

**THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND CHILD PROTECTION NETWORK
INITIATIVE IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

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Matric. No.: **142189**

A Thesis in the Peace and Conflict Studies Programme,
Submitted to the Department of Peace, Security and Humanitarian Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of the

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

OCTOBER, 2021

CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to Almighty Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful,
and
My Lovely Family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to Almighty Allah who made this possible. I will ever be grateful for His mercies.

My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisor; Dr. Willie Eselebor and co-supervisor; Dr. Temitope Abiodun who were not only firm on issues but were also friendly enough to let me see their critique as necessary injections to strengthen the work. Their mentorship, support and constant readiness to work even outside official hours will remain evergreen in my memory.

I am grateful to the immediate past Director of the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, Professor Tajudeen Akanji for his unrelenting guidance to us and his love for improvement in the system which he consistently hammering into our hears. Also, my heartfelt appreciation goes to the Acting Head of Department, Department of Peace, Security and Humanitarian Studies; Dr. Nathaniel Dominic Danjibo who has always provided all the necessary support and constructive criticism for the work. Moreover, my lecturers in the Institute have been wonderful and I do not take for granted their contributions to improve my work. I appreciate their magnanimity in checking my work each time I requested for such support even at their inconvenience. Repeated reviews by Drs. Ruth-Adio Moses, Stephen Faleti, Benjamin Aluko, Lanre Oladejo Funmi Agbaje and the General Secretary Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP); Adeola Adams no doubt improved the quality of this work. The foundations for this journey to pursue a doctoral degree were effectively laid by both Professor Oyesoji Aremu and Dr. Isola Olusola who were respectively my supervisors while studying for the Masters Degrees in Humanitarian and Refugees Studies as well as in Peace and Conflict Studies. I am grateful sirs. Professor Isaac Olawale Albert and wife, Dr. Oluremi Albert deserve my special appreciation for their support in all aspects. Theirs is a family worthy of emulation.

During my field work, I enjoyed the unalloyed support and cooperation of various institutions both government and non-governmental that is critical to the success of the thesis. Worthy of note is the Nigerian Army (NA), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Nigeria Police (NP), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS), National Drug and Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Oyo State Ministry of Education, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Child Protection Networks (CPN), Civil

Society Organisations (CSOs) among others. They all provided an enabling environment for me during my numerous sessions and engagements with them.

The acknowledgement will be incomplete without my gratitude to the non-academic staffs of the Institute; Mr Idris, Mr. Hammed and others. I thank you all for your commitment and the spirit of willingness to help always. Also some of my colleagues and friends within the institute were so wonderful and supportive; Engr. Oladayo S. Ojo, Dr. Lanre Yusuf, ‘President’ Hamilton and a host of others, thank you.

To my bosses in the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps headed by the amiable Commandant-General; Dr. Ahmed Abubakar Audi *mi*, former Commandant-Generals; Abdullahi Gana Muhammadu and Dr. Adewale Abolurin *OFR*, I am very grateful. My thanks also go to my brother and *Oga*, Dr. Solomon Olasupo for being part of the foundation for this exercise, God bless you sir. I also appreciate other colleagues and subordinates including Mrs Suulola, Dr. Egberedu Mega, my ever willing editor; Aremu Sangolade, Akinpelu (Ololo), Alade (Deano), Salami, Ibikunle and others in my Ibadan office for giving me the needed support and helping hands when needed most.

To my darling wife, Fatimah and Children, thanks for your immeasurable support and patience with me all the time.

Hammed Abodunrin

October, 2021.

ABSTRACT

Adequate protection of children is critical to the future of any society especially in the developing economies like Nigeria, where protection culture is hindered by myriads of problems. To enhance child security, UNICEF organised child-focused non-governmental organisations, security and other government agencies into various groups called Child Protection Network (CPN) in 2011. While improved health and education issues have received scholarly attention, physical security of children and the roles expected of the organisation are not sufficiently documented in the literature. The study therefore examined emergence of CPN child protection issues, response skills for children, CPN alternative strategies and challenges facing the network in Oyo State.

The Jane Piaget's Child Development and Max Weber's Complexity Theories, the Case Study design were employed. The Primary and secondary data were used. Ten in-depth interviews were conducted with selected CPN members working in orphanages, schools, empowerment agencies, street children, child rights organisations, child labour organisations, human trafficking organisations, vulnerable children and narcotics areas. Fifteen Key Informant Interviews were conducted with heads of security agencies and Criminal Justice administration including Nigerian Police Force (4), Nigerian Army (1), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (2), Nigerian Immigration Service (2), Nigerian Correctional Service (2), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (1), Federal Road Safety Corps (1), Chief Judge and Chief Magistrate of the Juvenile court (2). Four FGDs were conducted: three with 12 secondary school children in the most populous school in each senatorial district (Ibadan, Iseyin and Ogbomosho) and one was conducted with other CPN members. Six CPN's monthly meetings, three school training programmes, one rally and 10 juvenile court sessions were observed. Data collected were content-analysed.

Despite the existing Child Rights laws in Oyo State, children still need protection against rape, defilement, child trafficking, incidence of street children, kidnapping, child labour, drug trafficking and out of school syndrome. Prospects in empowering children to play vital roles in their own security by acquiring trainings in child protection, child rights knowledge, self-defense, negotiation skills and security consciousness were indicated. The CPN alternative strategies included: child placement, direct interventions in bills payment, counseling, monitoring, organising protests, rallies, media campaigns, teaching parenting skills to the public and conducting school based self-protection training programmes towards comprehensive child security. In spite of their efforts, the CPN still encountered challenges of inadequate funding, regular conflict with the police, lack of formal training among child protectors, lack of borstals, and family courts, second degree abandonment, low level of public awareness, members lukewarm attitudes and community interference in criminal proceedings.

The Child Protection Network initiative is impactful, but faces significant hindrances. Its potentials can be better explored with adequate funding, collaborating with security agencies, establishment of borstals and more family courts.

Keywords: Child protection rights, Non-Governmental Organisation, Security agencies, UNICEF, Oyo state.

Wordcount: 446

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACJ	Administration of Child Justice
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ALISON	Advanced Learning Interactive System Online
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
CAR	Children at Risk
CCC	Core Commitment for Children
CDCF	Child Protection and Concern Foundation
CGCI	Child Growth Concern Initiative
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CJ	Chief Justice
CNSP	Children in Need of Special Protection
CP	Controller of Prison
CPN	Child Protection Network
CRA	Child Rights Act
CRC	Convention on the Right Child
CRL	Child Rights Law
DFCs	Drug Free Clubs
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FIDA	Federation Internacional de Abogadas
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
IDIS	In-depth Interviews
IFRCRCS	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IHL	International Humanitarian Law

ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LERAPO	Legal Rights Awareness and Protection Organisation
LGAS	Local Government Areas
NA	Nigeria Army
NAN	News Agency of Nigeria
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons
NBA	Nigeria Bar Association
NDLEA	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
NEMA	National Emergency Management agency
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIS	Nigeria Immigration Service
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NPS	Nigeria Prisons Service
NRA	Nigeria Child Rights Act
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
NUJ	Nigeria Union of Journalists
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OCJW	Officer –In-Charge of Juvenile Welfare
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PPRO	Police Public Relations Officer
PTA	Parents and Teachers Association
RSCs	Road Safety Clubs
SARS	Special Anti Robbery Squad
SSS	Senior Secondary School
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child

UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNSEGE	United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education
USDHHA	US Department of Health and Human Services and Administration
VAC	Violence Against Children
WARSHE	Women Against Rape, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation
WASW	Women Affairs and Social Welfare
WHO	World Health Organisation
WRA	World Record Academy

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The idea of Child Protection Network (CPN) is the initiative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to reduce the challenges facing children globally, especially during conflicts and emergencies. The CPN is to bring together, all Non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and agencies statutorily empowered to deal with the security of the child and engage in other humanitarian interventions. The network is a forum where ideas can be shared and solutions proffered to various problems confronting the child. Thus, the term "Child Protection" connotes "all activities aimed at preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children - including commercial sex exploitation, trafficking, child labour and other harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage" (UNICEF fact sheet, 2006). The fund states further that, "It also involves medium- and long-term tasks to strengthen and broaden programmes that could reduce casualties from violence, conflict-related and other emergencies including natural disasters." Child protection is an evolving phenomenon due to the fact that in the past, children were not protected against some practices which are now protection issues. Examples of such include the issues of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and that of inscribing tribal marks on children as part of the culture especially in various parts of Nigeria. These two age-long cultural practices and many others have now been outlawed by various statutes at global, regional, national and local levels.

It is widely recognised in the literatures surveyed that, children are the most vulnerable, yet they account for about 2.2 billion or a third of the world population estimates of seven billion (UNICEF, 2014). “This fact about child vulnerability stares the world in the face in our recent history judging from the Rwanda genocide of 1994 where about 300 children were murdered” (Human Rights Watch, 2003). In the ongoing Syria War, researchers at the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium are of the view that while men make up the overall majority of civilians killed in the war, nearly 25 percent of the estimated 80,000 civilians killed by explosive weapons were women and children (Taylor, 2015). Besides, a report titled *A Devastating Toll: The impact of three years of war on the health of Syria’s children*, by *Save the Children*, a charity outfit, revealed that “at least 1.2 million children have fled the conflict and become refugees in neighbouring countries” which may include Turkey, Greece and Germany among others.

Also, the incessant attacks on children by insurgent rebels who either kill them, use them as human shields or child soldiers all over the world is a source of concern. For instance, a Radio Nigeria commentary of February 26, 2015 put the number of child soldiers in Africa alone at about one million. In Nigeria, between 2013 and 2015, *Boko Haram*, which is an insurgent group, killed about two hundred school children in frequent attacks on their schools in the North-eastern part of the country comprising Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. The group, officially known as *Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’Awati Wal-Jihad*, has adopted *Boko Haram* as their alias which literally translates to “Western education is evil.” In one fell swoop in 2014, *Boko Haram* also kidnapped a bevy of over two hundred girls from their school hostels in a hitherto sleepy community called Chibok, in Borno State. There were reports that those captured were being used as sex slaves as the group had earlier threatened to marry all the girls off, and this threat appeared to be real as some of those released so far have become mothers. As a result, parents have been withdrawing their children from schools in the area. Manuel Fontaine, the UNICEF’s West and Central Africa Regional Director noted that “the conflict has been a huge blow for education in the region, and violence has kept many children out of the classroom for

more than a year, putting them at risk of dropping out of school altogether” (*Daily Trust*, December 22, 2015). Aside the assault unleashed on these children by insurgents, some of those held captive are also used as suicide bombers (see Plate I).

Besides the issues of war and violent conflicts, children have always been victims of other nature-aided and man-made disasters. Instances of how children were lost to these disasters, violence and other life-threatening circumstances are numerous. From road and air crashes, shipwreck, boat capsize, flood, fire outbreak, landslide, tsunami, cyclone, drought, desertification, volcanic eruption, armed robbery, rape and arson to other sundry but dangerous occurrences including vandalism, induced explosions, power surge, failed dam and building collapse; are all existential risks, especially for children.

Findings of a survey on violence against Children in Nigeria carried out in 2014 were described as shocking with about nine million children suffering from one form of violence or another annually (FG-VAC survey, 2014). The report which identified physical, sexual and emotional forms of violence has a breakdown that further reveals that:

Before the age of 18 years:

-approximately six out of every 10 children experience some form of violence;

-half of all children experience physical violence;

-one in four girls and one in 10 boys experience sexual violence;

-one in six girls and one in five boys experience emotional violence by a parent, caregiver or adult relative (Violence Against Children in Nigeria, 2014).

Oyo State is not insulated from these life-threatening occurrences that can negatively affect child security and quality childhood which can either lead to miserable adult lives or instant death. For instance, in 2013 alone, Oyo State recorded 365 cases of rape (*The Punch*, January 8, 2014). Reports had it that in Ibadan, the state capital alone, an average of 20 rape cases per month was being recorded (*The Punch*, September 15, 2013).

According to the paper, the legal adviser to the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in the state, James Ajibola, asserted that “aside the fact that it had become an aberration, under-aged girls were now major targets of rapists, leaving their victims with horrible experiences.” It was noted further that the various intervention by different people to settle rape cases out of court have allowed rapists to go unpunished and thus encouraging more rape cases with “only one out of 100 percent rape cases receiving diligent prosecution.” As a result of all the above, incidences of street children, out-of-school children, child labour, neglected and abused of children in various forms (including the raped) are the focus of the CPN in Oyo State.

Some of the abuses present in Oyo State are typical of children in poor economies where people are generally vulnerable as a result of unfavourable socio-economic climate, thus, situations in the urban centres of underdeveloped countries cause hard ways of living. In the urban centres for example, there are cases of working mothers that need to engage the services of house maids who sometimes turn violent and become dangerous to the children they are hired to protect in the first instance. For example, the 2014 popular incident in Rwanda where one Jolly Tumuheerwe, a 22-year old housemaid tortured an 11-month old baby for refusing to eat (*The New Times*, November 28, 2014) is a typical case of the risk children whose parents hire helps may face on a daily basis. Some other children may be raped or get knocked by vehicles while trying to eke out a living to support their poor parents.

In order to save children, and guarantee their childhood and security, laws have been made at different levels of administration culminating into a legal framework (Table 1). These are different laws made at global, continental, national and local levels to protect children against the threats to their lives as well as other unacceptable practices that can negatively affect their childhood. These laws form the basis of operation for the CPN in Oyo State. They include the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC); and the Nigeria Child Rights Act, 2003

(NRA). The local version of this global statute is the Oyo State Child Rights Law (CRL) enacted in 2006 while the CPN was inaugurated in Oyo State in 2011, as a body expected to partake in the implementation of the CRL. The legal framework for the protection of the child is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Legal framework for child protection at Global, Africa, Nigeria and Oyo State levels

AGENCY	LAW ENACTED	DATE	REMARKS
United Nations	Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC)	20/11/1989	Adopted at the UN in the 44th session of its General Assembly who opened same for signatures by all member states. Nigeria ratified the convention in March, 1991.
African Union (AU) which was then known as Organisation of African Unity (OAU)	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)	July 1990 but entered into force on November 29, 1999.	Adopted at the 16th ordinary session in Monrovia, Liberia between July 17 and 20 upon which the charter was premised. The charter noted “with concern” the peculiar situation of African child in relation to poverty and level of development in the continent.
Nigeria	The Child Rights Act (CRA), Nigeria	2003	The Act virtually adopts the provisions in CRC and ACRWC with provisions for punishment for actions and omissions specified.
Oyo State	Child Rights Law (CRL), Oyo State	24 th Oct., 2006	The law domesticates the Nigeria’s CRA and spells out peculiar situations in Oyo State.

Source: Adapted from various legal instruments for Child Rights at global, regional, national and local levels.

However, the fact that the damage done to the child cannot be reversed even by the best justice system, informed the roles of the CPN in exploring the possibility of building security consciousness, safety skills and other advocacy programmes in children to prevent occurrences in the first instance, and remedy the situations where prevention fails. Aside the danger inherent in various forms of abuse, the child is equally faced by threats by other forms of nature-induced emergencies that can cause death or permanent disability. A former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Anna once declared:

“We must above all shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. The humanitarian community does a remarkable job in responding to disasters. But the most important task in the medium and long term is to strengthen and broaden programmes, which reduce the number and cost of disasters in the first place. Prevention is not only more humane than cure; it is also much cheaper.” (Odetoro, 2005).

In the same vein, Gordon Brown, the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education (UNSEGE) also once observed that:

“ ...in an ideal world, whenever children needed help, they would get it...Unfortunately, ours is far from an ideal world. When children need help, days turn into weeks and months. Hundreds of desperate children become thousands and eventually millions. Hope gives way to prolonged misery...not for a few months or even a year, but on average for more than a decade. They are shut out of schools, locked out of opportunity, and condemned to live in unbearable conditions - subject to child labor (sic) or forced begging, sold into marriage, trafficked, conscripted into gangs, or recruited by extremists” (Odetoro, 2005).

It thus suggests that help may not be readily available for children at all the times of distress. This may not be deliberate, but due to certain unpredictable or unavoidable circumstances. However, security of lives and property remains a fundamental right to all, as enshrined in various UN conventions, regional charters and individual states’ constitutions. Invariably these rules have also made it a right to know what to do to preserve one’s life against any form of threat, irrespective of the age of the threatened.

Perhaps, it is the realisation of this right to know that has made different organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, within CPN to start focusing on the need to advocate for safety and security of the child. This lends credence to an assertion that “in the new world order, it is suicidal to be weak” (Osofisan, 2000). Thus, new ideas are provoked to ensure that every segment of the population of a given society, including children, is proactive, especially where such is feasible and safe. Therefore, the United Nation’s decision to give special attention to children in this regard is understandable.

