence they have on the research project. Five ways by which a qualitative researcher can gauge their influence on a research project have been suggested by a number of scholars like Reid et al. (2018) and Palaganas

et al. (2017). The five ways suggested are: (a) strategic reflexivity, which centres on the project methodological aspects; (b) contextual reflexivity, which scrutinises elements around cross-cultural situations in carrying out research; (c) embodied reflexivity centres on the 'interviewer-respondents' non-verbal communication; (d) relational reflexivity considers the dynamics in 'researcher-respondents' relationship that leads to particular kinds of answers; (e) ethical reflexivity has to do with context-specific ethical challenges during the implementation of the study.

This researcher's reflections on the way the study process was affected by both the respondents' and the researcher's realities, are stated below.

4.9.1. Strategic reflexivity

Methodological awareness was very important in carrying out this study. The interview questions were framed using simple wording to ensure that the respondents found it easy to understand; and where the respondents seemed confused, the question was translated into their own language (Igbo) for easy understanding. While conducting focus group discussions and interviews, the researcher closely observed the participants' responses and consequently adjusted their terminology and questions without losing the meaning.

4.9.2. Contextual reflexivity

Living outside Nigeria and carrying out the study in Nigeria came with a set of challenges. This is due to the fact that the researcher is an indigene of the state who has lived and worked in the metropolis for years before going abroad to further their education. This made the researcher an insider, but their perceived achievements likewise made them an outsider. This in some ways affected the responses that some of the respondents felt safe to disclose. Street children felt free to express themselves and air their views; government officials were sceptical and cautious, not wanting to reveal what they felt might jeopardise their employment. The researcher discovered that informal discussions with respondents before the interviews and focus group discussions went a great way in settling respondents and reducing their uneasiness. In reconsideration, this "acquaintance" led to a more relaxed air that allowed for a more organic interview.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval to conduct this study was granted by the University of the Western Cape's Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) Faculty's Postgraduate Research Board and by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSRC). The ethical considerations observed in the

course of data collection included the following: the consent of respondents, both verbal and written, was obtained before interviews. The researcher got consent from African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) Nigeria Chapter who acted as chaperon and guardian for the street children before the focus group discussion with the children was conducted. Also, participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and no form of coercion was to be used and that they can withdraw from participation at any point in time during the interview or focus group discussion. The researcher ensured the privacy of participants by keeping the identity of participants anonymous as well as that of any sensitive information provided.

4.11 Field Experiences: Problems and Challenges

Research fieldwork comes with its own share of experiences. These experiences are in various forms – some are problems, challenges and lessons. This study had its own fair share. The study faced a lot of delays caused by bureaucratic processes, especially with government agencies. The government agencies had the usual bottle-neck process of diverting requests from one unit to the other; this made it difficult to get information as speedily as required. Furthermore, some government officials were reluctant to provide exact information as they were afraid of exposing the reality of the government's inadequacies, as the subject matter relates to street children. Others were afraid that the study might be a means of witch-hunting and exposing them, thereby jeopardizing their jobs.

Although many non-governmental organisations were keenly interested in the study and felt that it will shed more light to help solve the problems of street children, some of their staff were reluctant to schedule time for an interview with the researcher. Also, there are many civil societies, but few are working on issues relating to children and even fewer have specific programmes for street children. The street children themselves were reluctant to leave their activities – which are a source of livelihood for them – to turn up for the focus group discussion. They would have preferred one-on-one interviews on the busy streets, as the try to combine making their living and answering the questions of the researcher. It was difficult to find the female potential participants in the street, which made the data skewed towards the male respondents.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the research from the collected data of this study. It starts with presenting the demographic characteristics of the sample where the data was gotten from. After the demographics, the presentation of the findings from the research will follow. The findings are presented based on the research questions the study is set out to answer.

5.2 Demographic Characteristics Summary

Twenty-two adults and fourteen children took part in this study. The sample was made up of government officials from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Gender and Social Development and the State Universal Basic Education Board. Also, teachers in both public and private schools and staff of non-governmental organisations took part in the in-depth interviews. The fourteen children were involved in the focus group discussion. They were within the age range of 14 and 17 years; 6 were females and 8 were males. They were all street children who live and fend for themselves on the street.

5.3 Research Findings

The aim of this study was to evaluate the role of government in the provision of basic education to street children and in so doing discover the areas of strength and weakness and means to improve. According to the Nigerian Universal Basic Education Act of 2004, the government is to provide free education for all at primary and junior secondary school levels. This education includes six years of primary education and three years of secondary education. It was launched in 1999 for every Nigerian child aged 6 years to 15 years (Irigoyen, 2017). One would wonder why about 10.3 million Nigerian children within the ages of 5 and 14 are not in school even when there is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in place (UNICEF, 2017). Among the out-of-school children, there are large numbers of street children. It will not be a surprise if these street children aspire to be doctors, engineers, accountants, business men and women and even teachers when they grow. This research identified many issues that inhibit street children from benefitting from the free education programme in Enugu State, Nigeria.