In Oyo State, there were 50 member NGOs and government organisations that formed the CPN as at May, 2016 (see appendix). These include some professional bodies such as the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA); *Federacion Internacional de Abogadas* (FIDA) interpreted as International Federation of Women Lawyers; faith-based organisations, government departments and security outfits. Most NGOs focus on child development, health, welfare and rights and thus place little emphasis on child protection against physical harm. The advocacy projects appear to have more to do with education on basic rights to the neglect of empowering the children against unexpected dangers that could harm them. In order to get the best from these efforts by these individual NGOs, UNICEF has brought the organisations together to form networks that could further guarantee childhood by cross-fertilising ideas.

While not being unconscious of the fact that children have limitations as far as their psychological, emotional and physical abilities are concerned, this study interrogated what could be done to reduce child vulnerability through the activities of the CPN in Oyo State. This research was carried out by looking at the current efforts of the network on child security; thus, the need to understand the challenges, limitations and prospects that CPN is confronted with in Oyo State necessitated this study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Globally, child vulnerability has always been identified as a social problem that requires concerted efforts to solve (Schargel and Smink, 2014). Children do not only die or get

injured in their numbers during violent conflicts, they are also victims of other vices such as homelessness, isolated violence, including rape, kidnapping and other forms of child abuse like incest, child labour, use of children for begging; and child soldiering. Apparently worried by the trend, the UN in the 44th session of its General Assembly on November 20, 1989 adopted a Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Africa followed suit with its own version which is ACRWC while Nigeria and Oyo State domesticated same in CRA and CRL respectively as earlier explained.

As noted by Newberger and Newberger (1982), the focus of professional and public concern about child protection and security has been identification and reporting of the victims while prevention has been largely ignored. The provisions of the laws which are expected to move the society away from the culture of reaction to child abuse to that of preventing the menace seems not to be adequately solving the problem as well. It appears Nigeria, like many parts of the world, still records several cases of child abuse such as rape and violation, trafficking, child labour, homelessness, and children used for begging as well as out of school children. For instance, a study conducted in 2008 among in-school adolescents in the age range of 16 to 20 in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria several years after the adoption of the CRC and enactment of CRA showed this category of people were still vulnerable to sex trafficking due to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and social status (Omorodion, 2009); and these indices are still prevalent in the country till date, even at a higher rate. Kopoka (2000), while noting that “the twenty-first century presents a hostile face to many millions of children in Africa,” submits further that poverty and increased hardship has contributed to the problems facing the children in the continent while key players expected to find solutions have become the major source of the problem. Like other scholars above, Ogundele and Ojo (2007), Olawale (2009), Faloore (2009) and Alaoet *a.,l* (2013) all identified poverty, low economic status, illiteracy and single parenthood among others as factors responsible for child vulnerability in Africa in general, with specific references to Nigeria and the study area in particular. The recommendations that usually follow such identification include the need for the

government to ensure eradication of poverty; counselling parents to avoid divorce as well as advocating child rights and the need to respect them.

Despite these laws at global, continental, national and state levels; account as given by the then Police Commissioner of Oyo State revealed that State recorded 365 cases of rape in 2013 alone with most of the victims being children; while the state also has its share of street children, especially in Ibadan, the state capital where they work as vendors, hawkers, car washers, cobblers, beggars, scavengers, head loaders and bus conductors (Olaleye and Oladeji, 2010). Reports by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) from 2013 to the first quarter of 2015 showed that a majority of those that were victims of traffic in persons were children. According to the agency, in 2014, out of 1,030 persons which NAPTIP rescued, 708 or 68.7% were children under 17 years who were trafficked for various reasons (NAPTIP reports, 2014). In the first quarter of 2015, out of the 130 cases reported to the agency, 65 were child-related, including child labour (32 incidences which represents 24.6%), child abuse (22 incidences which represents 16.9%) and kidnapping from guardianship (11 incidences which represents 8.5%); while in the same period, 51 child-related suspected traffickers were apprehended but none was convicted (NAPTIP report, 2015). Again, a report by *Radio Nigeria*, Ibadan indicated that of the 252 children rescued by NAPTIP in the South West of Nigeria in 2014, 108 were rescued at Bodija market, Ibadan, the state capital. This may not be unconnected to the fact that the state which shares a border with Benin Republic in the West is noted as a recipient of trafficked person especially underage children who are engaged in domestic servitude or unpleasant work schedules (Tade, 2014). Also, a report to the UN Special Envoy for Global Education released in 2013 indicated that the state had the least primary school enrolment in south- western Nigeria despite the CRL that make basic education compulsory in the state. Different studies have focused on several aspect of child protection. Davids (2013) did a social analysis of a theological organization in Venezuela on how effective foster care is in caring for children. Perez – Hernando and Fuentes - Pelaez (2020) focused on the formal and informal networks available to aid reunification of foster children with their biological families. Coming

closer home to Africa Foussiakda and Kasherwa (2020) examined how to protect children in a failed state using the child protection network. Constant and his colleagues provided lessons for professionals in the area of child protections through the work of “child hub” an agency working with children in South East Europe (Constant, Godara, Agagliate, Kumar and Amara 2019).

All this is to show that despite the protective provisions in various statutes, childhood is still under threat in Oyo State. With this development one wonders whether the children should be left alone to continue being at risk hoping things will get better, or empower them with some protection skills, bearing in mind UNICEF’s position that “the best way to protect children is to empower them to protect themselves.” This study therefore, investigated the impartation of skills in the children among the other strategies the CPN in Oyo State has been using in handling the issue of child protection, in addition to the application of the CRL to enhance the child’s safety and security.

1.3 Research questions

The following questions have been carefully formulated to guide this study:

1. What are the peculiar protection needs and their corresponding protection clauses for the child as enshrined in Oyo State Child Rights Law?
2. How can children be empowered with safe, teachable and learnable skills to enhance child protection?
3. How is CPN strategizing to address identified gaps in child protection?
4. What are the challenges faced by CPN in child protection programme in Oyo State?

1.4 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this research is to examine the strategies adopted by CPN to protect children in Oyo State. Derived from this broad aim are the following objectives to;

1. investigate the peculiar protection needs of the child and provisions for them under the law;
2. explore empowerment techniques that are teachable, learnable and safe for children in acquiring protection skills;
3. interrogate alternative strategies employed by CPN in Child Protection; and
4. discuss challenges faced by CPN in Oyo State in child protection interventions.

1.5 Justification for the study

The future of any society depends on the versatility of its young ones and this study basically advocates this future to be protected. Children are always classified as belonging to the vulnerable group of human population and this is why various laws have been made to ensure their protection with virtually all countries of the world, except the United States of America and Somalia, ratifying the global statute convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as of 1992. Somalia, however, equally signed the CRC ten years later in 2002, and ratified same in 2015 (CRINMAIL 1412, 2015). The implication of this is that the child's vulnerability is widely acknowledged.

However, scholars and practitioners, in most cases, dwell extensively on the responsibilities of the adults alone to ensure worthy childhood with a plethora of works on natural, moral and legal responsibilities bestowed on parents concerning the protection and security of their children. A lot has also been done to make guardians, teachers and other relevant government officials, especially law enforcement agents socially and legally responsible for the child's welfare and security, while the child appears to have been left out of the plan. Yet various sections of the Child Rights' Laws place some responsibilities

on children as the beneficiaries. This study will thus come up with responsibilities for the children to contribute to their own protection as provided for by various laws which appear to have been neglected.

The need to get the child involved in protection efforts is growing by the day because, when the security of any place is threatened, the presence of security operatives is not a guarantee for safety (Olurode, 2008), not to even talk of when the law enforcers are not present. Besides, apprehension and prosecution have been observed to only marginally impact the crime rate (Locke, 1990). Again, it is not only the issues of crime and criminality that make children vulnerable; they are not also immune from the impact of both natural and man-made disasters. Sidi (2012) observed that children represent about 60 per cent of those affected by death, injuries and diseases from conditions that are exacerbated by disasters in addition to the disruption of their education.

It should also be noted that making laws to protect children and advocating their implementation could be counter-productive if the beneficiaries, that is, the children are not imparted with adequate knowledge on how to enjoy such rights. For instance, the children that were massacred in Soweto, South Africa in 1976 were just exercising their rights by protesting while recently, 10 primary school children in Kenya were injured by the police who fired teargas at them for protesting against plans to demolish their school's playground (*Child Rights International Network*, January 19, 2015). Another instance was the case of Faris Odeh, a 14-year old Palestinian boy who was killed while throwing stones at the Israeli armour tank in protest against the combatants (see Plate 2). Perhaps, his courage fuelled by ignorance could have redirected him if he were educated properly to know the wide gap between the potency of his stone and the capacity of a military armoured tank. Thus, seeking alternative strategy that can further reduce child vulnerability through impartation of skills, which is the focus of this study, is justified. In 2016, the school children of the study area were shut out of schools for weeks by the Governor who insisted that the schools in the state would not be opened until the children

and their teachers apologise to him for daring to protest about some of the state government policies on education. The Governor's demand for apology which was widely reported in the media underscored the violation of the rights of the child to speak out when negatively affected by actions of the adults. The study is thus justified in that it seeks to emphasise children empowerment to protect themselves against various forms of threats emanating from man-made and natural disasters. This is due to the fact that impact of the crime on violated children cannot be totally reversed even by the best justice system.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study covered the operations of the Child Protection Network in Oyo State by examining what its members have been doing to protect the children since 2011, when it was established to 2015. It also explored other areas to ensure security and eliminate life threatening circumstances of violence and emergency. The study covered children of school age (12-17 years). According to UNICEF, the appropriate school age for a child is five years. This implies that a child is eligible to attend any school; public or private by age five upwards (UNICEF, 2021).

The study also examined the implementation of the state's Child Rights Laws, the existing relationship between the CPN, security and safety organisations (such as NEMA and Fire Services), and their areas of collaboration, limitations, challenges and potentials that could be explored and exploited for the total protection of the child.

1.7 The study area

Oyo State is located in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria, and it was one of the three States carved out of the former Western State of Nigeria in 1976. Oyo State consists of 33 Local Government Areas (LGAs) which are: Akinyele, Afijio, Egbeda, Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-West, Ibadan South-East, Ibarapa Central, Ibarapa East, Ido, Irepo, Iseyin, Kajola, Lagelu, Ogbomosho North, Ogbomosho South, Oyo West, Atiba, Atisbo, Saki West, Saki East, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa,

Ibarapa North, Olorunsogo, Oluyole, Ogo-Oluwa, Surulere, Orelope, Ori-Ire, Oyo East, Ona-Ara. The State covers a total of 27,249 square kilometres of land mass and it is bounded in the south by Ogun State, in the north by Kwara State, in the west by Ogun State and the Republic of Benin, and in the east by Osun State. The landscape consists of old hard rocks and dome shaped hills, which rise gently from about 500 metres in the southern part and reaching a height of about 1,219 metres above sea level in the northern part (Figure 1).

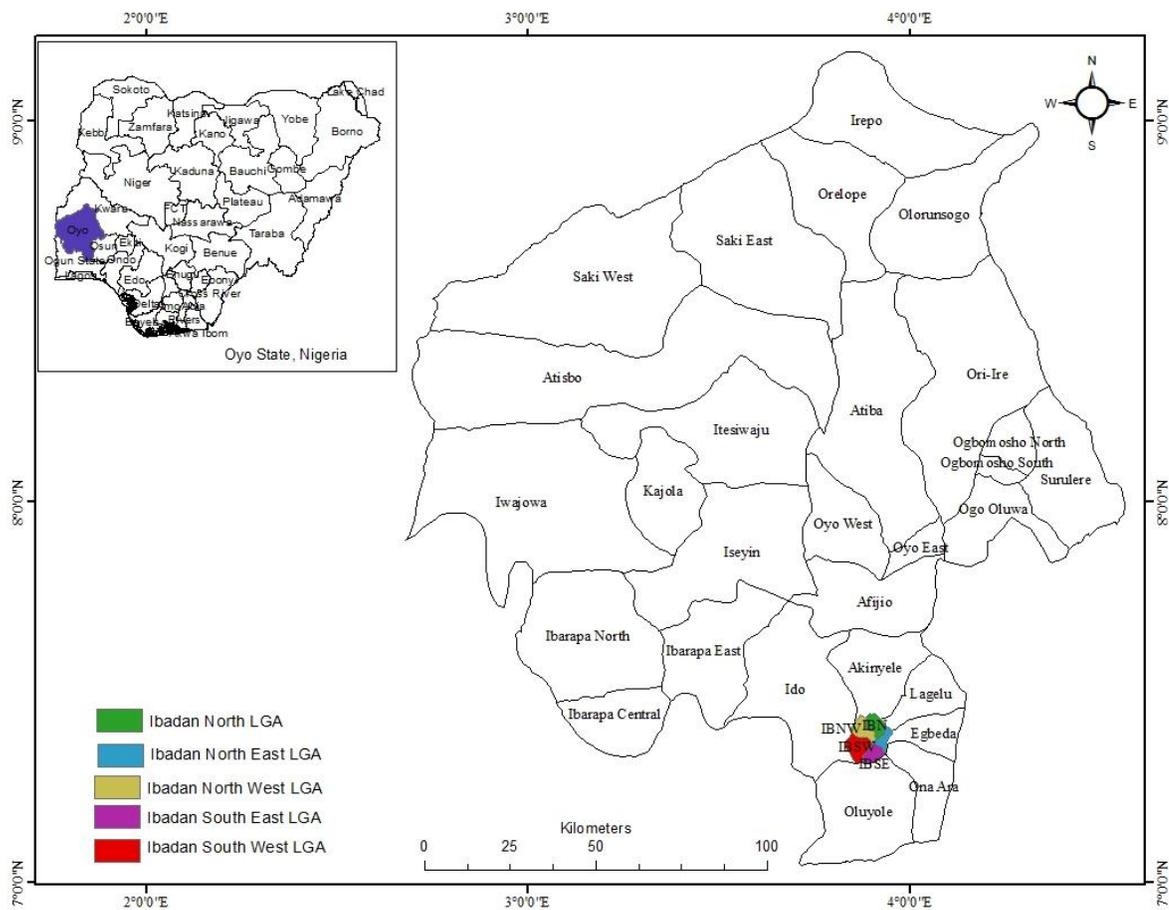


Figure1: Map of Oyo State showing all local governments (Ibadan metropolis LGs highlighted)

Source: Cartography unit, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

1.8 Operational definition of terms

Some of the key terms such as child, childhood, security, protection, and emergency are operationally defined for the purpose of this study. A few of them are further explained as concepts in the course of the study.

Child: For the purpose of this study, a child is a young person below eighteen years as stated by the Nigeria's Child Rights Act (CRA), 2003 and the Oyo State Child Rights Laws (CRL) enacted in 2006.

Childhood: The study adopts UNICEF's definition of childhood to mean "the time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults" (UNICEF, 2005). This is a state of worthy living before the age of 18 years where a child grows up within a family, has access to basic education and is free from all forms of abuse or deprivation.

Security: Security has been defined in various ways to mean absence of threats to lives, property and the environment, especially after the Cold War, to go beyond the provision of military wares for defence. Many scholars such as Buzan (1991), Baldwin (1997) and Williams (2008) see security from different perspectives but their views could be summarised as: a situation where the object to be secured has freedom from threats from the military, political, economic, societal and environmental factors within or outside an entity. This may include fortification of the subjects or value to be secured or deterrence of the threat itself. This concept of security is adopted for this study in order to address all the protection issues being handled by the CPN in Oyo State which are more of socio-economic concerns.

Child abuse: The World Health Organisation (WHO)'s definition of Child abuse is adopted for this study. The term connotes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitations

resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (Jackson *et al.*, 2005).

Child Protection: This is a broad term used by UNICEF to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. The term connotes all efforts aimed at guaranteeing childhood safety.

Violence Against Children (VAC): The term is used to describe any action that is capable of causing injury to children physically, sexually and emotionally. Thus kicking, beating, pushing, or killing children among other types of assault; sex exploitation through inducement or promises of compensation, unwanted sex, an attempted sex, unwanted touching as well as verbal insults that can injure the child's emotion are all categorised as violence against children.

Exploitation: Exploiting children means taking advantages of their innocence to abuse them. This could be in form of threatening or inducing them with gifts or promises to reward them in order to persuade them to engage in any form of abusive practices. It will not matter whether such promises are fulfilled or not.

Child Rights: Child rights are the same as the fundamental human and civil rights with specific provisions to take care of the peculiarity of the child. For instance, the right to life and self-dignity is further strengthened with specific provisions that certain individuals and institutions including parents, guardians and governments at various levels must ensure that the child is protected. Also in the civil rights categories, provisions are made in various statutes to ensure, for instance, free and compulsory basic education. This study therefore adopts the definitions above that confer these inalienable rights and moderate responsibilities on children in accordance with their capacity.

Child education: In this study, child education connotes all teachings and trainings expected to be given to the children to ensure a worthy childhood. These include the academic teachings, social and vocational upbringings that are commensurate with the child's ability.

Child vulnerability: This is the degree of risk a child faces, whether living within or outside the family. This is to say that a child could still be vulnerable even when staying with the parents if the risk of being abused is still high.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relevant literatures in the field of peace and conflict studies, psychology, child development and security as well as child protection laws at global, regional, national and local levels were reviewed. Also, specific child development theories, security, peace and conflict theories, early warning and emergency theories relevant to this work were reviewed with a view to bridging any knowledge gap discovered in these past efforts.

2.1 Conceptual clarifications

Various concepts used in this research are clarified to enhance readers' understanding of the context in which they are used.

2.2 Child: biological, social and legal concepts

Biologically, a child is a new-born of any living organism, and for the purpose of this study, it is an issue of a human being. Legally, a child is such human being below 18 years otherwise known as the age of majority. Before attaining age 18, children are referred to as minors, that is, they are still in the age of minority, thus, the age of majority signifies greater or more years that qualify a child to become an adult. Certain social factors could influence the legal determination of the age of majority, and these vary from one country to another, as this age is attained quicker in the developed economies. This is the reason the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as “a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. In the same vein, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) of 1990 which came into force in 1999, in its Article II, defines a child as “every human being below the age of 18.”

This is deliberately done without condition as enshrined in CRC because of the fact that “the situation of most African children remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances, natural disasters, armed conflict, exploitation and hunger and on account of the child’s physical and mental immaturity, he or she needs special safeguards and care.”

It is noteworthy that Africa has been the only continent with special charter on child rights due to socio-economic conditions that orchestrate poverty, insecurity and environmental degradation. Interestingly, as of November 2010, all members of the African Union have signed the children charter while only eight were yet to ratify it in their various countries. This is to say that African children as defined, are recognised by their leaders to be a deprived, exploited, disadvantaged and endangered group who, due to all and more of these negative factors, are not likely to attain maturity until they reach age 18, and even more in many cases. This study, therefore adopts the biological and legal definitions that see a child as a young human being, who is below age 18.

2.3 Safety

The Health and Safety Executives (HSE) in the United Kingdom see safety as the set of advice, guidance, news and template provided to promote security. Thus, the main difference between safety and security is the fact that the former could be said to be a subset or an element of the latter. In other words, safety in many cases could be situational and definite, while security is more encompassing and enduring. For instance, a poor man could be rescued to safety from a fire disaster, but he could continue to battle with environmental and economic insecurity among other forms of insecurity.

Thus, safety means the condition of being safe from undergoing or causing hurt, injury or loss (dictionary.com); the condition of being protected against physical, occupational, psychological, educational or other types of failure or other consequences of failure, damage, error, accidents, harm, or any other events which could be considered non-desirable. It could also mean freedom from occurrence or risk of injury, danger, or loss (dictionary.com).

2.4 Emergency

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRCS) explains emergency as a situation where disaster has caused extensive damage and/or loss of life or casualties that require humanitarian interventions (IFRCRCS, 2000). As explained by *Farlex Trivia Dictionary* (2012), the word ‘emergency’ has its origin in Latin ‘e’ and ‘mergere’ which means ‘to dip’, ‘plunge’ and ‘unforeseen occurrence’. Collins Thesaurus of the English Language listed about a dozen synonyms of emergency, which include; crisis, danger, difficulty, disaster, necessity, pinch, plight, strait, catastrophe, predicament, calamity, quandary, critical and urgent situations. It is also defined as a serious situation or occurrence that happens unexpectedly and demands immediate actions (*The American Heritage of English Language*, 2009). One thing that is common to all definitions is the issue of emergency being a “sudden” and “unforeseen” or “unexpected” occurrence. It is, in the least, not hoped for and thus, could catch people unawares, almost always. Emergency may include, but not limited to disasters such as fire outbreak, flooding, thunder, auto and plane crashes, shipwreck, failed dam, and building collapse etc. It could also come in the form of criminality as the cases may be in arson, rape, kidnapping, assault, armed robbery or assassination. Violence eruption, war, communal clashes, insurgency, terrorism and the likes could also lead to emergency situations. Children are not insulated from these phenomena and thus become hapless victims at the slightest occurrence; as such, any unexpected occurrence that compromises the security of children and goes beyond what they can handle by their selves will be regarded as emergency in this study.

2.5 Child protection as a concept

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) uses the term, child protection as a concept that includes philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. The term thus covers all

activities aimed at ensuring the security, safety and wellbeing of the child. Thus, child protection strategies are always aimed at preventing the child from experiencing all forms of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual e.t.c.), child labour, neglect, military use and infanticide among others (UNICEF child protection information sheet, 2006).

The term is also used for various laws, statutes, conventions, and protocols at the local, national and global levels that confer responsibilities on adults to ensure the safety of the child. These sets of laws make it mandatory for adults, including parents, teachers, guardians, health-care providers, law enforcement agents and relevant government officials, to report any form of abuse, meet the child's basic needs, not neglect the child and prevent child soldiering (UNICEF child protection information sheet, 2006).

2.6 Forms of child abuse

There are various practices that are inimical to the development and wellbeing of children which are broadly referred to as child abuse. These include child labour, violence against children (including physical, sexual and emotional violence), exploitation and child soldiering among other vices discussed subsequently. According to Olusegun and Idowu (2016), child abuse generally can be sexual or non-sexual in nature. Abuses that are sexual in nature borders around child marriage, child molestation or female genital mutilation (FGM). The non-sexual abuses include child labour, violence on a minor, kidnapping and neglect.

A Child marriage crime often involves the violation of series of other rights and is committed when children are married to adults (Ogunniran, 2011). He further averred that child marriage also leads to abuse of the child's right to equality on grounds of sex and age, the right to marry, family, health and education. Child Molestation has to do with illegally forcing or enticing an underage to partake in sexual activities with or without violence or physical harm. The most common non-sexual child right abuse is Child Labour which could be forced or otherwise.

2.6.1 *Child labour in different contexts*

Child labour generally involves work that deprives children of their childhood, their potentials and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development. Specifically, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC, 2016) which started in 1992, refers to child labour as any work that:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- interferes with their schooling by;
- depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
- obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
- requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (ILO/IPEC, 2016).

The ILO (2016) states further that “in its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age. Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries.”

Going by this definition, the ILO has reported that at present, around 215 million children work globally with many doing full-time work, without going to school and having little or no time to play. The Organisation reported further that many do not receive proper nutrition or care while they are denied the chance to be children with more than half of them exposed to the worst forms of child labour such as work in hazardous environments, slavery, or other forms of forced labour; illicit activities including drug trafficking and prostitution, as well as involvement in armed conflicts. This global body in charge of labour issues also takes cognisance of individual countries as far as whether a work

assigned to a child could be classified as inimical to the wellbeing of such child or not. It also clarifies certain works that could be done by children without compromising their childhood. Thus, specifically, ILO states:

“Children’s or adolescents’ participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays” (ILO fact sheet, 2012).

This provision perhaps is a catalyst for child labour especially in less developed economies like Nigeria. The clause, “assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside the school hours and during holidays”, seems to have provided a leeway for the perpetrators, who subject their wards to hawking and other hazardous tasks. Though, these activities may be carried out after school hours, hawking till late in the night or on heavily trafficked roads for instance, could as well be dangerous. It is equally noteworthy that academic and extracurricular activities are not limited to school hours, thus a hawking child is prone to inability to do his school assignments at home or partake in evening games aimed at psychomotor improvement.

2.6.2 The menace of child abuse

According to the World Health Organisation’s report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, ‘Child abuse’ or ‘maltreatment’ constitutes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power” (WHO, 1999). Child abuse is a social issue emanating over a period of years as such activities seen today as unacceptable were at a time the norm of some societies. The issues around mistreatment of children included infanticide, abandonment, severe physical chastisement and child prostitution as recorded in history, and where such took place they were always in contention (Corby, 2000). The implication of this is that what is

considered as child abuse in a given society, at a point in time, could be acceptable in some other periods or places. Thus, what to protect the children against was not only varied by time and space, but it was culturally influenced until recently when the idea of global practices came into being.

Tracing the child protection issues that were regarded as forms of abuse, Bilston (2006) reports that “while the practice of child abuse goes back to the roots of human history, it is only in the last century or so that it has been recognised as a distinct phenomenon, something that children have a right to be protected from.” He notes further that:

“Child exploitation was tolerated in much the same way, not least because child labour was cheap and versatile; children could carry out simple repetitive jobs or crawl into spaces too small for adults. It took Evangelical philanthropists like Shaftesbury to urge the Factory Acts through Parliament, limiting the hours that children were allowed to work in factories, mines and cleaning chimneys. So, neglect and exploitation may have existed but were accepted” (Bliston, 2006).

Despite the intervention of the Evangelical philanthropists according to Bliston as recalled above, Acts of Parliament only reduced the number of working hours, rather than eliminating child labour completely. Even in the developed countries, what is today known as child abuse was viewed differently in the past. Corby reported further that Demo (1986) carried out a study of court records in New England in the 17th Century and found “a conspicuous absence” of child abuse cases. He opined that “such finding is usually attributed to the belief that cruelty to children in this period of history was so much the norm that court action was a rarity”. In the less developed countries with low income, it appears child labour was a normal thing in the past and till now. Alao *et al.*, (2013) in their study of “Child Labour among Rural Households in Oyo State” submitted that Africa and Asia account for over 90 percent of child employment in the world, citing poverty as a major factor responsible for the act.

Corby's report of Demo's findings as stated above is a pointer to the fact that, what is known as child labour in the context of abuse today was not really a negative development to be prevented in the past. As again noted by Alao *et al.*, even in the present world, using children for adult works still remain a common phenomenon in poor economies, especially in the rural areas, where parents and guardians see these young persons as companions in the daily activities to fend for the family. The contributions of these children appear to have been factored in as important parts of the production factor, making them carrying out such routine assignments as matters of duty.

Aside child labour, one of the commonest abuses in the modern world is rape. That children suffer sexual abuse from their colleagues and, more often from the older and stronger children and even adults, who are to be protecting them, cannot be overemphasised. Its importance, relativity and complexity perhaps make the United States of America to have dual definitions for child abuse and neglect at the federal and state levels, as documented by the US Department of Health and Human Services and Administration (USDHHA) for Children and Family. The Child Welfare Information Gateway, which is a service of the Children Bureau states *inter alia*:

Federal legislation provides guidance to States by identifying a minimum set of acts or behaviours that define child abuse and neglect. The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C.A. § 5106g), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at minimum: Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation"; or "An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm" (USDHHA, 2010).

This definition of child abuse and neglect refers specifically to parents and other caregivers. A "child" under this definition generally means a person who is younger than age 18 or who is not an emancipated minor.

While CAPTA provides definitions for sexual abuse and the special cases of neglect related to withholding or failing to provide medically indicated treatment, it does not provide specific definitions for other types of maltreatment such as physical abuse, neglect, or emotional abuse. Also, while federal legislation sets minimum standards for States that accept CAPTA funding, each State provides its own definitions of maltreatment within civil and criminal statutes.

In all, it appears that of all forms of abuses suffered by children, rape is the most prominent. Perhaps, it is so due to the fact that the dastardly act is committed for various reasons which range from pleasure to spiritual. For instance, Faith Karimi of CNN, citing *Human Rights Watch*, reported that, in South Africa, which has one of the highest rape rates in the world, a 2009 report by the country's Medical Research Council noted that "28 per cent of their surveyed men had raped a woman or a girl with one in 20 saying they had raped in the past year" (CNN June 21, 2010). It has been repeatedly reported that some South African men believe that raping virgins can cure HIV/AIDS (*Reuters*, January 1, 2011). These virgins are likely to be children under age 18 as *Reuters* further reports that police statistics "reveal that 21,000 cases of child rape or assault were reported in the past year".

Worried about the plight of children in the United Kingdom, a London based organisation called National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), which among other child protection issues, singles out rape, submits that, "1 in 20 children in UK have been sexually abused; 1 in 3 children who were sexually abused by an adult did not tell anyone else at the time; while 9 out of 10 were abused by someone they knew."

Nigeria is not insulated from the menace of rape as well, especially among the children. The Lagos State Government put cases of rape committed in the state at 283 in 2011, out of which only 11 suspects were duly prosecuted and convicted during the same period. In addition, between 2012 and 2013, the state's command of the Nigeria Police said it recorded 678 rape cases (*TheEagleonline*, April 15, 2013). Achunike and Kitause (2014)

in a research titled “Rape Epidemic in Nigeria: Cases, Causes, Consequences and Responses to the Pandemic”, submit:

“From all indications, it is evident that rape case in Nigeria is not a new practice but only that it appears to be assuming a new dimension, with children now forming the bulk of the victims (Odeh, 2013). According to Ejim (2013), “the incidence of baby and child rape has currently hit a statistic of up to 70 per cent of the total rape” (Achunike and Kitause, 2014).

The Eagle Online equally noted that “the statistics is coming against the backdrop that rape of minors has been on the increase in Nigeria despite the various laws on rape.” In its editorial of October 4, 2013 titled “Surge in Rape Cases”, the *Vanguard* newspaper captured the situation in Nigeria as follows:

Statistics on rape incidents may still not be a good reflection of the extent of the crime. Stigmatisation of rape victims keeps the numbers low, a further armoury to the criminals.

In the United States, about 80,000 cases of rape were reported to the police from 2004 to 2010. According to United Nations data, US Justice and Department estimates that 300,000 American women are raped annually, while the Centre for Disease Control says the number is 1.3 million. Also, according to a 2009 study in *Clinical Psychology Review*, in 65 studies from 22 countries, the highest prevalence rate of child sexual abuse was in Africa having 34.4 percent of the total (*Clinical Psychology Review*, 2009).

Most child sexual abuse is by men. About 30 percent are relatives of the child (brothers, fathers, uncles or cousins), about 60 percent are other acquaintances such as ‘friends’ of the family, babysitters, or neighbours; strangers are offenders in about 10 percent of child sexual abuse cases, the studies revealed (Easton, Saltzman & Willis, 2014). A Non-Governmental Organisation, Women Against Rape, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation (WARSHE), once raised an alarm over the rising incidence of rape cases in Nigeria. The NGO at a news conference at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, said

80 percent of 3,118 students interviewed in a study it conducted in Oyo and her neighbouring Osun State had experienced sexual violence and abuse. The organisation's principal researchers, Dr. Olutoyin Mejiuni, and Professor Oluyemisi Obilade, said *inter alia*:

Some men capitalised on the trust reposed in them to rape their victims. About 31 per cent of respondents who had experienced sexual violence and abuse had the experience before age 13, and 80 per cent before age 18. The assailants who attacked the respondents were their relatives, a few teachers and religious leaders; family friends, neighbours, male friends and boyfriends. Respondents suffered shame, fear, aches and pains, cuts and injuries especially to their vagina, bleeding, loss of virginity, pregnancy and ostracism as a result of sexual violence and abuse (Mejiuni and Obilade, 2012).

Some perpetrators are so desperate to the extent they do not just rape children; they at times abduct them for permanent sexual pleasure. A report by *The Punch* of November 27, 2015 revealed a 42-year old herbalist, Akpan Okon who abducted two minors named Wisdom and Felicia, when they were around four years old, but he was only arrested when the girls were already 11 years old. The suspect confessed to the police as follows:

“While staying with Wisdom’s mother at Onitsha, I observed that she had problems bringing up her nine children. This girl was always with me when I was staying in their compound. So, when I wanted to leave Onitsha, I took her with me without telling her mother. When I left Onitsha with her, I went to Auchi and was riding a commercial motorcycle as a means for livelihood. Where I stayed in Auchi, Destiny was always coming to play with Esther (also called Wisdom). I also noticed that Destiny’s mother had many children. So when I wanted to leave the town, I took her along. I had sex with them and I know it is bad in the sight of God” (*The Punch*, November 27, 2015: 4).

This is in agreement with the studies of (Bass, 2018 and Selengia, Thuy, & Mushi, 2020). A child is frequently sexually abused or used by men through coercion. This is because children trust the adults whom they are familiar with and due to their age, they have no choice and fail to comprehend the adults are being untrustworthy.

From the above, it also appears rape is the least reported case among the forms of abuse because of the attendant stigma the victim could suffer in the process of trying to bring the culprit to book. In addition, prosecuting rape victims is tedious, as proving the allegations beyond reasonable doubt remain a herculean task. As revealed by various researches by NSPCC, WARSHE and others, rapists are in most cases known persons who the victims or their parents may not want severe punishment for, thus encouraging continuity of the act.

It is in realisation of this that UNICEF, in a toolkit designed for child protection training, espoused the myths and facts about sexual abuse so that members of the public would be more alert to the need to be vigilant. The tabulated information below is a revelation of basic facts about rape to be noted and considered when children are involved.