5.3.1. Poverty

Poverty is defined as the state where people do not have the resources to fulfil their elementary needs. Poverty is viewed from two perspectives, namely, absolute poverty and relative poverty (Geiser, 2017). Absolute poverty refers to when a person cannot afford basic things needed for survival such as food, shelter, clothes, etc. Relative poverty, on the other hand, refers to when the income and way of living is shoddier than the general standard of living. With regards to the findings of this study, poverty here refers to absolute poverty.

Poverty has proven to be one of the major hindrances that inhibits street children from benefitting from the free education programme in Enugu State, Nigeria. One may point to the clause 'free education' and wonder how poverty will stop one from accessing something that is free. These street children face the challenge of having no food, no school uniforms, among many other basic things that they will need in order to have their minds at rest and be able to learn. The extracts below from one of the interviews made this point clear.

> Poverty is part of the barrier that has prevented these kids … No school fees … Purchasing of books, school uniform, supplies, and so on. Even food has posed a lot of barriers to these street kids (IDI005).

> Although education is considered as free, there may be other needs that are not covered by the free education, like their school uniforms, their feeding, family support. These children require family support (IDI006).

To further support the point, another respondent in response to a probe from the researcher on whether street children begging for alms is the reason the street children are not attending school, the respondent replied with the rhetorical question below:

> When you are hungry and there is no food and you have no clothes; or let's say better or good clothes to put on, will you be able to go to school so you can be educated and stay hungry? (IDI005).

The street children themselves also attested that their basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing and security inhibit them from going to school:

> … money for hidden charges, housing, food, clothing. If you decide to go to school and you keep your school bag outside, it will be stolen or damaged. Every day the police comes to disturb us here. They flog us and if a pursuit ensues you cannot run with the bag (Participant

3, Male FGD).

These children spend a lot of time in the streets, seeking means to meet their basic needs, that they sacrifice the time to be in school, to source money for something to eat. The responses also revealed that there are hidden costs attached to the 'free education'. Students are being made to pay money for things that should have been covered in the free education arrangement, such as an exam levy, project fees, etc.

This study discovered that the street children's uncertainty of where their basic needs each day will come from, impacts on their ability to concentrate fully in school, to learn and to study. Their attention will be divided between what is being taught and how they will survive the pangs of hunger. The quest for survival frequently pushes them into activities like stealing and other forms of delinquency, which might lead to their suspension or expulsion from school, should they be enrolled in school.

5.3.2. Inadequate school facilities

School facilities refer to structures and resources available in a school to help facilitate teaching and learning. Such facilities may include buildings like classrooms, sports facilities, administrative block, etc. (Ramli et al., 2018). It also includes laboratories, vehicles, desks, chairs, computers, as well as teachers and other staff. On the other hand, inadequate school facilities refer to insufficient resources, or the absence of facilities to cater for the population of the school.

School facilities in this regard refer not only to the material facilities in a school but also to adequate staffing, enough schools, and the good location of schools. One of the factors inhibiting street children from benefitting from free education in Enugu State, Nigeria is that there are not enough schools around them and as such, the distance to get to school is great and serve as a demotivation for them to want to go to school. It was gathered from respondents that there are not enough schools around and students from very poor backgrounds have to walk long distances to neighbouring communities to attend a public school. The excerpts below are responses from the interviews and focus group discussions:

> There is no, yea, not enough classes, not enough facilities. Ok, I have a situation now of a child that really wants to attend technical school. But in the community where he is at, that's eeh Amechi, he does not… from Amechi, for him to have access to technical school (Q: He needs to come to GTC GRA) which is at eeh IMT polo, GRA, it's very far from him. So, if he must come, he can spend two drop. From Amechi, he's either taking, eeh taking from

Amechi to NNPC before entering another one coming to IMT polo or they take ESBS motor.
So the distance at which… (IDI001)

From the response above, it shows that institution that matches the aspirations of the child is located in a community far from the community of the child. This serves as a demotivation and contributes to hindering the child from benefitting from education. Another respondent also pointed out that distance is a challenge, as it discourages people from attending school. This was captured in the response as follows:

Distance ... sometimes you have the free education in one community far from another. It makes going to such places difficult for children living in typical villages where they don't have one … (IDI008)

Apart from inadequate structures, there are also challenges of poor staffing of the schools meant to be offering free education. Such schools are crowded and lack adequate and well-motivated manpower to keep the school running:

… and another thing I didn't even point out on the challenges, why we're having growing numbers of out-of-school children, is the issue of overpopulation in class… (IDI007)

Moving around Enugu metropolis, the researcher could not help but notice the state of most public schools within the metropolis. Aside from the over-crowdedness of some of the classrooms, the buildings were dilapidated and in serious need of renovations. From walking around some of the schools, it was evident that even though there is a space allocated for a library, the room is devoid of books, desks and chairs. Designated structures for laboratories were also empty.

5.3.3. The mirage of 'free education' in Nigeria

Free education refers to the absence of any form of payment of tuition and related fees in a school, in order to be educated. It is understood to be the abolishment of tuition or school fees (Kan & Klasen, 2018). Free education is also regarded as the absence of any financial costs – both directly or indirectly – in one's pursuit of education. The concept of free education is regarded as the goals or objectives of global projects like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Education for All (EFA), among others.