Table 2: Myths and Facts of Sexual Abuse (Rape)

Myths	Facts
Child sex offenders are creepy or weird looking	Child sex offenders usually present themselves very normally. Most will go to work and participate in community life without drawing attention to themselves.
Child sex offenders are ‘dirty old men’	Most child sex offenders commit their first offence during their teen years and continue until they are caught. While it is true that most sex offenders are men, it is inaccurate to characterise them as ‘old’.
Strangers are the biggest threat to children	The traditional image of the ‘stranger’ as the child molester is mistaken.
He was sexually abused as a child, so he could not help it	Some people who sexually abuse children were themselves sexually abused as children. However most people who have been sexually abused do NOT become sex offenders. Recent research has found that sex offenders are more likely to have experienced physical and emotional abuse, including bullying, in their childhood and this appears to be a factor in sexually abusive behaviours.
Women never sexually abuse children	Although the majority of child sex offenders are men, women are also known to sexually abuse children.
It only happened once, and he promised it would never happen again	It is rare for a sexual offence to be a one-off occurrence, and generally sex offenders are prosecuted for fewer abuses than they have committed. Sex offenders have limited commitment to change as they have already crossed substantial legal, social, and ethical boundaries to commit the offence. Treatment for adult sex offenders, while important, has proven so far to have limited success in preventing re-offending. Treatment for adolescent sex offenders, however, is reaping more positive results
The incidence of child sexual abuse is grossly exaggerated and is more a	Most stories of child sexual abuse never become public. As many as 95% of child sex offenders do not have criminal convictions for these

sensationalised media story	crimes. On best estimates, only about 10% of offenders are prosecuted and only half of these are convicted.
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Source: UNICEF factsheet (2016) on sexual abuse

It can be seen in Table 2 that adherence to the myths has been a catalyst to the occurrence of child violation. For instance, parents, caregivers or teachers would normally warn children to stay away from strangers, whereas relatives and other known persons have been mostly found to be the culprits that violate children. Besides, there is the general tendency that only men sexually abuse children, which has been proved to be incorrect. As such, it is not only the female children that are at risk. A case in point is that reported in Lagos where a nine (9)-year old boy was raped by a 34-year old shop keeper through the minor's anus (*The Punch*, February 24, 2016). Other faulty notions include thinking that those who were violated when they were young are likely to abuse children, assumption that violators are dirty old men, thinking that sexual assault cases against children are exaggerated and having the tendency to start trusting an offender after he is once caught and pledges never to repeat the action. All these notions have been proved to be myths with their opposites being the facts.

Apparently concerned about the issues of child abuse, Article 16 (Protection Against Child Abuse and Torture) of the African Children Charter states specifically that:

“State Parties to the present Charter shall take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse, while in the care of the child”.

In other words, the issue has to be tackled from all angles, including legislative, administrative, social and educational, to ensure comprehensive prevention. The UNICEF's CPN thus is expected to help greatly in this area by advocating for specific child-friendly legislations, liaising with the executive arms and their agents as well as mobilising community members against abuse and providing relevant education to stakeholders including the children, on abuse, which the study interrogated.

In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of education in the realisation of the need to reduce child vulnerability to the barest minimum came out with a policy assigning roles to various

stakeholders in child protection. Apart from the Ministry's prominent role in the design and implementation of curriculums for the education of the Nigerian child overtime, it has become pertinent to ensuring safety and security of country's schools due to incidences of child trafficking, kidnapping for ransom, terrorism, banditry and other sundry crimes bedeviling the nation. This led to the formulation of the Federal Ministry of Education National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-free Schools with its implementing guidelines (2021). Section 5 (SS 15) of the policy provides the need for FME to:

Collaborate with relevant safety and security agencies for the training of school safety and focal point officers and school-based management committee members to lead child protection, school safety and security efforts in their respective schools.

Thus, security agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) can train selected school safety focal point officers and committee members on adequate security measures for child protection. When this measure is implemented in schools, safety of school children will not only be guaranteed, but issues of child vulnerability would have been taken care of. In addition, sections 5 (SS15.5) (e) of the policy gives responsibility to the Ministries of Defence, Interior and Police Affairs to:

Ensure security forces shall collaborate with protection actors to hold regular trainings on child protection and gender based violence

Under this policy, the state Ministries of Education have been assigned important roles specifically for the protection of the especially women, children and those with special needs as stated in section 5 (SS15.10)(n) and (o) thus:

- Encourage programmes which reflect gender needs and address issues of vulnerable learners, particularly girls, young women and people with special needs.

- Sets policies to address and respond effectively to sexual and other gender-based violence in schools, particularly abduction, rape, forced marriage, sexual assault and sexual harassment.

2.6.3 Child protection and technology

Child abuse is a global phenomenon that is no respecter of the level of development. As such, multiple approaches to eradicate it, including the enactment of various laws and regulations, as well as setting up of institutions to monitor the situation and ensure protection are being explored. The UNICEF submits that in choosing the appropriate technology for the protection of the child, six pertinent questions should be asked as follows:

- a. Is there a need to create new applications or can existing solutions be used?
- b. What are the characteristics of the user group and the environment (urban – rural, existing networks and coverage etc.)?
- c. What technical expertise is required for installing and maintaining the system?
- d. How well will investments in equipment and capacity meet the needs, expected impacts, benefits and outcomes in terms of result delivery?
- e. What are the potential partnerships for sustainable capacity-building and service delivery? What are the roles of public and private service providers?
- f. What are the financial resources needed in the short, medium and long term to establish and maintain the system? (Mattila, 2011)

The fund reports further that at present, “some of the most relevant mobile applications for child protection include: Frontline SMS and Ushahidi for violence reporting; RapidFTR for family tracing and reunification in emergencies; RapidSMS for data collection, awareness raising and violence reporting; and the Mobile Vital Record System and Nokia data gathering for mobile birth registration.” All these applications are to provide information about the child in need of protection. There are other forms of technology outside UNICEF action plan which have been developed to address some emergency

situations where there is no quick intervention in sight. For instance, when rape became so notorious a form of abuse in India and women had become endangered species, technology to deter rapist also became an option. Olupounda, a public affairs analyst once put the situation in India in perspective thus:

In India, for example, it is said that a woman is raped every 20 minutes. To further cement that country's infamy, its capital, New Delhi, is notoriously referred to as the "rape capital of the world" (*The Punch*, June 13, 2013).

Moreover, studies such as that of (Mahanta 2012, Suri &Khan 2013 and Durham 2015) all mentioned the high rate of rape cases in several parts of India including New Delhi.

It was in response to this challenge that a group of three female engineers designed an electric bra that can shock a potential rapist numb and send messages to the security agencies as may be programmed by the user (see Plate 4). *Vocativ*, an online medium report:

The bra contains a pressure sensor connected to an electric circuit that generates a shock of 3,800 kilovolts, which is severe enough to stun an attacker and severely burn his hand...The moment its pressure sensors are activated, the bra's built-in GPS also alerts the police and the victim's parents to the location where the attack is taking place (*Vocativ*, July 14, 2014).

The medium reports further that those who have worn the bra said it is comfortable, quoting a user as saying, "it is light like any other bra, and one really cannot (tell) a difference." Answering questions on the safety to the user, the issue of washing it with machine, and the ability to differentiate friends and foes to prevent accident and false alarm, the lead inventor, Manisha Mohan told *Daily Beast* that the part of the bra that touches the user is insulated while there is 'on' and 'off' switch for the user's discretion to use when necessary, especially if any danger is suspected. Mohan explained further that they still have to figure out how the material of the lingerie could be machine washable.

Also, *The New York Post*, in its June 26, 2014 edition reported another invention of Alert Jeans pants by two Indian female students. Like the bra, the pair of jeans is capable of sending distress call to the police when an attached electronic button is pressed (Plate 5). In its assessment of the invention, the paper observed that “the students’ timing couldn’t be better,” noting further that, “a UN child’s rights committee charged Indian authorities with not doing enough to fight sexual violence after two teenage sisters were gang-raped and hung from a mango tree in a rural village in Uttar Pradesh.” The incident specifically attracted a comment from the deputy chairman of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Benyam Mezmur, that “there has been a dereliction of duty in relation to rape cases.” (Mezmur 2014).

In South Africa, repeated raping of virgins, who were minors in many cases prompted a medical doctor, Sonnet Ehlers, to create a female condom with “teeth” otherwise called “Rape-aXe” (see Plate 6) with internal ribs to deter rapists. Yahoo news reported that when properly worn,

If a man takes a woman by inserting his penis in her vagina which is equipped with the Condom with Teeth, his penis will be hooked by the stiff internal ribs, which Ehlers says are like jagged teeth. It is akin to getting one's penis caught in a zipper, only worse. Only a physician can remove the device. Ehlers believes this will bring a rapist to justice in a country where rape goes under-reported (Rees & White 2012).

Corroborating the report, Faith Karimi (2010) reported that the condom with teeth acts as a trap saying “once it lodges, only a doctor can remove it - a procedure Ehlers hopes will be done with authorities on standby to make an arrest.” Karimi quoted the inventor as saying, “It hurts, he cannot pee and walk when it's on,” she said. “If he tries to remove it, it will clasp even tighter... however, it doesn't break the skin, and there's no danger of fluid exposure.” She explained further that she consulted engineers, gynaecologists and psychologists to help in the design and make sure it was safe for use. The invention was however roundly criticised by Victoria Kajja, a fellow for the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention in the east African country of Uganda who described it as a “form of enslavement.” She opined that there are fears surrounding the victim’s act of wearing the condom in anticipation of being assaulted; “the device constantly reminds women of their vulnerability; it presents the victim with a false sense of security and psychological trauma; it also does not help with the psychological problems that manifest after assaults” (Karimi, 2010 White and McMillian 2020).

Despite these criticisms, Ehlers(2010) who believes that unusual problems should be tackled by making use of unusual solutions submits:

Yes, my device may be a medieval, but it's for a medieval deed that has been around for decades...I believe something's got to be done ... and this will make some men rethink before they assault a woman (Ehler 2010).

It is interesting to note that even Kajja, after her criticisms, notes that the device’s “one advantage is that it allows justice to be served.” In other words, despite the shortcomings of these devices, they, in a way serve as deterrents.

2.6.4 Right of the child: global, regional, national and local perspectives

Due to their acknowledged vulnerability, children have been made to enjoy special rights beside the general fundamental human rights guaranteed by various laws and statutes at different levels. The UN set the pace by having a Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and various regional, national and even local authorities followed suit by domesticating the global provisions. While some of the clauses in the CRC were adopted by these bodies completely, some were adjusted to reflect the realities of these individual state parties.

Specifically, the UN, in what the agency calls its “most complete statement” on children’s rights ever produced and “most widely ratified by the international human rights treaty in the history” (UNICEF fact sheet), states the specific rights of the child to include the following:

- The right to a childhood (including protection from harm)
- The right to be educated (including all girls and boys completing primary school)
- The right to be healthy (including having clean water, nutritious food and medical care)
- The right to be treated fairly (including law and practices that are unfair on children)
- The right to be heard (including considering children's view)

It is important to note that the *primus inter-pares* of the listed rights above borders on protection, safety and security that can guarantee childhood. It is followed by the right to education which cures ignorance. Other rights, including accessibility to good health; fairness in dealing with the child, as well as the right to be heard, appear to be complementary to security and protection. Therefore, it is equally right to allow this segment of the population to have access to the necessary information, education and special protection that could further guarantee their rights to life, knowledge, good healthcare, fair and equitable treatment as well as the right to express themselves. Various sections of these laws equally provide for some responsibilities for the child, as can be seen in section 21(2) (a-h) of the Oyo State CRL. For the purpose of this study, the CRC, African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), which is the African version of the child rights law; the Nigeria Child Rights Act (CRA); and the Oyo State Child Rights Laws are reviewed.

2.6.4(a) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The UN in the 44th session of its General Assembly on November 20, 1989 adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and opened same for signatures by all member states. The 54-article convention popularly known as CRC has its text prepared in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish as the authentic languages (Olanmi, 2014). Nigeria ratified the convention in March, 1991.

In its 13-point preamble, the CRC reaffirms its faith in equal enjoyment of fundamental human rights by all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. It further posits that such rights are inalienable irrespective of the status of the beneficiaries with a proclamation that “childhood is entitled to special care and assistance.” The CRC reiterated its conviction that: children should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that they can fully assume their responsibilities within the community; the child should grow up in a family environment in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding for harmonious development of his or her personality; and that the child should be prepared to live an individual life in society in the spirit of peace, dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity, among other sundry provisions.

In arriving at the above, the convention recalled the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child of 1924 adopted by the UN in 1959 with specific provisions that “the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.” Other instruments recalled in arriving at CRC include the Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally (General Assembly Resolution 41/85 of 3, December 1986; the United Nations Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (‘The Beijing Rules’) -General Assembly Resolution 40/33 of 29 November, 1985); and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (General Assembly Resolution 3318 (XXIX) of 14 December, 1974). However, the convention in recognising that children living in exceptionally difficult conditions in all countries in the world need special consideration, take due account of the importance of tradition and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child.

The principles above guide all the provisions in the articles. For instance, articles I to V provide for the definition of the child as “human being below age of 18” unless majority is attained earlier; stress the need for states’ parties to the convention to respect it; and state

that all actions must be in the “best interest of the child” as far as the available statutes in the home countries and international cooperation can attain. Articles VI to XI deal with the issues of fundamental human rights especially to life, and the need to enhance and ensure it; birth registration, preservation of the child identity; the right to grow with the family and combating illicit transfer.

Children’s freedom to have views and express such, as well as the right to associate freely without unlawful interference with their privacy, is guaranteed in articles XII, XIII, XIV, XV and XVI. Other specific provisions include the role of the media in disseminating appropriate information about and for the child, through books and other educative materials (article XVII); and protection against violence, including adoption and granting of refugee status (XIX-XXII). Article XXIII extensively deals with the rights of the mentally and physically disabled children. The child’s rights to health, social security and wellbeing, education (including the development of the child’s personality, talent, physical and mental abilities to the “fullest potentials”), religion and cultural freedom, rest and leisure are guaranteed in articles XXIV to XXXI.

Issues on child labour and abuse of various forms including child soldiering as well as what is required of all parties to the convention to do, in terms of enacting appropriate laws to forestall such ugly developments are provided for in articles XXXII to XXXVIII; while article XXXIX deals with reintegration of such rescued child with the family or guardian if such is in the best interest of the child.

Article XL deals extensively with the rights and responsibilities of children in respecting the laws of their states. The provisions include prompt dispensation of justice; assumption of innocence of the child until proved otherwise; access to appropriate legal representation; immunity from forced testimony; free assistance of an interpreter and full respect for the child’s privacy. Besides, states’ parties to the convention are to constitute special courts for trial of such child in conflict with the law. The parties are also required

to establish relevant laws and care institutions for the child found to have infringed on the laws. The last section of the article specifically states:

A variety of dispositions, such as care, guidance and supervision orders; counselling; probation; foster care; education; and vocational training programmes and other alternatives to institutional care shall be available to ensure that children are dealt with in a manner appropriate to their wellbeing and proportionate both to their circumstances and offence.

In other words, the essence of dispensing any form of judgment concerning the child in conflict with law is to make him or her, a better person. Handling him/her after violating any law should thus focus more on rehabilitation than punishment.

The last 14 articles deal with the implementation of the above provisions, starting from how the laws will be domesticated by the states' parties; responsibilities to publicise same; setting up appropriate UN committee to receive and review reports from the parties to the convention; parties signatures; ratification; commencement; amendment procedure; denunciation of the convention by the willing state; depository of the CRC, which is the UN Secretary General, and the official languages of the statute earlier stated.

The appropriateness of the CRC in terms of comprehensive provision cannot be overemphasised. Its acceptance by state parties was also encouraged as virtually all, except the US, have not only given their consent to be part of the statute, but have also domesticated same in their various countries. These positive outcomes, however, appear not to have really translated to complete protection for the children globally, with cases of child labour, rape, torture as well as child soldering among others still thriving.

2.6.4 (b) African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)

This charter on Rights and Welfare of the African Child follows almost the same pattern as the CRC with modifications in the areas of welfare, peculiarities in the African culture

and state of the economy. In its preamble, the Charter considers Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights as paramount. It equally recalled the adoption of the child's rights and welfare by the Assembly of the Heads of States and Government of the then Organisation of African Unity (now African Union) at its 16th ordinary session in Monrovia, Liberia between July 17 and 20 upon which the Charter was premised. The charter states *inter alia*:

...having noted "with concern that the situation of most African children remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation and hunger, and on account of the child's physical and mental immaturity he/she needs special safeguard and care; then recognises the need for the child to grow with the family in happiness, love and understanding as well as the necessity of a legal guidelines to ensure such (ACRWC, 1992).