Nigeria has a policy in place for free basic education, but in reality, there is a discrepancy between

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what is stated in the policy and what is actually seen in schools that are meant to be offering the free basic education. Some of the findings show that pupils are charged various fees, which make it difficult to actually agree that basic education is free in public schools. Respondents have attested that school children are billed for examination fees, handwork fees, project fees, development fees, etc. in the schools that are supposed to be offering free education.

It is even more alarming because some of the bank accounts set up for payment of some of the above listed fees were set up by the state Ministry of Education. In the interview with one of the respondents, it was pointed out that students in public schools in all the local government areas of Enugu State pay one form of levy or the other. In Enugu State, it was discovered that school children are being required to pay various types of levies, such as examination levies, project fees, development fees, among others. Failure to pay any of the fees, leads to the child being sent home during school hours or being disenfranchised from participating in assessments and examinations.

The various imposed levies have made education inaccessible, especially for street children who struggle to cater for themselves and sometimes for their siblings. The idea of getting struggling people to pay fees they cannot afford, pushes them away from school, right into the streets, seeking other means of survival. These children are caught in a bind between buying food and paying school fees. Using the economic concept of scale of preference, they will rather buy food and miss out on education because solving hunger is a far more important issue than attaining an education. Below is an excerpt from his interview:

> … in the case of Enugu State where we are currently, children pay, they call it developmental levy and eeh exam fee, which for junior school is 1,900. For senior school it's 2,900 and we are talking about free education. And when students don't pay these fees, they are not entitled – they will not be allowed to attend classes, neither will they be allowed to write exams (IDI001).

With such discoveries, one wonders if there is actually a free education for the vulnerable children in street situations.

5.3.4. Poor policy implementation

There are policies that the government – at both national and regional levels – has put in place; however, the challenge is how the policies are being implemented. There are policies and laws regarding quality and affordable universal basic education in Nigeria – such policies include the

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Universal Basic Education Act of 2004, and the Child's Right Act of 2003, among others. So, if we are asking for laws promoting children's access to basic education, it will be easy to say yes. On the other hand, the implementation of these policies raises questions. Implementation is a challenge, as some respondents pointed out that the people who are meant to implement the free education principles are the ones collecting money in the name of all the listed levies. Snippets of some of the responses received, are captured below:

> … eeh the implementation now is the challenge we are facing in terms of eeh the growing number of out-of-school children because eeh you make a law that ok aahm every child should have access to quality … in the case of Enugu State where we are currently, children pay, they call it developmental levy and eeh exam fee which for junior school is 1,900… In general, in the whole state, the seventeen local governments that are made up of eeh the other time they were telling us they have almost 160 something secondary schools in Enugu. The government-owned institutions pay 1,900 into accounts. Now we have what they call the SBMC which is eeh eeh the School Board Management Committee … (IDI015)

5.3.5. *Birth registration requirements*

Birth registration is the formal recording of the birth of a child by a government agency bestowed with such functions. It is a process through which the birth of a child is documented lawfully by an authorised government agency in the government civil register (Zimmerman, 2019). Birth registration is important because it officially recognises the child and their identity, acknowledging the child's right to a name and nationality. Birth registration is the first lawful acknowledgment of the child and is needed in order for the child to have a birth certificate (Hunter & Sugiyama, 2018).

One of the major stumbling blocks to the education of street children boils down to the registration requirements. The two major requirements needed, include a birth registration certificate and a traceable address. These two requirements are difficult for street children to produce as most of them are estranged from their biological families and many of their births were never registered. UNICEF's Impact Evaluation Report of 2018 shows that an alarming 70% of Nigerian children under the age of 5 years have no birth registration.

Birth registration, apart from being covered in Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is the official documentation of a child's birth by government and this registration record is meant to help the government in making informed decisions in their plans to safeguard the rights of the child.

The birth registration certificate is one of the documents required to get children enrolled in school and without it, most street children automatically miss out from the population of people to benefit from the free education policy. One of the respondents, when asked about street children's hindrances to accessing education, had this to say:

> … you know that about 87% of street children don't have a birth certificate and they have no traceable address. These two issues are part of what excludes them from being among eligible persons the government said they are offering free education (IDI004).

Some of the street children themselves in the course of the focus group discussion, confirmed the challenges such as birth certificate, shelter and other documents which they could not produce, that made it impossible for them to register in school in the urban areas since they relocated from their villages. According to one of the children:

> When I come to Enugu from my village, I spent some time trying to know how to move around and where to sleep. After that time, I go to Ekulu Primary School to see whether them go take me, but them tell me, say I go need, go bring paper wey contain when them born me. And also I go need go bring other things like former results and address where I dey stay (Male FGD).

What are street children's perceptions about accessing basic education?

According to Garzón et al. (2019), basic education denotes all the educational activities that take place in various settings with the aim of meeting simple learning needs. Furthermore, the International Standard Classification of Education posits that basic education encompasses primary to junior secondary education. Based on this classification, basic education in Nigeria is from primary one to junior secondary school (JSS3) class three (Ayara et al., 2013). Discussions with street children revealed how these children feel about basic education and education in general. They spoke about their aspirations and dreams of what they want to become when they grow up and most of them asserted that education is the key to who they would love to be in the future.