Like its global version, the ACRWC also expressly states in its first ten articles in Part One, the need to respect the child's rights, who a child is, the supremacy of the Charter where it is in clashes with "any custom, tradition, cultural or religious practice". It stresses "non-discrimination against the child and that all efforts should be in the child's best interest". Other areas of similarities are the child's rights to a name, nationality, freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, thought, conscience and religion with lawful guidance from parents or guardians; and right to privacy with a provision that parents or legal guardians "shall have the right to exercise reasonable supervision over the conduct of their children". Again, "the child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."

One of the most interesting provisions of this Charter is the Article XI which deals with the child's education. Aside the general rights to education as granted by the CRC, specific provisions, perhaps due to the level of development in Africa, are made. For instance, the CRC in Article 28, sub section (2) expressly states that all state parties to the

Charter shall “encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as free education and offering financial assistance in case of need.” Despite this seeming categorical provision, the African Charter only provides for the encouragement of development of secondary education and “progressively” make same free. The implication of this is that the CRC emphatically states the need to take definite action to ensure and enshrine free education, while the ACRWC provides for its sequential attainment, making it an open-ended clause. Besides, the African Charter makes provision for any pregnant girl to return to school after the delivery of her baby. This could also be as a result of the realisation of the vulnerability of the girl-child in Africa.

Other ACRWC provisions that are similar to the CRC include the child’s rights to leisure, recreation and cultural activities; the rights of disabled children subject to the resources available first to their parents/guardian, and then to the state; the rights to health services, protection against child labour, abuse and torture. Here again, the ACRWC’s provision in this regard subjects the rights of disabled children more to the status of their parents than to the responsibility of the state.

On juvenile justice, the Charter, aside the general provision for the exercise of the fundamental human rights of the *child in conflict with law* makes special provisions forbidding exposure of the child during trial or press interview. It seems the whole essence of trial is to rehabilitate and reintegrate the eventually convicted children with their families, since they can neither be sentenced to death nor to prison terms.

Articles 18 through 20, like the CRC, provides for adequate parental care, responsibilities of divorced parents and the child’s unfettered access to either of such separated parents; while Article 21 provides that all parties to the Charter should legislate against all forms of harmful social and cultural services with emphasis on the prohibition of child marriage and child betrothal. It is obvious that this particular clause is to take care of the practice in

many African communities, where daughters could be married off to friends of their fathers. Besides, the prohibition of child betrothal would prevent the practice of ‘promised marriage’ between a baby girl and a future husband who could be of her age, or as old as her grandfather in some cases.

The issues of child soldiers and child refugees are addressed in articles 22 and 23 with provisions encouraging respect for humanitarian laws; prohibition of children taking part in armed conflicts; and mandating state parties to take all feasible measures to ensure child protection, including granting the child refugee status without conditions. The child who is displaced in internal conflicts is also to enjoy such refugee status *mutatismutandis*. This special provision is to serve as immunity for the child from having to fulfil the conditions of a refugee before being granted such status. The Charter, in subsequent articles, takes care of child adoption procedure, divorced parents; prevention from sexual exploitation, drug abuse or being used for drug trafficking and alms begging; prohibition of child sale, trafficking and adoption; and prevention from being in prison with convicted mother.

The last article of the first part of ACRWC deals with the child’s responsibilities. The whole article is reproduced below since it is all about what is expected from the children themselves which is a key focus in this work. Article XXXI states *inter alia*:

Every child shall have responsibilities towards his family and society, the state and other legally recognised communities and the international community. The child, subject to his age and ability, and such limitations as may be contained in the present Charter, shall have the duty:

- (a) to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need;
- (b) to serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service;
- (c) to preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity;
- (d) to preserve and strengthen African cultural values in his relations with the other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation to contribute to the moral wellbeing of society;

- (e) to preserve and strengthen the independence and the integrity of his country;
- (f) to contribute, to the best of his abilities, at all times and at all levels, to the promotion and achievement of African unity (ACRWC Article 31).

With these provisions, it is obvious that the child has a lot to contribute to his own development and the wellbeing of the society. However, it is not certain whether children are aware of these responsibilities especially in Africa where a great percentage of the population is in abject poverty. The struggle for survival in terms of meeting basic needs of life seems to have made other issues, including child training up to post-primary school and secondary level and creating awareness among the children on these responsibilities, to be a herculean or an abandoned task.

The second part of ACRWC with 17 articles (XXXII-XLVIII) deals with the mode of operation of the Charter. Provisions are made on the establishment of various committees, eligibilities of the members, appropriate representations, communication procedure, signature, ratification and adherence; as well as amendment and revision of the Charter. In other words, the whole essence captured in Part two of the ACRWC is its administration.

2.6.4(c) Nigeria Child Rights Act (CRA)

“This is not the best time to be born in Nigeria. We just have to face the reality”. This was the reaction of the child rights activists as reported by a Nigerian national daily, *Premium Times* at a conference held in Lagos on May 26, 2014 to commemorate the annual children’s day that is celebrated in the country on 27 May. The participants concluded that “the Nigerian Child Rights Act, passed in 2003 to protect children’s rights, has not lived up to its responsibilities” (*Premium Times*, May 27, 2014). Their frustration could be the non-implementation of the Act by those concerned. At the conference tagged “Safeguarding Nigerian Children: Building a Child Protection System Fit for the 21st Century,” in Lagos, the activists submitted further thus:

The Nigerian government has abdicated its responsibility to protect the child. Most of the states that have passed the Child Rights Act are not even implementing it. So at the end of the day, there is really no change in the status of the Nigerian child in most states across the country.

One time Nigeria Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Zainab Maina, at the commemoration of the 2014 International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women noted that since the passage of the Child Rights Act in 2003 by the National Assembly, to protect children's rights in Nigeria, only 23 states have domesticated the law, while only two states in Nigeria are implementing it - Lagos and Akwa Ibom.

The above is the state of implementation of Nigeria's CRA enacted since 2003. The Act has 24 parts and 278 sections that provide for the overall development, protection, security and wellbeing of the Nigerian child. Unlike its global and regional versions, the CRA provides for punishments for violators of these laws in its various sections.

The best interest of the child, his wellbeing and various rights already stipulated in the CRC and ACRWC, are equally provided for in CRA with other specific provisions. For instance, while granting the right to health and health services to the Nigerian child in its section 13, sub-section (4) compels parents or guardians of children under two years to immunise them while sub-section 5 (a), (b) and (c) stipulates punishments ranging from a fine of five thousand Naira (N5, 000) to one month imprisonment and/or compelling the offender to immunise the child. Other sections of the Act that states one form of punishment or another for various offenders are tabularised below.

Table 3: Offences and their punishments in the Nigeria Child Rights Act (2003)

Section	Provisions/offence	Punishment (fines and prison terms)
15	Failure to give the child the right to compulsory primary/junior secondary education.	Compulsory community service to N5,000 or two months imprisonment for parents/guardian.
21/22	Prohibition of child marriage/child betrothal.	N500,000 fine and/or 5 years imprisonment
24	Prohibition of tattoo or marks on body	Maximum of N5,000 fine and/or maximum of one month imprisonment
25	Exposure of children to use, production and trafficking of narcotic drugs	Life imprisonment for the offender
26	Use of children in other criminal activities	14 years imprisonment
27	Abduction, removal or transfer from lawful custody	From Nigeria temporarily: 15 years; from Nigeria permanently: 20 years; from one state to another within Nigeria: 10 years. In any case: 5 years imprisonment
28	Prohibition of exploitative labour	Maximum of N5000 and five years imprisonment. In case of corporate body, the head is fined N200,000 fine
30	Prohibition of buying, selling,	Conviction to imprisonment for a term of

	hiring or otherwise dealing in children for the purpose of hawking or begging for alms or prostitution etc.	10 years in prison
31	Unlawful sexual intercourse with a child, etc.	Life imprisonment (even if the child consents or the offender believes the child is already 18 years old)
32	Sexual abuse/exploitation	14 years imprisonment
33	Other exploitation not captured	N500,000 fine and/or 5 years imprisonment
35	Prohibition of importation of harmful publication	N30,000 fine and/or three years jail term
36	Penalty for harmful publication-printing, selling publishing, or be in possession e.t.c	N50,000 fine and or 5 years imprisonment
47	Abduction of children in care (of certain lawful authority); inciting or assisting the child to run	Maximum of N70,000 fine and/or maximum of 3 years imprisonment
67	Penalty for impersonating another for purpose of providing scientific sample (e.g., in paternity/maternity issues)	Maximum of N10,000 fine and/or maximum of one year imprisonment
79-81	Prohibition against acquiring a child's custody after the minister's order to the contrary	A fine of N10,000 and/or one year jail term
115	Prohibition of receiving money or reward as inducement to	Maximum of N30,000 and/or maximum of 3 years imprisonment

	foster a child	
116 (2) (a)(b)	Prohibition of taking, sending fostered child out of (a) (any) state or(b) Nigeria	(a) 10 years imprisonment (b) 15 years imprisonment
118	Foster parent prohibited from marrying fostered child	Maximum of 14 years imprisonment
119	Non-compliance with lawful directives	Maximum of N2,500 and/or maximum of 3 months imprisonments
123-124	Power of state government to prohibit private fostering or obstruction of information on such.	Maximum of N5,000 fine and or maximum of six months jail term
143	Paying or receiving payment for adoption	N30, 000 fine maximum or maximum of 3 years imprisonment.
144	Unauthorised interstate adoption	Maximum of N30,00 fine and/or maximum of one year jail term
147	Adopter prohibited from marrying adoptee	Maximum of 14 years imprisonment
157	Prohibition of child's name, photographs etc., while in court	A N50,00 fine or 5 years imprisonment
170	Failure to register premises for day care and child minder outfits	Punishment ranges from maximum of N5,000 fine and/or one year imprisonment to maximum of N10,000 and/or 1 year imprisonment
195	Unregistered children home	Maximum of N10,000 fine and/or maximum of 6 months imprisonment
197	Prohibition of disqualified	Maximum of N10,000 fine and/or

	person from managing or working at children home	maximum of 1 year imprisonment
198	Obstructing inspection to children home	Maximum of N2,500 fine and/or maximum of 3 months imprisonment

Source: Adapted from the Nigeria Child Rights Act (2003)

One curious feature of this Act, however, is its failure to hold governments or their operators at any level responsible for actions and omissions that contravene any section of the law. For instance, failure of government to provide basic education for the child attracts no punishment or sanction for those that may be in government when such failure occurs. Whereas, section 15 of the law stipulates a jail term of two months or five thousand Naira (N5, 000) for the parents or guardians who fail to give the child the “Right” to compulsory primary/junior secondary education irrespective of whether public schools exist in the area where such defaulting parents or guardian reside or not; or whether they are capable of offering such education. Thus one remarkable defect of the Act is the seeming immunity granted government officials by making no categorical provisions for failure to take care of their omissions or commissions. The non-justiciable status of the failure of operators of government could definitely encourage impunity.

2.6.4 (d) Oyo State Child Rights Law

The Oyo State Child Rights Law (CRL) was enacted by the state’s House of Assembly in 2006; while its effectiveness commenced on October 24 of the same year, with the law adopting virtually all the basic provisions of the Nigeria CRA. The law draws most of its provisions from the earlier ones, including the CRC, ACRWC and especially the Nigerian CRA. The CRL is divided into twenty-four (24) parts, eleven (11) schedules and 272 sections which are grouped into three main parts.

In its sections one (1) and two (2), the CRL details the commencement, citation and interpretation of terms such as “act”, “adoption service”, “appropriate authority” and the other technical words and phrases subsequently used in the various sections. Sections three

(3) to (22) provide for the rights and responsibilities of the child, essentially as enshrined in Chapter IV of the Constitution of Nigeria as well as in the provisions of the country's CRA, 2003. This part equally states the responsibilities of those to take care of the child including the parents/guardians, institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

The subsequent part, which contains sections 23 to 43, spells out offences and punishments for contraventions of such basic and child rights. These include prohibitions against child marriage/betrothal; body incisions of any form or for any reasons; hard drug usage, trafficking or production by the child; use of children for criminal activities; abduction or unlawful removal of any form; child labour and abuse of any form; importation, production, storing, stockpiling, publication and /or dissemination of harmful materials to the child; and prostitution and other forms of gainful or non-gainful activities that could prevent the child from acquiring Universal Basic Education up to Junior Secondary School final class.

Part IV of the CRL provides for the institutions to protect the child, including a specialised child police that could take a child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm into police protection by moving the child to an Emergency Protection Centre or an approved suitable accommodation. These special police unit is expected to also prevent the child from being removed from a hospital or any other place where such child is safely accommodated.

In its fifth part, the CRL empowers a Child Development Officer, a police officer or any other person so authorised to bring a child before a court if there are reasonable grounds for believing that the child is in need of care and protection. The court is also empowered by the law to make orders to commit parents, guardian, or any other person to take care of the affected child. The court can equally order that the child be sent to an appropriate institution for proper care.

Parts VI, VII, VIII and IX spanning sections 55 to 94 make provisions for care and supervision of the child; use of scientific tests in determining the paternity or maternity of the child; rightful possession and custody of children and their guardianship respectively.

The issues of ward-ship, fostering and adoption are provided for in parts X to XII covering sections 95 to 149.

To give the CRL effective powers, part XIII provides for the establishment of the family court in Oyo State. The court is expected to operate at two levels - as a division of the high court and as a magistrate court, while there are also provisions for the membership of the two levels to include judges and assessors who shall be guided by the principle of conciliation. In other words, family courts are mainly to rehabilitate the child as much as possible and not necessarily out only to mete punishments on child offenders.

Provisions for child minding and day care; government support for children and families; community homes for children; voluntary homes and voluntary organisations and registered children's homes are contained in parts XIV to XVIII in sections 164 to 198 while part XIX provides for the supervisory functions and responsibility of the commissioner who in most cases is in charge of youth and women affairs, or any ministry that deals with children's issues.

Part XX deals with the Child Justice Administration, which has four distinct aspects, as well as the mechanism for treatment of children in conflict with law, and the post-release system. In any case, Section 205 specifically states:

No child shall be subjected to criminal justice process or to criminal sanctions, but a child alleged to have committed an act which would have constituted a criminal offence if he were adult shall be subjected only to the child justice system and processes set out in this law (Oyo State Child Rights Law, 2006).

Sections 205 through 238 of this part make various provisions on the need for special training for all to be involved in the child justice system matter; the pattern of investigation, avoidance of regular court words such as "conviction" and "sentence" in adjudication; the need to have Special Mothers Centre as detention for offending mothers with less than six years children; institutional and non-institutional treatments for child

offenders; and the need for government to encourage research-based policy formulation and evaluation on child matters.

The last parts make provisions for supervision, approved institution for post release supervision; establishment of various institutions such as Children Attendance Centre, Children Centre, Children Residential Centre, Children Correction Centre, Children Special Correction Centre and any other institutions that the Commissioner may from time to time establish; and establishment of Child Rights Implementation Committees at state and local government levels and other miscellaneous provisions.

From the foregoing, there is no doubt that the CRL is by design child-friendly. Its provisions appear to be primarily aimed at reconciling children with the family and the society at large for better childhood. Even when found guilty, the law in its section 221 specifically restricts the court by making the following provisions:

No child shall be ordered to be:

- a. Imprisoned; or
- b. Subjected to corporal punishment; or
- c. Be subjected to death penalty or have the death penalty recorded against him (OYSCRL, section 221)

The alternatives provided to the restriction in section 221 are in section 223 as follows:

- i. Dismissing the charge; or
- ii. Discharging the child offender on his entering into a recognizance; or
- iii. Placing the child under care order;
- iv. Committing the child offender by means of corrective order to the care of a guardian, relative or any other fit person;
- v. Ordering the offender to participate in group counselling, undertake community service under supervision and similar activities;

- vi. Ordering the parent or guardian of the child offender to pay fine, damages or compensation, give security of his good behaviour (Oyo State CRL, simplified version: 13, Oyo State CRL, 2006).

These provisions in the CRL are essentially to ensure all actions are in the best interest of the child.

It should be noted however, that the CRL does not make provision for research into children issues only with a view to having sound policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, but also, in its section 21(2) (a-h), it expressly states the child's responsibilities *inter alia*:

A child shall, subject to his age and ability and such other limitations as may be contained in this law and any other law,

- a. Work towards the cohesion of his family and community;
- b. Respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and assist them in case of need;
- c. Serve the state by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at his service;
- d. Contribute to the moral well-being of the society;
- e. Preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity;
- f. Preserve and strengthen the integrity of the state;
- g. Respect the ideals of democracy, freedom, equality, humaneness, honesty and justice of all persons;
- h. Relate with other members of the society, with different cultural values in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue, and consultation;
 - (i) Contribute to the best of his abilities at all times and at all levels to the promotion and achievement of the state; and
 - (ii) Contribute to the best of his abilities at all times and at all levels to the solidarity of the people of the state and the human race.

With the above provisions placing responsibilities on the child, there is no doubt that the need to develop the child's potentials to live up to the expectations cannot be overemphasised, and how the CPN in Oyo State has fared in this task is a focus of this study.

2.6.5 Child prodigy

The grand theories of child development could, to a very large extent, generally obey some sequential rules of development. That the child observes and learns, interacts and learns, constructs his own learning or combines all in the learning process cannot be overemphasised. The assertion by Piaget of the child's independent way of learning is more pronounced in child prodigy cases. These are children who could be described as unusual in their ways of life, achieving goals that could even be very difficult for many adults to achieve. Cases of such unusual feats abound globally.

Going by the definition of a child, especially legally, individuals below 18 years are excused from certain responsibilities due to what has been described as immaturity. This group, for instance, cannot be held responsible for criminal acts to the extent of serving "adult" punishment. In fact, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), through its various child protection interventions, has declared that children arrested for one form of offence or the other could not be referred to as "suspects" but "children in conflict with law" (Adegoke, 2012). They are not considered psychologically mature enough to take decisions, thus they cannot give consent in marriage or be enlisted in the military, paramilitary or for any government job. Giving them any of these responsibilities would amount to child labour.

However, these persons often referred to as "innocent" or "immature" have continued to challenge these assertions, turning them to mere assumptions in many cases. They have

broken several records which the supposed “all-knowing” adults at times may find difficult to attain. The World Record Academy (WRA) in its online publication of August 3, 2012 reported a nine-year old car racer, Braden Dubois who ran a full session of the car racing course to become the youngest to do such using his Chevrolet four-cylinder car. He was not just a car racer at the tender age of nine as his mother attested to his reasoning ability by saying, “He is very safety conscious and understand the importance of being in control over winning.”

The Academy also reported on the six-year old youngest map memoriser, Mohammed Ashik, who pointed out 195 countries on a plain world map measuring 91.5 by 58 cm. The academy further reported that “he also pointed out 50 countries when the judge questioned him one by one in a zip-zap manner.”

On April 2, 2012, the online college reported on “The 10 youngest PhDs of all time” with their ages ranging from 16 to 22. The youngest among those listed was Kim Ung-Yong. The online college reported thus:

By age three, he was a physics student at university. NASA brought him from Korea to do research for them at age eight (8). He worked there for 10 years while earning a Ph.D at the age of 16.

There are several cases of the unusual feats already performed by children all over the world such as young mothers at ages five, eight, nine, 10 and 11 years; recently, there was a report of a young couple each aged 14 who already had a child; there was Mum-Zi, from Calabar, who gave birth at age eight and became a grandmother at 17 (Mirror online, February 6, 2013); an American lawyer Senator John McClellan called to bar at age 13 (Wikipedia, July 27, 2013); teenage pilots and many other professionals. Also, the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom made its 15-year old PhD student known to the world through the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news. The teenage girl, Eugenie de Silva already bagged a master’s degree in Intelligence Studies from a United States university (*BBC News* June 19, 2014).

2.6.6 The usual child

Apart from cases of child prodigy, many children can be said to have gone through the normal process of development and yet performed unexpected feats. During the pre-19th Century wars for instance, drummer boys were engaged to entertain warriors in the battlefields. Although there were always official age limits, these were often ignored (Wikipedia) and yet there were success stories in many cases. These boys were no special beings nor were necessarily called prodigies by any standard but their task was as hazardous as that of the adults who were in the battle field. There was a case of a particular drummer boy, Nathan Futrell who was just seven years old when he participated in the American war of independence while another one, a nine year-old John Clem was reported to have shot a confederate officer who had demanded his surrender as equally reported by *American Battlefield*, a non profit organisation that published his biography.

If the above cases were old tales, on June 4, 2013, the media was awash with the story of a 10-year old who rescued the whole family from the claws of armed robbers who dressed like deliverymen and invaded their home. The child picked the intruder's gun that fell, and with courage, shot at the wall to scare the invaders away. Quoting the Associated Press, Yahoo News presented the scenario thus:

It all began around 5:30 p.m. when the suspects, dressed in disguise, knocked on the door of the Brooklyn home. When two teenage girls opened the door, the two men pushed passed them, and headed upstairs, according to the Associated Press. When one of the suspects tried to enter a bedroom on the second floor, the 40-year-old home owner slammed the bedroom door on one of the home invaders arms, causing him to drop the gun. The owner's 10-year-old son grabbed the gun and fired a shot into the wall. One of the suspects fired back, without hitting anyone. The would-be robbers then ran off

The hoodlums were perhaps confused, thinking there were more experts who could deal with them. In a related development, a nine-year-old boy was also reported to have

sneaked away from a scene of an attack on his mother to call a neighbour who eventually called the police. Yahoo further reports:

Another brave boy also recently made news for his quick thinking during a home invasion. In Detroit, when burglars forced their way into Jaden Kanka's home, the 9-year-old heard the intruders talking to his mom and boyfriend in the front of the house. He sneaked out the one-story bedroom window and ran to a neighbour, who called the police. The criminals were still in the home when police arrived and they were quickly arrested (*Yahoo news*, June 4, 2013).

Academic research on gun violence aligns with this position and they also report that children are introduced to guns to early thus it can be said that studies such as (Jouriles et al 1998, Reich et al 2002 and Agrawal et al 2018) all support this position.

At their tender ages, they were able to ward off evil that could have been devastating attacks on their homes. In Nigeria, a noodle producing company recently rewarded three Nigerian children for heroism. According to media reports, the child who got the first prize was a 14 year old girl, who rescued a drowning boy; the second prize went to a boy who helped find a missing child while the third kid awarded was an eight year-old boy whose ingenuity led to the arrest of a gang of armed robbers (*Newswatch Times*, October 16, 2015). One thing to be noted in the report is the fact that 14 children were considered before only three were picked. These 14 kids could only have been those that had privilege of knowing that such competition was going on and had the resources to participate. Those considered were also from major cities that are state capitals in Nigeria - Port Harcourt, Kano and Minna. There could be several hundreds of others who perform greater feats in the villages on a daily basis but do not have access to where they could be recognised. These are no prodigies; they only became exceptional through courage and exposure. For instance, Nigeria's first world boxing champion, Hogan 'Kid' Bassey was just 16 when he became famous in his chosen career which earned him the middle name "kid". Even the global prodigies were only identified when they had opportunities to prove their mettle. The 16-year old pilot, 13-year old lawyer, 16-year old PhD holder or

nine-year-old driver could not have emerged while selling “pure water” or following herds of cattle around without schooling. The 10-year old who fired a shot from a gun must have seen one (gun) or was educated about one before, otherwise, where to pull the trigger would have been the bane of such readiness to display the rare bravery. The CPN’s responsibility is thus to see to the possibility of every child realising his or her potentials within the ambit of various relevant laws.

2.6.7 Child soldier

In the midst of fighting, a young boy scrambled from an alleyway. An American machine gunner saw that boy, who would later turn out to be 10 years old, was carrying an RPG. In a nanosecond, in the midst of bullets flying at him, the 21-year-old had to make what would surely be the toughest decision of his li

fe. “I took him out,” he later said; “I laid down quite a few bursts.” The boy fell dead. After the battle ended, there was time to think, the soldier reflected on the episode. “Anybody that can shoot a little kid and not have problem with it, there is something wrong with them,” he said smoking cigarette. “Of course I had a problem with it. But after being shot at all day, it didn’t matter if you are a soldier or a kid, these RPGs are meant to hurt us...I did what I had to do (Singer, 2009).

The episode narrated above by Singer is usually the pathetic situation for child soldiers who are dragged to war by the combatants with, or against their consent in most cases. Child soldiers, who are definitely not mature enough, face such imminent destructions by their adult counterparts who should be protecting them.

The UNICEF defines child soldiers as “any child – boy or girl – less than eighteen years of age, who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity.” It is instructive to note that this age limit was adopted in 2002 by the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as against the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols which set fifteen years as the minimum

age for participation in armed conflict (Kaplan, 2005). The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) noted further that nearly 80 percent of conflicts involving child soldiers include combatants below the age of fifteen, with some as young as seven or eight while “Children are combatants in nearly three-quarters of the world's conflicts and have posed difficult dilemmas for the professional armies they confront...”

Even when the UN put the age limit at 15, many government and non-state actors were using children below such age to prosecute war. Children were used for various purposes including errands running, sex slaves, cooks and real combatants. Child soldiering is a global phenomenon. The story is the same, from Iran where in 1984 the President of Iranian Parliament declared that “all Iranians from 12 to 72 should volunteer for the holy war” (Brown, 1990), to Uganda, Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Palestine, Lebanon, Nicaragua and Iraq, where *Al-Qaudisiyaya*, a government-controlled organ, published a decree calling for all Iraqis between ages 14 and 65 to volunteer for active service (Kaplan 2005).

A new but sad development now is the use of children as suicide bombers and arsonists by non-state actors, insurgents and terror groups (Tossoukpe 2019). In Nigeria for instance, there have been cases of child suicide bombers, especially teenage girls deployed by *Boko Haram insurgents* (Plate 5). Another incident was the *Channels* television report of February, 16, 2015 about a fourteen-year-old boy, Alaji from Kereuna, a town in the northern part of Nigeria. Alaji who was abducted earlier but luckily escaped from the dreaded *Boko Haram* group, told the television the gory story of how the terrorists use the children they capture thus:

There were a lot of women in the camps. They raped and abused them. For boys like me, we run errands but everyone knows the repercussion for disobedience, they enforce discipline. We were selected based on our strengths, they put us in trucks and Armoured Personnel Carriers ...They gave the weaker one's gallons of petrol to burn houses and buildings, and the stronger ones bullets and guns. Our responsibility to

deliver this is to fight on the battle fields during attacks.
(Onuaha, 2014).

Alaji who insisted the terrorists' claim to be fighting *Jihad* was false, escaped when he was given an assignment to take two fighters to Mongolo on bike, where he said they arrived at dawn before he ran away. His experience was similar to Jaafer, a 13-year old Iranian, who "volunteered" to serve in his country's *Basijji*(Iranian volunteer army). Brown reports that:

Jaafer ...had left home to go to war at the age of thirteen. His mother had cried when he left, pleading with him to stay. Shortly after being dispatched to the front, armed with two hand grenades he took part in a massive Iranian land offensive in the region of Ali Gharbi, ten kilometers north-east of Basra in the south of Iraq. Many of his young fellow-soldiers died in the attack, but he was captured (Brown, 1990:1).

The above cases point to some issues that require stakeholders' attention in handling child development issues. The child soldiers were either compelled or brainwashed to partake in hostilities, while those that were forced would always long for freedom if their mind had been previously trained to resist negative activities which could, more often than not, appear to be fun. Jafeer, as reported by Brown, volunteered as he saw it as fun and was "convinced" in his innocence to fight what he was made to know as a laudable cause, even when the mother was not in support. The UNICEF's CPN therefore is not out to only rescue and rehabilitate children after falling victim, but members of the network are to take proactive steps in developing the mind of the child positively.

2.6.8 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Child Protection

The UNICEF is the leading advocate for children. The body says it has the global authority to influence decision makers and the variety of partners at the grassroots level to turn the most innovative ideas into reality with the belief that nurturing and caring for children are the cornerstones of human progress. UNICEF was created with this purpose in mind, that is, to work with others to overcome the obstacles that poverty, violence,

disease and discrimination place in a child's path (UNICEF Nigeria fact sheet:2006). The specific functions of the fund in Nigeria include:

- i. UNICEF supports efforts to ensure that children survive, grow and realise their full potential and specifically aims to reduce maternal, neonatal, infant and under-five morbidity, mortality.
- ii. The fund equally aims to increase sustainable access to and use of improved water sources, sanitation facilities and hygiene practices in communities, schools and institutions.
- iii. The UNICEF nutrition programme supports action focused on the first 1,000 days of life in areas with the highest levels of wasting and stunting.
- iv. The fund focuses on the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, care and treatment of children living with HIV, and support for HIV prevention among adolescents.
- v. The organisation supports government efforts to provide equitable access to quality education in Nigeria where 10.5 million children are out of school.
- vi. UNICEF supports efforts to strengthen child protection systems to prevent and respond to exploitation, abuse and violence, and ensure access to quality care, protection and support services.
- vii. It also supports efforts to strengthen safety nets, research on the situation of women and children, and communication for development.
- viii. In emergencies, children are especially vulnerable to disease, malnutrition and violence. UNICEF focuses on protecting children and their rights.

The Fund equally performs all these functions globally in collaboration with individual governments of the states where it is located. The Fund's functions, especially in (vi) and (viii) above, informed its decision to organise various child-focused NGOs into networks for productive interactions and cross fertilisation of ideas. Child protection is a child of circumstances owing to a long period of child abuse of various forms including child

labour, neglect, maltreatment, sexual assault and other vices which were promoted by cultural, economic, religious and political reasons around the world. The age long practices that children are being protected against today were never seen as abuses in the past (Bilston, 2006), and until about a century or so ago.

The need to protect the child is born out of the fact that children are vulnerable as they are always at risk and weak physically and psychologically. The UNICEF Cambodia's Child Protection Network Evaluation Report of January 2003 defines Children at Risk (CAR) as:

... a child living in circumstances that put him/her at special disadvantage or in danger but which do not affect his/her development, though the child is at risk of becoming a child in need of special protection. More generally, a child at risk may need special protection because he/she is in a situation that exposes the child to being easily abused. (UNICEF, Cambodia, 2015)

The fund equally identified eight categories of CAR to include:

1. Extreme poverty
2. Parents' break-up, second marriage
3. Alcoholism, gambling in the family
4. Domestic violence against women
5. Post-conflict areas
6. Newly-settled families (internally-displaced people, demobilised soldiers, etc.)
7. In the care of people who are not the biological parents
8. Often miss school, dropouts or never went to school

Aside the CAR, there are also Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP). A child in the CNSP category is seen by UNICEF as:

....a child in circumstances that put him/her at special disadvantage or in danger and are affecting his/her development. The child could be a victim of abuse

and/or be in a situation that justifies specific intervention and the involvement of social services.

The Fund noted that there were initially 13 categories of CNSP while the category of children affected by HIV/AIDS has been added as follows:

1. Abandoned children
2. Orphans
3. Neglected children
4. Battered children
5. Children that are victim of sexual abuse
6. Children that are victim of sexual exploitation
7. Children engaged in harmful and exploitative labour
8. Trafficked children
9. Children living or working on the streets
10. Children deprived of basic material needs
11. Children affected by armed conflict
12. Children in conflict with the law
13. Disabled children
14. Children affected by HIV/AIDS (UNICEF)

There is no doubt that, going by the definitions of CAR and CNSP as well as the categories identified, a large number of children in Nigeria belong to these groups. Only recently, the country was reported to have the highest number of out of school children in the world, estimated at about 10 million. According to *The Punch* of May 18, 2014, UNICEF, while condemning the abduction of school girls by *Boko Haram* terrorists in the country, noted that “almost one of three primary-school aged children and one in four secondary-school aged children is not enrolled” in school. The Fund, which specifically expressed concern about the situation of the girl-child in the country, stated further that:

In many states, girls are twice as likely to be out of school as boys. In some parts of Nigeria, only five per cent of the poorest young women are literate. Given these challenges, it is disturbing that the girls were abducted to prevent them from attending school (*The Punch*, May 18, 2014).

Besides, the *BokoHaram*'s claim of abducting the girls to prevent them receiving western education is though worrisome, and rather superficial. This suggestion is as a result of reports of allegations that the insurgents also used the kidnapped female victims and affected children as sex slaves. This assertion was further confirmed when a rescued abducted girl was already with a baby when found (*The Nation*, May 19, 2016). Those who may not be part of CAR and CNSP conditions as stated above could also be at risk of rape and violation by relatives or even parents, hence the need to get all children involved in self-protection issues.

2.7 UNICEF child protection network in Oyo State

The CPN in Oyo State was established on June 4, 2011, comprising child-focused NGOs as well as some security agencies. As at June 2015, the network had no fewer than 50 NGOs; it had six security agencies as members as at January 2016. This UNICEF-initiated network is out to enhance the child's security and development in such a way that can guarantee childhood. Apart from the NGOs and some security agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) and the Nigerian Immigrations Service (NIS) that are members of the network, the state's ministries of Justice and that of Women Affairs are also represented. As a matter of fact, since it is the policy of UNICEF to deal with state governments directly, the network can only get any form of assistance from the Fund through the Women Affairs or Information Ministries (as the case may be) which also facilitates the CPN secretariat. Besides, individual members can only officially get the reports of their activities to UNICEF, first through the network's secretariat, and then to the Ministry which will forward same to the fund.

Essentially, the CPN's basic responsibilities are to educate all the stakeholders on the need to protect children and how to protect them. They are out to do advocacy about child rights to the children themselves as well as their adult counterparts. It is equally expected of them to ensure no child is subjected to any form of abuse including torture, rape, child labour, trafficking, or any other form of slavery. The network members are to work with other security agencies in monitoring the community where they operate in such a way that the above-mentioned vices are prevented, and in cases of occurrence, perpetrators are brought to book.