5.3.6 Access to employment

Most recruitment and job-seeking processes usually require certificates acquired through education. When asked what they would like to be in the future, the children responded by naming professions such as medical doctor, lawyer, accountant, soldier, business person, trader, electrician, etc. The majority of their responses require formal education, starting with basic education, while artisanal careers like traders and electricians could be attained through apprenticeship (informal education). One of the boys shared his career aspirations:

> I want to go to school and stop at SS3, get a certificate and enter the military. That's all I want from education. If I don't enter the military, my family will not have a say until I bear children. (Male FGD)

The choice of profession of street children shows that they see education as tool to achieving what they want to be in life. They are aware that they cannot be medical doctors, accountants, lawyers, etc. without education. They regard school as being important but also acknowledge that some factors impede them from going to school. Some of the children reflected thus:

> Schooling is important, very important. If you can have a cool head, you will learn a lot about schooling (Male FGD).

> All of us want to go to school. There is no one that you will point to now amongst us that doesn't know the value of education. The problem is the school fees. If you can't pay the fees, you will fail … (Mixed group FGD, female participant).

5.3.7 Way out of poverty

Education is seen differently by different people and many people regard education as the vehicle that will lead them out of one situation or the other. It is no different among street children. Most of the street children believe that education holds the key to their financial emancipation. With education, they will know how to read and write, get qualifications that will give them job opportunities that will lead to their financial freedom. One major factor that has led these children into the streets, to fend for themselves – and in some cases for their siblings as well – is poverty. They therefore believe that should they be able to be educated, they will be able to turn around their current condition and help their families. They regard education as being important, but something that they cannot afford due to prohibitive costs and other socio-economic factors:

… to go school dey good, I want to go school so that I go fit learn and get better work wey go help me to dey pay for things I need, but I no get money to take pay school fees, buy uniform, buy books. To even buy food chop sometimes hard (Female FGD).

5.3.8 Social status

Street children regard education as a way of uplifting their societal status. They are of the view that they will be seen in a different perspective if they were educated or if they were going to school. People in the community regard educated people as respectable people. Also, they believe that, with education, it will be easier to associate with people in other strata of the society:

This side wey we dey stay, them like people wey go school and people wey dey go school well well pass people wey no dey go school. If I dey go school, them no go dey look me like say I be thief (Male FGD).

If I am going to school, they will respect me more and even associate with me better. I will get better help because people like children that are going to school. They see us who are begging in the street as problem (Mixed FGD).

You know, it is bad for some of your peers to be able to read while you aren't able to read too. From among us, you know there are teachers, headmasters and some of the human resources that are needed for society's growth. As we are now, we don't know the destiny of each other, but going to school will help us to actualise our full potentials. To get employed, it is your qualification that will help you to become employed (Male FGD).

They have the perception that with education, one becomes less of a problem in the society as one will be able to read and understand instructions and apply it to one's activities and stay out of trouble. Education is important to most of the street children because it holds the key to where society will place them in the future, as expressed by these young people:

… if you a driver you will know what inscriptions are made, for example, "No parking". But if you are not literate, you will not know what's written on the notice board and then you will become a nuisance (Male FGD).

When you are with friends and peers, they will be making jest of you because you are not literate (Mixed FGD).

What are the roles of stakeholders in addressing the challenges of street children in accessing universal basic education?

Stakeholders are people with a vested interest in something. There are various stakeholders in issues relating to children and street children. These stakeholders vary from government to the children themselves. To mitigate the challenges of street children in accessing basic education, this study gathered the various roles, suggested by participants, that stakeholders need to play, which include policy making and intervention programmes. Some of the stakeholders in the welfare of street children include the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, child focused non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, and faith-based organisations. Additionally, the stakeholders include community development associations, multinational co-operations, private business organisations, parents, community leaders, teachers, and even street children. The roles of stakeholders include policy making and implementation, awareness-creation, advocacy, watchdog roles, intervention development and implementation. According to one of the participants:

> Well, starting from the government, government should ensure that the basic education is free and affordable. Then parents and guardians should also help to encourage their children to go to school by putting them in school and making sure they go, instead of taking them to their business places or giving them things to hawk. The church can also help by putting these street children in school and sponsoring their education. Individuals can also help to sponsor them too (IDI012).

5.3.9 Policy-making and implementation

The bane of the issues concerning street children is hinged upon policies and implementation of those policies. The government and its ministries and agencies were listed by respondents as stakeholders in issues concerning street children. The roles they are expected to play border more on making policies and implementation of the policies. From the responses received from the interviews conducted, one can assume that the challenge is not in developing policies but in implementing the existing policies and programmes, as underscored by this participant:

> Now in terms of the government, the government has the role to make policies that is going to be favourable to the poor masses, the underserved and underprivileged communities who are not well informed about education. So, if these policies by the government are not favourable or are not favourable and accessible to the people, it will really affect whatever

the town union are doing. Now we come back to the multinational co-operations we have, they have to support the government as well by eeh creating eeh [an] environment too for the people. Currently, we're talking about the issue of STEAM and STEM in education (IDI001).

5.3.10 Awareness-creation and advocacy

Awareness-creation simply means 'to be made known', to convey knowledge or information for people to know about something. Advocacy, on the other hand, is an action that is targeted at influencing choices within a social, economic or political institution. These choices may be policies, programmes, Acts or perception.

There are programmes and policies that concern children, but from interactions with people, they are not aware of such. How can one access a benefit that one is not aware of? The onus of creating awareness does not lie only with the government and its agencies. Other stakeholders like non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, religious bodies, and knowledgeable individuals should also join in creating awareness and ensuring that there is information flow. With such actions, no one will be left behind.

Within communities, it is noted that there are town unions. This town union plays a part in the development of the community as well as influencing decisions and actions within the community. Town unions should also be pressured to take up the task of ensuring that people of their communities benefit from policies such as the free education policy. This study discovered that the town unions have the means to sensitise the community and to see to it that information trickles down to every member of the community. Should they carry out their function, which includes being a pressure group, then it will be difficult for any child within their community to be excluded from benefitting from policies that will develop their capacity. This participant agreed:

> Non-governmental organisations create enlightenment on basic education, advocate for implementation of policies, support the community in carrying out their task, help businesses identify areas where support is really needed and monitor the implementation of UBE programme (IDI002).

Additionally, advocacy plays a key role in ensuring that policies and programmes are implemented efficiently and effectively. Advocacy helps in bringing information of what the needs are for a programme or policy to be effective. It helps with creating awareness and letting the people who matter

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know what is going well and what is not, what needs to be done and how it should be done to achieve the best results. Some of the responses received, buttressed the fact that some of the policies concerning children would have been better articulated should there be a dialogue between stakeholders to find out how such policies were going to affect the society. Respondents from civil society also stressed about not being given the acknowledgement of their advice, by the policy makers. They carry out advocacy visits to heads of ministries, agencies and even the lawmakers, and some of their advocacy work really helps in correcting some of the challenges that would have materialised from initial drafted policies and programmes.

5.3.11 Watchdogging

Just as the three arms of government serve as watchdogs to each other, there is a need for stakeholders to act as watchdogs when it comes to policy making and implementation. There is need a for someone to hold government accountable, not just to develop policies, but also for the full implementation of policies and programmes so that the goal of such policies and programmes will be achieved. The civil societies are best placed to be able to detect how a policy is being implemented and how effective it is. In finding out, they also need to canvass for better implementation or a total change to the policy. They need to serve as policy and programme watchdogs. The civil societies are closer to the grassroots than the policy makers and will be able to see on a first-hand basis how policies and programmes are being implemented. They can share best-practices and suggest ways forward. They can help the people who are interested in becoming watchdogs, concerned about the interests and happenings of the society and community mobilisers for social change, of which the issues concerning the welfare of street children, are an integral part.

5.3.12 Intervention development and implementation

There is a need for intervention programmes that will help street children access education, to be developed. The interventions fall under some of the programmes and activities of some stakeholders, such as non-governmental organisations, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism and even faith-based organisations. Some of the respondents indicated during the interviews that there are some interventions that have been carried out in the past to get street children out of the street, but they were not successful. One of the interventions was carried out by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. It provided a building to house street children and made efforts to move street children there and stop the children from begging in the street. Unfortunately, according to some of the children placed in this shelter, they

were not provided with food after the first few days. The intervention was only to tick boxes and after press coverage for public glory, the children were left to fend for themselves and returned to the streets.

Non-governmental organisations have also carried out some interventions in the past and are still doing so. Organisations like the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) Nigeria, implemented a programme between 2012 and 2015 on the re-integration of street children with families and enrolling them in schools. However, due to no sustainable funding for the intervention, it ended as soon as the funds dried up. The key to solving the problem of street children and providing them with access to education, requires not only development of the intervention, but also providing a sustainable means of funding the implementation.

5.3.13 Shelter and nutrition

Part of the challenges depriving street children from enrolling in school is the absence of an address that they can be traced to. An address is required in the various schools' application forms. During the focus group discussion, some of the children asked questions concerning how they would be able to go to school when they have no roof over their heads and from where they would wake up, prepare and then go to school. They were also of the view that if stakeholders provide them with shelter and register them in schools, they were willing to go to school:

> What can be done, is to rent an apartment for us that can contain 3 persons to a room to live. The second thing is to register us in school (Mixed Group, female respondent).

The bulk of the street children sleep in the open, under bridges and in uncompleted buildings. These are places that are clearly not ideal for children and also not conducive for learning. One of the children suggested that if stakeholders can help provide street children with shelter, they will be able to source other things they need, such as clothes, food etc.:

> .. what we need most is a house so that we will have a place to be sleeping. If people can help us with this, we can source for food, clothes, and other things we need to survive. (FGD, male respondent 2).

Food is also a motivation for learning as it will be difficult to learn on an empty stomach. Part of the reasons why these children are on the street, is because they are looking for means to eat. Food insecurity is part of their worries because they have no parents or guardians providing for them. A feeding programme is part of what some of the stakeholders can provide to help these children. It can

be in a form of school feeding programmes where the children get to eat in school or a feeding programme that is linked to staying in a provided shelter. Some civil society organisations have feeding programmes but they are not consistent, as they only go out to feed the poor during festive occasions. Some of these organisations have gone on to help reintegrate children in homes where they are catered for and provided with basic needs, including which food, shelter and education.