Among other child protection techniques in their mandate is for the members to rescue and rehabilitate abused or disaster-affected children. In a situation where doing so is not inimical to the child's wellbeing; the network is to reunite the affected child with the parents. In all cases, the activities of CPN in the state should be in the best interest of the child.

2.8 Child protection in emergencies

The UNICEF uses the term "child protection" to mean "preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children - including commercial sex exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage" (UNICEF fact sheet, 2006). The Fund's child protection programme equally targets "children who are uniquely vulnerable to these abuses such as those living without parental care; in conflict with the law, and in armed conflict." While noting that children's right to protection is being violated everywhere in the world, the Fund equally asserts that there "are massive, under-recognised and under-reported barriers to child survival and development, in addition to human rights violations." The resultant effects of all these on the children will be putting them "at risk of death, poor physical and mental health, HIV/AIDS infection, educational problems, displacement, homelessness, vagrancy and poor parenting skills later in life" (UNICEF fact sheet, 2006:1-2). Children require special protection in emergencies which may be

occasioned by manmade or nature aided phenomena. As the leading child protection agency, UNICEF has various ways of responding to child protection issues, including the following:

- Monitoring and reporting on grave violations of children's rights
- Child recruitment, release and reintegration
- Gender-based violence (GBV)
- Unaccompanied and separated children
- Psychosocial support and well-being
- Management
- Humanitarian coordination (UNICEF, 2006).

A critical look at the above UNICEF's areas of interest which form part of the Fund's "Core Commitment for Children" (CCC) in humanitarian action, seems to be essentially responsive. However, actions relating to emergency management are expected to be comprehensive enough to the extent of making preventive measures a priority. In International Humanitarian Law (IHL), provisions are specifically made to protect children, and in the international law applicable to armed conflict in general, children are granted special protection in addition to the general protection granted to civilians. Even in cases where children take part in hostilities, they only lose the general protection granted to civilians but retain the special protection enjoyed by children. However, in reality, children suffer almost the same fate as adults during emergencies, if not worse. This is so because flying bullets do not discriminate between combatant and non-combatant, children or adults. As a matter of fact, it is no longer news that combatants in the regular armies and guerrillas even use children as human shield, and this does not always deter the opponent from destroying such enclaves where children are used as "walls." Aside the emergencies emanating from violent conflicts, isolated violence, manmade and nature-aided disasters do not discriminate or select those to be affected according to their ages. This singular fact makes children even more vulnerable. The child

rights laws, for instance, can only punish child violators but can neither restore the child to the original state nor punish nature for any havoc done.

2.9 Cultural and religious attitudes that impedes child protection

Scholars have observed that there cultural impediments that mitigate the protection of children across the world this seems to be more common within developing nations that hold on to societal traditions that affects the child negatively(Boyden 2013). Similarly Benbenishty et al. (2003) state that “Values influence the importance given to competing demands to keep the child within the biological family, to refrain from intervening in the lives of families, and to protect the child”(p.150). Hence, it is unlikely that workers may have an ‘all or nothing’ attitude. Practitioners are interested in promoting child safety and the same time keeping the family intact. It is when these wishes are competing that their professional judgment, values and attitudes tilt the balance toward one of the alternative decisions. The potential importance of these attitudes and values led Gambrell (2005) to urge practitioners to examine and clarify to themselves the attitudes, values, and perceptions that influence their assessments. Better understanding of these personal subjective views may help identify biases, pitfalls, and practices that are prone to error (Banach, 1998; Benbenishty, 1992). The study discusses three major attitude that impacts the work of the child protection expert. These are child marriage, corporal punishment and female circumcision.

Female child marriage

Child marriage is reported to be most prevalent in the world's poorest countries (Jain and Kurz, 2007); where social and economic options for females are most limited (Mathur et al. 2003). Thus, in a review of data from 40 Demographic and Health Surveys conducted in developing countries, Singh and Samara (1996) show that the three factors which contribute most significantly to women's age at first marriage are labour-force participation, acquisition of formal education, and degree of urbanisation. Concerns about child marriage are various. Throughout the literature, the impacts of early marriage are mostly associated with the negative health and education outcomes (UNICEF 2001). These risks are exacerbated by poverty and inadequate access to maternal and child health services (Singh and Samara 1996). Most of the health impacts associated with early marriage are more accurately attributable to the negative consequences of early pregnancy and childbirth. According to literature reviewed by Mathur et al. (2003), morbidity levels among young mothers are very high and are often related to complications with obstetric fistula and difficult labour (see also Ellis 2004). Other research shows that young mothers experience higher rates of maternal mortality, because their bodies are unprepared for childbirth (Jain and Kurz 2007). Infants born to young mothers are also at higher risk of mortality, even through to the age of five (Mathur et al. 2003: 12). Early childbearing has also been associated with lower levels of education among girls (Jain and Kurz 2007; Jensen and Thornton 2003). Girls are likely to be married to men who are significantly older than they are, which raises concerns that such age differences 'can affect the power, status and autonomy of women within the household ... because women are less mentally, emotionally and physically mature, and/or capable of asserting themselves' (Jensen and

Thornton 2003: 14), leading to a higher incidence of domestic violence.¹⁶ Thus, a survey in India found that girls who married before 18 years of age reported experiencing physical violence twice as often as girls who married at a later age, while younger married girls reportedly experienced sexual violence three times more often (Jain and Kurz 2007: 8).

The betrothal of female children to adult males is still a regular phenomenon among the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group who occupy the northern part of Nigeria and, to a lesser extent, is prevalent also in other parts of the country. In Northern Nigeria, child marriage is a traditional cultural practice which is heavily influenced by Islam, a religion which historically has been practised in the region and which continues to be practised. Due to pressure exerted on children to marry young in Northern Nigeria, 48 per cent of Hausa-Fulani girls are married by age 15, and 78 per cent are married by age 18 (Akindola 2019).

These appalling statistics led Elizabeth to describe the life of a girl child in Northern Nigeria as 'pathetic'. To buttress her assertion she maintains that, while the ideal marriage age of women, although it varies, is between 20 and 26 years old, "in the North, little girls who have started menstruating are considered mature for marriage and the case of menstruation varies as a girl of twelve can be given out for marriage based on the fact that she has started menstruating". (World Health Organisation, 2010).

Despite the prevalence of child marriage among the Hausa-Fulanis, child marriage is illegal in Nigeria. As a step towards showing that it does not support child marriage,

Nigeria has signed and ratified international and regional instruments which regulate the rights of children. Nigeria ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 16 April 1991, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children's Charter) on 12 July 2001. Additionally, Nigeria took steps to domesticate both instruments in the form of the Child Rights Act (CRA). However, irrespective of Nigeria's passing of the CRA in 2003, the adherence to Islam and the application of Shari'a in the Northern parts of Nigeria, where child marriage is practised, continue to violate the provisions of CRC, the African Children's Charter and the CRA. The article examines international and regional instruments such as CRC and the African Children's Charter, which prohibit the practice of child marriage. Particular attention is given to Nigeria's domestication of both instruments through the CRA. Irrespective of the promulgation of this Act, I argue that child marriages are, to a certain extent, tolerated in Nigeria because of the weakness of the CRA. Such weakness stems from the fact that the CRA has to be passed into law in each state in Nigeria before child marriage may be considered illegal. Therefore, because the CRA is not enforceable across all Nigerian states, it leaves children in states that have not signed the CRA vulnerable. Other than this weakness, the article points out flaws in the 1999 Constitution that are loopholes that allow child marriage in Nigeria.

Part II of the article examines CRC, the African Children's Charter and the promulgation of the CRA in Nigeria despite it being met with opposition from religious groups and traditionalists. In this section problems with the CRA and its conflict with the Islamic

practice of child marriage are discussed. Part III deals with the practice of Shari'a law in Northern Nigeria, the reasons why child marriage is practised in that region and the effects of child marriage that have been documented. Part IV argues that despite the enactment of the CRA, the girl child in Nigeria is not adequately protected and that this inadequacy stems from the wording of Part 1 Section 61 of the 1999 Constitution. Part V draws conclusions and proposes recommendations, such as the need for a 'Prohibition of Child Marriage Act', in order to protect the girl child in Nigeria.

Corporal Punishment

Punishment is a term used in operant conditioning to refer to any change that occurs after a behaviour that reduces the likelihood that behaviour will occur again in the future. While positive and negative reinforcement are used to increase behaviours, punishment is focused on reducing or eliminating unwanted behaviours (Leach & Humphreys, 2007). Also, Scarre (2003) also defines the word "corporal" to refer to any punishment applied including assault or any means that are meant to cause physical pain or humiliation. The National Association of School Nurses, (2010): defines punishment as causing physical change behaviour that could be in the form of hitting, slapping, spanking, punching and pinching using objects such as sticks, belts, and paddles. It also states that "the intentional infliction of physical pain as a method of changing behavior, which may include methods such as hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, pinching, shaking, use of various objects (paddles, belts, sticks or other), or painful body postures Nakpodia (2012). Acton (1969) opined that punishment also implies law-making, penalization, finding

guilty, pronouncing a sentence. In this case, it serves as a method used in reducing the incidence of one's behaviour either by deterring the potential offenders or by incapacitating and preventing them from repeating the offence or by reforming them into law-abiding student. In educational system, research indicates that punishment may be administered by teachers, other staff and school mates on children through corporal punishment and other forms of punishment (Dunne, Leach, Chilisa, Maundeni, Tabulawa, Kutor, Forde, & Asamoah, 2005), and (Leach, & Mitchell, 2006).

The goal of punishment in schools is to decrease the behaviour that it follows. Punishment is only a method of disciplining and in school's corporal punishment is only one aspect mostly used (Sanderson, 2003). Corporal punishment is the use of physical force causing pain, but not wounds, as a means of disciplining students in schools. According to Leach and Humphreys (2007) spanking, rapping on the head and slapping are forms of corporal punishment which are normally used in schools.

The use of corporal punishment is strongly rooted in our society and is passed on through generations; however, this doesn't mean that corporal punishment is justified. The legitimacy of corporal punishment is still a contentious issue to many societies including Nigeria. Further, McGrath (1999): proposed that corporal punishment reflects a failure on the part of the teachers. Punishing means subjecting a penalty for an offense and usually includes inflicting some kind of hurt; in this regard, to Nakpodia (2012) sees corporal punishment as a practice of disciplining in which, something unpleasant is present or positive reinforces are removed following behaviour so that it happens less often in

future. In general, these definitions seek to point out that corporal punishment is the use of physical force against an individual. All these harsh disciplinary measures adopted by authoritarian/totalitarian parents and teachers to discipline children lead to anti-social behaviour, contribute to academic failure and social rejection.

Teaching in schools goes beyond gathering students for learning. It is all encompassing and discipline forms an integral part of it. For Africans, particularly in Nigeria, not sparing the rod is one essential aspect of discipline. School administrators and teachers have power and authority to administer a school disciplinary programme. This power to control and discipline students for infractions is traceable to the age doctrine of in-loco-parentis (in place of parents). This position of principals and teachers with regards to disciplinary control of students, especially in imposing corporal punishment is well explained in the *Corpus Julis Secundum*(79CJS:493 cited in Nakpodia 2012). The court in democratic societies all over the world has also viewed school officials as standing in loco-parentis, allowing them to regulate the students in any manner subject only to the standards and restraints that the parents would use in supervising the welfare of the child (Nakpodia, 2011). This is appropriate and relevant because every great person was once a child. World Corporal Punishment Research, (and generally in the English-speaking world, the use by schools of corporal punishment has historically been convened by the (same) common law doctrine of in loco parentis, whereby a school has the same rights over minors as their parents. In most places nowadays where it is allowed, corporal punishment

in public schools is governed by official regulations laid down by governments or local education authorities.

In Nigeria, teachers argue that their hands are tied in effective disciplining of school children because parents resist the use of old methods, including corporal punishment. But the use of corporal punishment in maintaining discipline in schools is frowned upon by majority of Nigerian teachers. The use of persuasion is advocated by the progressives; while traditionalists insist on the use of the cane whenever the situation demands it but they argue that only the school head should administer corporal punishment whenever the need arises. In addition, school Heads complain that teachers are no longer amendable to discipline since the new trend in state take-over of schools, which has resulted in the establishment of State School Management Boards (SSMBs) and Teachers Service Commissions (TSCs) which handle the appointment, promotion, discipline and teacher's conditions of service (Okeke, 2001). Corporal punishment is most frequently used in the secondary schools of Delta State (Egwunyega, 2009).

Female circumcision

There are different forms of circumcision, the more radical forms having potentially serious health consequences. According to the WHO, 100–140 million women in the world have been circumcised, and two million girls are estimated to be circumcised each year (WHO 2010). The debates surrounding female circumcision are among the most polemic within human-rights, feminist and anthropological discourses. Although a number of medical studies (e.g. Almroth et al. 2001; Behrendt and Moritz 2005; Elnashar and

Abdelhady 2007) have linked female circumcision with a range of reproductive and other health disorders, in practice the health impacts depend on the kind of surgery performed. There is no significant research on the health effects of cliterodectomy or excision, but infibulation has been associated with longer-term gynaecologic or urinary-tract difficulties, cysts and keloid formations, pelvic infection, dysmenorrhea, hematocolpos, painful intercourse, infertility, and problems during childbirth (American Academy of Pediatrics 2010). Feminists and advocates of human rights (and children's rights) also point to the gendered discrimination underlying the practice, its violation of bodily integrity, adverse effects on sexual functioning, and the fact that it is frequently carried out on children who are not able to provide informed consent.

On one hand, many African countries whose ways of life are largely dictated by their traditional beliefs do not subscribe to this negative description and the relentless attack believing that female circumcision has been grossly over exaggerated by the international community. Their ground is the perceived attempt to trivialize their socio-cultural and historical values. In fact, several outspoken scholars have sharply criticized this tendency to describe female circumcision negatively as dissocialised and a historical Smith (2011). They believe that the word mutilation implies excessive judgment by outsiders and insensitivity toward individuals who have undergone the procedure.

Despite decades of programming efforts aimed at eliminating female circumcision, results have varied and in general, limited. For instance, reviews point to serious limits in the understanding of the process of decision making and change in the practice of FGM, and

call for theoretical models to understand better how and why interventions cause change. Yet there are claims that female circumcision is primarily found in areas where there is much poverty, illiteracy, hunger, poor sanitary conditions. Also, its prevalence can be found where there is little in the way of health care facilities. Nonetheless, two opposing views are clearly evident in the debate over female circumcision. On the one hand, the ideological basis for the practices lie essentially in individual society's cultural, traditional, historical, economic and religious background (Pilt 2013) . The late founding father and former president stated that “no proper Kikuyu would dream of marrying a girl who has not been circumcised and vice versa. It is taboo for a Kikuyu man or woman to have sexual relations with someone who has not undergone this operation”.

On the other hand, however, the international community sees female circumcision as involving a considerable degree of mutilation which is painful, invasive and even life threatening, and that the operation actually reduces female libido while also describing it physically as an extreme example of gender discrimination and of the domination of women by men. The bottom line is the obvious case of reclassification whereby a global concern: “female circumcision” has become female genital mutilation and a traditional practice becoming human rights violation (Jordal et al 2018). In Uganda, an elder was quoted as denouncing “foreigners ...who call us bad names, call us primitive and call our circumcision rites genital mutilation. It makes us want to do more” (Klien et al 2018). Those who support and help perpetuate the practice argue that the decision to engage in such a custom is the prerogative of a society, and that other societies have no right to

impose their contrary morals and beliefs. In other words, they advocate an absolute right to cultural self-determination, not even a cultural tradition, such as female circumcision, routinely resulting in death could be attacked as a violation of human rights.

2.10 Relationship between UNICEF and CPN Oyo state

In most countries in sub-Saharan Africa especially in Nigeria, traditional residential institutions usually have too few caregivers and are therefore limited in their capacity to provide children the affection, attention, personal identity and social connections that families and communities can offer (UNCF, JUNP on HIV/AIDS and USAID, 2004). Developmental risks can thus be substantially heightened in institutional settings. Institutional care tends to segregate children and adolescents by age and sex and from other young people and adults in their communities, instead of encouraging independence and creative thinking, institutional life tends to promote dependency and discourage autonomy. For many adolescents, the transition from life in an institution to positive integration and self-support as a young adult in the community is difficult. They lack essential social and cultural skills and a network of connections in the community (UNCF, JUNP on HIV/AIDS and USAID, 2004).