5.3.14 Equipping schools

Educational infrastructure is important in the quest to achieve universal basic education. There need to be school buildings with adequate desks and chairs, with equipped laboratories, sick-bays, and sport facilities. A school needs to have everything necessary for the holistic development of the child, including street children. Equipping public schools majorly falls in the domain of government, but they will not mind support from other stakeholders. During the course of collecting data, this study found out from respondents that apart from government, stakeholders such as multinational corporations and private business owners can fund some projects like equipping schools. As part of organisations' corporate responsibilities, helping schools with some of the equipment and infrastructure they need will go a long way in making access to education a dream come true for some children, as the school might have adequate facilities to accommodate and leave no child behind, in the quest for education for all. According to these respondents:

> … So multinational corporations can help by providing some of these needs eeh eeh eeh … lab or equipment in eeh help in providing facilities for practical [work] in their technical schools (IDI001).

> Businesses – Fund the provision of learning and teaching materials including school buildings (IDI002).

It is on record that some telecommunication companies have equipped some of the public schools with information and communication technology centres where students get to put into practice what they have been taught in computer science classes. Such donations from corporate organisations are some of the gestures that respondents are referring to, as part of what stakeholders should do to help bring education to every child.

5.4 Conclusion

To conclude, this research discovered multiple challenges hindering street children from accessing universal basic education in Enugu State, Nigeria, even in the face of policies stating that there is free universal basic education. Children are being asked to pay for a range of levies and fees, like examination levy, handwork levy, project fees, Parents-Teachers' Association Levy, etc. Their inability to pay excludes them from attending school. Aside from such levies, hunger and shelter are also notable challenges, as the children reported that without being sure of the next meal, they will rather use the time for school, rather than rallying around, looking for what to eat. Without adequate roofs over their heads, they look unkempt and will not be allowed into classrooms to study.

The issue regarding effective implementation of policies and programmes has also affected street children's access to education. It is one thing to make policies but also another thing to effectively implement policy. The Nigerian Universal Basic Education Policy made provision for free basic education in public schools, but the interpretation of the term 'free' seems to be different in the understanding of the Education Management Board as they develop levies which school children are forced to pay.

The study also learned that there are few or no intervention programmes targeted at street children. Various child-focused organisations have programmes and activities targeted at children in general, but most do not include children in street situations. This has contributed to the challenges of street children, as in most cases, their voices are not heard and they continue to be among the excluded when it comes to programmes and policies developed for the benefit of the child. Organisations that are meant to serve as watchdogs when it comes to implementation of policies and programmes, generally focus on programmes that are being funded and do little or nothing to raise awareness in other areas that have been omitted. Unfortunately, street children often fall into the omitted category.

It is evident that many children in street situations view education as the key to their upliftment and seriously desire to be educated. Many of them aspire to be doctors, accountants, lawyers, soldiers, etc. They regard education as the instrument through which they can know their rights and be good citizens. Their perceptions regarding education also show that they are optimistic that the society will embrace and hear them if they were going to school than just be on the streets. They hold firm beliefs that education will change their social status. However, enrolment requirements, inadequate education facilities, poor policy implantation, lack of intervention programmes, among other issues, have continued to hinder street children from accessing basic education in Nigeria.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study aimed to empirically discover the challenges hindering street children from benefitting from the universal basic education programme in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. The discoveries from this study confirm that street children want to be educated but the implementation of the universal basic education programme in Nigeria is poor, and in many cases, not as free as it is stated in the policy documents. Notably, the study learned that there are various means through which some forms of fees are being collected from students of various 'free education' institutions, and that there are enrolment criteria that are also hindering street children from accessing free education. The study also discovered that a wide range of factors are contributing to pushing and pulling children into the streets. Such factors include poverty, child maltreatment and neglect on the part of guardians, death of parents, lack of caregivers, etc., while factors hindering the street children from accessing education include poverty, hidden fees, lack of shelter, poor hygiene, enrolment requirements, hunger, etc.

In this chapter, the study provides an in-depth breakdown and clarification of its findings in the context of the themes explored during the literature review. This chapter also draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

6.2 Street Children and Education

This research adopted Hai's (2014) definition of street children, to include any child under 18 years of age who is connected to the streets, either by living in the street or working in the street, on a seasonal or transitory basis. Hai (2014) maintains that street children also include children who, in order to afford basic needs, are involved in informal work in the street; children who spend the day seeking alms in the street; children who, for economic gains, get involved in sexual activities; and children who are in conflict with the law because of their involvement in street crimes, such as the sale of drugs or who function as drug mules. The findings from this study, which are also supported by the arguments of Cumber and Tsoka-Gwegweni (2015) and Alem and Laha (2016) show that there are different categories of street children, but the one thread that cuts across the various categories of street children, is that they are solely in-charge of their own welfare. They make decisions for themselves without any adult guidance. There are those who are fully living on the street and there are those who only fend for themselves on the street but return to their families at night. The study also learnt that there are different perceptions about street children. They are viewed differently by different people. Some people regard them as children without parents, who need care and affection, while some view

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street children as miscreants and people causing a nuisance in the community. Similarly, Dladla and Ogina (2018) found that street children are viewed as vulnerable, impoverished, and dysfunctional. The researchers stressed that street children are seen differently from other children and are treated likewise.

Education is one issue that many thought would not interest street children, but in discussing it with them, this study discovered that many of these children in street situations desire to have an education, as they feel that it is a means to getting their future sorted and their ticket to getting off the street. In support of the findings by Clerk et al. (2019) this study shows that street children face barriers in their quest to access education. The barriers mentioned in the work of Clerk et al. (2019) are the same obstacles identified by the study. They include barriers revolving around the lack of a traceable address, no legal identity, age barriers, etc. Also, those who manage to enrol in schools, face discrimination, marginalisation and stigmatisation (Clerk et al., 2019). One major hindrance for street children accessing education unearthed by the study, is poverty. The work by Olatunji (2018), similarly identified poverty as a major hindrance to children's education in Nigeria (Olatunji, 2018).

The perceptions that street children have of education, as discovered in this study, are consistent with the views of Clerk et al. (2019), Dladla and Ogina (2018), and Jamiludin et al. (2018) on street children regarding education as a game changer in their situation and as a key to a better life. Education brings about multiple opportunities, apart from it being an instrument for socialisation and a means of networking. It affords children the scope to aspire to and pursue their dreams. Street children aspire to becoming engineers, medical doctors, teachers, business men and women, lawyers, law enforcement officers, pilots, etc., and they are aware that they need education to actualise these dreams. They want to be educated and have pointed out that education is their way out of their predicaments; but they need government to fully implement its policies of free education. Other studies such as that of Alam & Wajidi (2014) also corroborate the findings that street children believe that education is their way out of their predicaments. In this regard, Clerk et al. (2019) assert that "… education is the key of life and one who does not have education, is nothing in life"; they also maintain that education, if extended to the vulnerable youths living in street situations, will be their opportunity to overcome their predicaments.

6.3 Street Children and Policy Implementation

While there is evidence that there are policies concerning children in Nigeria, studies have raised concerns about the manner in which the policies are implemented. This study is in consonance with what researchers such as Ihugba (2020) and Evans-Obinna and Ndieze (2017) have previously established, that there are policies concerning free education in Nigeria but the implementation is poor or not implemented at all. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution, the Child's Rights Act of 2003, and the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004 all made it clear that basic education is free, but in reality, this study has discovered that even though there are policies supporting free education, students are being made to pay fees through various ways ranging from levies for exams, labour levy, project levy, etc. Part 1 Section 2 of the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004 states clearly that,

> Every Government in Nigeria shall provide free, compulsory and universal basic education for every child of primary and junior secondary school age.

As such, this proves that there are policies in place concerning free basic education in Nigeria, but in reality, children within school age are forced to pay to acquire education and this is making it difficult for street children, thereby increasing the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria.

Opoh et al. (2015) and Oladimeji and Ogunyebi (2019) in their various studies confirm the poor implementation of education policies, as also discovered in this study. Both these studies point out the failure on the part of implementation agencies and ministries where it concerns the Universal Basic Education Programme. They point out that the objectives of the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004 have not been met and that the implementing agencies have failed. Oladimeji & Ogunyebi (2019) go further to emphasise that corruption is one of the main issues that has led to the poor implementation of the policy. Other challenges regarding the poor implementation of the education policy, as discovered during this study and supported by findings of other studies like that of Opoh et al. (2015), and Oladimeji & Ogunyebi (2019) include poor capacity of the Nigerian education sector; incompetence of the agencies, parastatals or ministries; improper utilisation of funds mapped out for the programme; and the nonchalant manner of policy implementers.

6.4 Education as a Right of Street Children

Education is not a privilege but a fundamental right of the child and is supported globally by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), regionally by the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and domestically by not only the Child Rights Act of 2003, but also by the

1999 Nigerian Constitution, the 2004 Nigerian Universal Basic Education Act, among others. The study found that, in as much as the term 'street children' was not mentioned in the various policies, it does not mean that they are excluded from being beneficiaries of what the policy promises. The Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2016), emphasises and insists that children should be granted full access to education and as such, promote the goal of full inclusion. The views and perceptions of people during the study shows that education is regarded as a right, and many civil society organisations are implementing programmes to enlighten people concerning their right to education. Unfortunately, the Nigerian government has not shown such effort and commitment in ensuring that all people, especially street children, benefit from such rights.

6.5 Education as key to child development and reduction of population of street children

The value of education cannot be overemphasised. Education holds the key to the aspirations of all people, including children. It cannot be denied that most of what the street children aspire to be will only be realised if they get educated. In support of the findings of Jamiludin et al. (2018) and Ezegwu et al. (2017) about the importance of education to child development, this study found that education is the major means through which child development will be achieved. Education has also been acknowledged as the most effective means of curbing the rise in the number of street children, resulting in these vulnerable and neglected members of society posing less nuisance to the community but rather taking up their place as productive citizens of the society. Basic education, which equips a child with the ability to read and write, is a huge step to the formation and moulding of the child to be a respectful (and respected) member of the society.

Other studies that have supported the conviction that education contributes to the reduction of the population of street children, include Karami et al. (2017) who demonstrate how the education of street children will reduce not only the population of street children, but also improve the relationship between law enforcement and children in street situations. The resilience of street children is hinged upon their access to education and the foundation that education will provide to them. To build a better society, the educational needs of all children, especially street children, should be prioritised.

6.6 Conclusion

The findings of this research study have implications for people's understanding of the situations of street children. Education brings about enlightenment and improves the capabilities and opportunities for street children, boosting their confidence and self-belief that they can be whoever and whatever they want to be. The perceptions that many have about street children will change, should these

children be granted access to education, be appropriately sheltered and be given the opportunity to become the persons they desire to be. Education is one of the fundamental rights of the child and there are conventions, policies and acts that offer basic education free of charge to children, but the reality on the ground shows otherwise. Street children are faced with difficulties in accessing this free education, as barriers that have to do with one form of levy or the other have been set up due to corruption and poor policy implementation and is now hindering street children from benefitting from these policies. Street children have demonstrated their willingness to go to school, but government on the other hand, will need to ensure that the various education policies are implemented to the fullest, should they want to achieve the aims and objectives of those policies.

The study has shown that, knowingly and unknowingly, street children have been excluded from benefitting from free education policies in Nigeria and this has contributed to the increase of the population of out-of-school children and the promotion of underdevelopment in Nigeria. There are chances that the failed implementation of the free education system will lead to the continued increase in children's participation in crime and delinquency (Ikuomola, 2019). The findings warn against the continuous deprivation of access to education for street children and caution that it will lead to an increase in crime within the society as these young people might become delinquents and do whatever is within their powers to survive both on the street where they live and in life in general.

The education of street children should not be limited to formal education, as many of these young people are open-minded regarding informal education and apprenticeships where they can learn and acquire skills in various crafts and trades. Apart from becoming medical doctors, teachers, accountants, lawyers, among other professions, some of these children want to become plumbers, electricians, mechanics, welders, block-layers and traders. The onus to make the world a better place for children does not fall on government alone, but rests on the widest range of stakeholders, including the private sector corporations and individuals. Everyone has a part to play in ensuring that children are protected, provided for and educated to become better citizens.

In conclusion, the questions explored in this research were hinged on the argument that street children care less about education and are not willing to go to school even when education is available free of charge. The research, through qualitative procedures, went all out to understand why street children are not benefitting from the free education policies that have been put in place for children in Nigeria and in Enugu State in particular. The so-called 'free education' was however, discovered not to be as free as it is being projected and this has led to a large number of children being excluded from accessing education, to at least junior secondary class three. Education holds vast opportunities, not only for

children, but for provinces, nations and Africa at large. The final responsibility remains with the Nigerian government, to demonstrate its commitment to repair the damage inflicted on the most vulnerable in society. Otherwise, the government will continue its legacy of failing the future leaders and builders of the country – talented young people who are currently eking out a miserable and treacherous existence, and stigmatized as unproductive "street children".

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ANNEXURES

Annexure A: In-depth Interview Guide

My name is Mr Emmanuel Ogbuabo. This research is being conducted as part of a Master's degree in Development Studies. The overall aim of this research is to find out more about street children's access to Universal Basic Education. The discussion will take between 30 minutes to an hour.

Consent:

The interviewee will be provided with copy of the information sheet on the study. There will be a consent form that the interviewee will sign before the interview starts. This is to ensure that the interviewee understands the rules of participation.

Rules:

- ➢ Feel free to answer questions, there will be no judgement.
- ➢ If you need clarity on any question, feel free to ask me.

In-depth Interview Core Questions

1. Tell us about the policies and programmes that promote children's right to education in Enugu/Nigeria.
2. What measures are in place to implement such policies and programmes effectively and efficiently?
3. Tell us about the Universal Basic Education programme in Enugu/Nigeria.
4. What are the barriers affecting street children from accessing basic education|?
5. How can street children overcome these barriers?
6. Tell us about the free education policies and programmes in Enugu/Nigeria.
7. Why are street children not benefitting from the free education policies in Enugu/Nigeria?
8. What impact will access to education have on street children in Enugu/Nigeria/Africa and the world?
9. Who are the stakeholders in the process of accessing Universal Basic Education in Enugu?
10. What roles do they play?

Annexure B: Focus Group Discussion Guide

My name is Mr Emmanuel Ogbuabo. This research is being conducted as part of a Master's degree in Development Studies. The overall aim of this research is to find out more about street children's access to Universal Basic Education. The discussion will take between 30 minutes to an hour.

Consent:

The interviewee will be provided with copy of the information sheet on the study. There will be a consent form that the interviewee will sign before the interview starts. This is to ensure that the interviewee understands the rules of participation.

Rules:

➢ Feel free to answer questions, there will be no judgement.

➢ If you need clarity on any question, feel free to ask me.

Focus Group Discussion Core Questions

1. Why are you on the street?
2. Tell us about your education. Why are you not going to school?
3. What are the challenges you face in going to school?
4. What do you like about school?
5. What do you know about free education in Enugu State/Nigeria?
6. What should be done to ensure you go to school?
7. What do you think about going to school?
8. How do people look at you? How do they feel about you?
9. What do you want to be when you grow up?
10. How will you achieve what you want to be, when you grow up?