In order to support the orphans and vulnerable children in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria initiated and adopted a number of policy frameworks. These include the Child Rights Act (CRA) (2003), which incorporates the UN conventions on

the Rights of a Child, and the National Guideline and Standard of Practice (NGSP) for OVC, in Nigeria (National Population Commission and ICF Macro, 2009). Twenty one of the thirty six states (including Oyo state) of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory have domesticated the law, and a vigorous advocacy campaign is currently being undertaken by the Ministry of Women Affairs for other states to follow suit (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development Nigeria, 2006; 2008). The goal of the NGSP for children protection in Nigeria is to provide comprehensive, efficient and effective care, support and protection of orphans and vulnerable children in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2007). The objectives of the National Guideline are to provide guidance for the development and implementation of interventions for the care, support and protection of orphans and vulnerable children in Nigeria, to provide minimum standards in quality of services and activities related to all areas of care, support and protection of orphans and vulnerable children that are socially and culturally acceptable, in accordance with the Federal Government of Nigeria policies, international instruments and internationally accepted best practices. This document also specifies the minimum services to be provided by any programme involved in the care and support of the child (Winifred and Okojie 2015).

Addressing the needs of children and mitigating negative outcomes of the growing child population worldwide is a high priority for national governments and international stakeholders across the globe that recognizes this as an issue with social, economic, and human rights dimensions. In Nigeria however, there is very limited rigorous research

evidence and data on children protection and interventions to inform policies and programs. Assessing the level of knowledge of stakeholders on the National Guideline and Standard of Practice on children will aid in highlighting the challenges stakeholders and policy makers experience with the implementation of National guideline and standard of practice on children (Winifred and Okojie 2015).

2.11 Historical Perspective on old and new trends of child vulnerability

In the past, traditional extended family system in Nigeria encouraged the idea of parents allowing their children to live with other close or distant family members. This was done in some cases where it was difficult for the parents of such young persons to take care of them. It was also done to provide support for a young couple that might require some form of domestic assistance when they did not have children of their own or when such children were still very young. The relationship then was based on mutual benefits such that the young person assisted the host family by carrying out domestic chores that were never quantified in monetary terms. On the other hand, the host family took care of the young person by providing for his/her daily up-keep and training in form of skills acquisition that could enhance his/her quality of life and enable him/her to be self-reliant. On the contrary, the trend now (in most cases) is for a married woman to keep a young person (whose age can be as low as 6 and as high as 20 or more) and pay certain fee for services rendered on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis.

The age of the young person plays a significant role in the determination of the salary payable. Inquiries carried out by Social Alert¹ on the treatment of domestic workers in

various countries revealed (inter-alia) that “there are many child domestic workers and that they are often recruited because it is easier to dominate them and also because they can be paid less than adults.” (Social alert, 2000). Sometimes these young persons, mainly girls, are from families that can only support them through primary school education. In some cases, they have not received any form of formal education. Often times, these girls are treated as second-class citizens and are seldom allowed access to educational programmes through the television, radio, or oral teachings. These girls are often treated differently from the children of their employers. These, in addition to the knowledge of their biological family’s inability to cater for them adequately, often make them lack self-esteem. The lack of, or inadequate access to reproductive health information makes it difficult for them to make informed choices and decisions that can enhance their quality of life. The lack of proper guidance and little or no love from their host families also make them highly vulnerable to domestic violence, exploitation, sexual abuse, and harassment by members of opposite sex. They are sometimes abused sexually by the husbands of their employers, or their drivers, or other males domestic workers in the same house or in the neighbourhood.

2.12 Theoretical framework

Child protection issues cannot and should not be pinned down to a particular approach as a result of its dynamic nature. For instance, fundamentals of child security and protections were initially taken to be issues bordering on health and home accidents that could result in serious injuries and death. These had grown over the years to include a number of other life-threatening phenomena such as rape, kidnapping, torture, child labour, child

soldiering, as well as using children as shields and, as suicide bombers by combatants and insurgents among other vices. Thus, this study utilises three main theories namely the Complexity Theory, Use and Disuse Theory and Child Development Theories.

Child protection is a development issue, which cannot be adequately discussed without the input of the major stakeholders themselves, that is, children. In all efforts to protect the child, the issue of the rights and responsibilities of the child are always the focus of discourse both by the scholars and the practitioners. However, the more conscious the child is about his rights, the more trouble he runs into if such rights and responsibilities are not imparted according to his capacity and his development rate. Thus, the Child Development Theory is discussed with a view to finding appropriate ways of building relevant protection issues in the mind of the child as he develops.

2.12.1 Complexity Theory

As noted above, child protection no doubt is a complex issue that cannot be tackled with a definite approach. As a social phenomenon, it requires various approaches, as persons, groups and issues involved vary in many ways. Thus, issues bordering on culture, religion, technological development, economy, socio-political set up, level of development, perception, necessity and even geographical factor, among others are involved in evolving fool proof methods of protecting the child to guarantee worthy childhood. As a result, using Complexity Theory as the framework within which child protection issues are discussed is apt. The *Business Dictionary* defines Complexity Theory as:

Set of concepts that attempts to explain complex phenomenon not explainable by traditional (mechanistic) theories...It recognises that complex behaviour emerges from a few simple rules, and that all complex systems are networks of many interdependent parts which interact according to those rules.

The theory emerged from the sciences as a study of the interaction of the various components of the natural environment which leads to some form of new issues. Bar-Yam (2002) sees complex systems as:

...the new approach to science studying how relationships between parts give rise to collective behaviours of a system, and how the system interacts and forms relationship with the environment (Bar-Yam, 2002).

Child protection, no doubt, is a complex matter with different issues involved at various levels of providing protection services to the child. Stevens and Cox (2007: 1320) in applying complexity theory to child protection, note that despite broad support from politicians, policy makers and the majority of the public to ensure the child is safe, “child protection practice and practitioners are frequently criticised for perceived or actual failure to protect.” They observed further that “successive inquiries produce reports with similar recommendations, yet children continue to be abused and harmed, sometimes fatally.” While noting that “clearly, better understandings and more effective protective practices need to be developed,” they concluded that “child protection is not simple because of the multiplicity of factors that result in children being at risk” (Stevens and Cox, 2007).

Thus, this work applied this theory in reviewing the issue of the UNICEF – propelled CPN’s child protection resources and multiple strategies in Oyo State at present, with a view to harnessing such and other methods that may be identified in the course of the study, for the benefit of the child.

2.12.2 Use and Disuse Theory

The essence of protecting the child is not only to guarantee childhood, but to ensure worthy and useful adulthood. The Use and Disuse Theory which postulates that undeveloped skill could be lost is also reviewed. This is to see whether safety skills can go beyond guaranteeing childhood, to making responsible adults.

This theory as propounded by a French biologist, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck postulates that characteristics acquired by an organism could be passed to the offspring, though Lamarck used the long neck of the giraffe to do his illustration, concluding that the continuous stretching of the neck by the animal to reach the leaves on trees for feeding would result in its child having long neck. He thus posited that, if a giraffe would not eat from tall trees, the neck of its offspring would be shorter than the necks of those whose parents stretched their necks to eat.

Though Lamarck's theory seems to be more of generic inheritance, the characteristics of the parents were acquired and influenced by the environment. As such, social behaviour influenced by the environment could be possibly "inherited" by the offspring of organisms so affected. Lee (2014) observed that:

Claiming the environmental elements in our surroundings such as fresh air, bright sunshine, pure water, green grass and close relations with our neighbours, including nature, we have to let all our mental and physical "use" functions go ahead for the future prosperity of our offspring, irrespective of age, sex, race and colour, on the global village, as medical doctors or professional therapists recommend.

Though, Lee observes that the Lamarckian "use and disuse" theory is not "necessarily convincing", he notes that "interest in Lamarckism has continued as studies in the field of epigenetic have highlighted the possible inheritance of behavioural traits acquired by the previous generation."

Adams (1973) notes that in the Lombrosian Theory of Criminality, Lombroso, who was a professor of legal medicine at the University of Turin identified three basic classes of criminals with those who are throwbacks as a category. Throwbacks or atavists are defined as people who behave in way that could be traced to their progenitors. *Understanding Evolution*, a non-commercial, education website, teaching the science and history of evolutionary biology equally posits that "despite all he got wrong, Lamarck can

be credited with envisioning evolutionary change for the first time” (http://evolution.berkeley.edu/evolibrary/article/history_09: 2015). Though, many other scholars of his time, including Georges Cuvier and Charles Darwin, challenged Lamarck and criticised him for failure to make empirical conclusions, his studies remain a foundation for human metamorphosis till date. Specifically, Lamarck’s and Darwin’s conclusions on evolution were compared as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Lamarck and Darwin positions on evolution

Lamarck	Darwin
Use and Disuse	Variation
Transmission of Acquired Characteristics	Inheritance
Increased Complexity	Differential Survival
No Extinction	Extinction

Source: Understanding Evolution

In the table above, Charles Darwin, who is seen as the modern evolutionist, also confirmed what Lamarck did but with some different conclusions. For instance, he saw “use and disuse” as “variation”; “transmission of acquired characteristics” as “inheritance” and “increasing complexity” as “differential survival”. The only marked difference is that while Lamarck posited that traits could never go into extinction, Darwin concluded unused characteristics could vanish.

Despite the criticism of the Lamarck proposition on transition of behavioural traits from one generation to another, his critics eventually agree that behaving in certain ways could influence a person's child's behaviour. Perhaps, this is why Lee (2014) conclusively submits that "we have to let all our mental and physical 'use' functions go ahead for the future prosperity of our offspring..." Effective child protection therefore could better be achieved if all the stakeholders, including the children, are conscious of their roles. This is necessary in view of the fact that a well-protected child could also be a responsible adult who will see child protection as a way of life. Applying this theory therefore has linked the challenges faced in child protection efforts at present, to the fact that the current adults were also not properly protected as children, and thus, could not have learnt certain skills as youngsters. Thus, child protection is encountering a lot of challenges now because it is a new phase of human endeavour that needs to be developed and inculcated in the children so that they will be better protectors in the future.

2.12.3 Child development theories

The Advance Learning Interactive System Online (ALISON), an online tutor on children studies, submits that theories produced by developmental psychologists have the potential to inform everyday discussions of children's behaviour and development. Described as the Grand Theories, they attempt to explain the general processes that underlie child's development and behaviour. Four of the most important theories which are behaviourism, social learning theory, constructivism and social constructivism were also adopted for this study.

a. Behaviourism Theory

This approach, also referred to as learning theory, sees child development as arising from specific forms of learning, based on the idea of the child as a passive recipient of environmental influences that shape behaviour. This theory presents child development as conditional, emphasising the influence of external factors as the main reason for a child behaving in a particular way. It posits that when an act is rewarded, the child is likely to

continue to repeat such while an act punished is eventually jettisoned. This assertion which held sway in the 1950s and 1960s could also be said to still be valid till date as measures such as reward and punishment are still being used to encourage or deter a particular behaviour not necessarily only among children but in the society generally. Without doubt, what goes on around the child could influence the present or future behaviour of such child. Citing Hilberman and Munson (1977-1978; Roy, 1977; Walker, 1979) Jourileset *al* (2005) submit that:

Many children in families characterized by partner violence are reported to experience mental health problems, as well as a range of other adjustment difficulties...The types of mental health problems typically noted included symptoms of trauma, anxiety, and depression, as well as defiant, aggressive and delinquent behaviour (Jourileset *al.*, 2005:225).

In other words, the fact that the parents were involved in violence was enough reason to affect the child who may not in any way be part of the problem except for the coincidence of being born into such family. Children, according to the dictates of this theory, are always influenced by the reaction their behaviour elicits as noted above. Continuing certain positively rewarded behaviour could start as early as within the first one year on earth. For instance, Murkoff, Eisenberg and Harthaway (2003), while counselling nursing mothers on ways to deter their babies from injurious behaviour of biting nipples while sucking, note that a child could turn an accident of biting her mother's nipple to fun if perhaps, the mother let out a yelp, the baby giggled and the mother could not help but laugh. The baby's action and the reaction of the mother would thrill the toddler, hence the fun could continue. They however submit that:

So, instead of encouraging her (*the baby*) hi-jinks with laughter (or with overreaction which may also invite a repeat performance), let her know that biting isn't acceptable with a firm, matter-of-fact No! Remove her promptly from the breast, explaining that "Biting hurts mommy-ouch!" If she tries to hang on to your nipple, use your finger to break her grip. After a few such

episodes, she'll catch on and give up (Murkoff *et al.*, 2003:379) (italicised, bracketed words mine)

If such reaction would deter a toddler from repeating an action, encouraging a positive behaviour by showing what is acceptable is then a necessity in the process of child development. It is, however, instructive to note here that the authors added the need to avoid “overreaction” and the need to “explain”, even when a less than one year old is involved. In other words, overreaction could only bring about confusion and more fun while not explaining; the consequent reaction could be meaningless as well. The weakness in behaviourism theory is the attempt to limit the learning process to observation without instruction. Such learning could be misconstrued and could later be misused.

b. Social Learning Theory

This was a major challenge to behaviourism theory. It recognises the ability of children to learn through by observing the way people around them behave. This theory is premised on simple observation that forms their (children's) character, and not necessarily learning only when there is deliberate influence. This emerged in the 1960s, supported by research that showed how aggressive behaviour was often imitated by children who observed others engaging in it. The social learning model thus recognised the more active part that a child can play in learning from their environment. It also stressed the significance of “role models” in children's development.

Also, Aremu notes that the social learning theorists believe that:

...children will model their behaviours according to the reactions they receive from others, either positively or negatively, the behaviour of the adults they are in close contact with, especially parents, and the behaviour they view on television and on movies. If children observe aggression, such as adults slapping or punching someone during an argument, and see that the aggrieved behaviour is approved or rewarded, they will likely react violently during a similar incident. Eventually, children will master the techniques of

aggression and become more confident that their behaviour will bring tangible rewards (Aremu 2014).

Aremu thus expressed concern that since children spend long hours watching television, especially between ages two and five when they have been found to watch television for an estimated period of 27.8 hours per week (Aremu, 2014), those who are emotionally disturbed may not be able to distinguish fantasy and reality shows. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that children learn through observation. This perhaps accounts for their demonstrations in their private time, when they sometimes “act” husbands, wives, children, drivers, gatemen, armed robbers, gunmen and other roles.

c. Constructivism Theory

Jean Piaget's stage theory contrasts behaviourist views by seeing children as independent agents in their own learning, and more important than the influences of parents and teachers. It describes in detail a series of four successive stages through which all children were believed to progress. This theory, also described as a form of constructivism, because Piaget saw children as having to construct their understanding of the world for themselves, prompted a massive volume of research activity, which continues today. Reviewing Piaget's theory, Kendra Cherry, also a psychologist notes:

Piaget suggested that children think differently than adult and proposed a stage theory of cognitive development. He was the first to note that children play active roles in gaining knowledge of the world. According to his theory, children can be thought of as ‘little scientist’ who actively construct their knowledge and understanding of the world (Cherry, 2014).

Busari (2011) also corroborated the Piaget's assertion by noting that “the thinking of younger children differs in significant ways from the thinking of the older children” and that the child's cognitive development level should be taken into account in the learning process. However, she argued that the clinical method on which such cognitive consideration is based may be too subjective to supply accurate data, noting that “Piaget may have made cognitive development seem more orderly than it actually is” (Busari, 2011).

Thus, while one can conclude here that Piaget's Cognitive Theory is relevant in the formation of curriculum for learning in a sequential manner and in accordance with the age and cognitive development, it should be noted that certain biological and environmental factors could alter such arrangement, especially as seen in gifted child, child prodigy and the autistic child.

c. Social Constructivism Theory

This theory also perceives children as active participants in their own development, as well as recognises that the roles that other people, environment and the culture the child grows up in, play in their development. Social constructivism also contrasts with social learning theory in that it identifies social interaction as the key to learning rather than mere social observation. In other words, whatever form or shape of character a child exhibits must be a result of what he/she learnt through active involvement in the goings on in the environment where he/she grows. A popular psychologist, Kurt Lewis, once observed that "Learning is more effective when it is an active rather than a passive process" thus lending credence to the opinion that "a self-made man is usually a horrible example of unskilled labour" (McKenzie, 2002).

There is no doubt that the above theories are all relevant as far as comprehensive development of the child is concerned. In summary, four contrasting views of how children develop have been identified as; development as discipline, development as natural stages, development as experience and development as interaction.

It is a fact that when a child exhibits a behaviour that elicits laughter, which could be regarded in this case as a reward, the tendency is that the child continues such while a behaviour that attracts frown accompanied with a shout such as "stop it!" could facilitate deterrence in such an act. Of course, without anybody sitting five-year olds down to teach them to cook or sweep, they often attempt to practice such, especially when playing with peers. This is definitely through mere observation. Today, many married couples have

never read any book on marriage yet they are husbands and wives with the pool of the knowledge being used for that through observation.

Piaget's constructivism theory of independent learning could also be justified in a way as a common saying posits that experience is the best teacher. There is no doubt that a child has a way of understanding his or her own world. The social constructivism which posits that children are active rather than passive participants about what goes on around them is a trite as far as child development is concerned. When it could be said some knowledge could be automatic, self-made people have always been referred to as unskilled labour. For a comprehensive development therefore, a combination of these assertions would be a condition - that is learning through observation, influences of others, one's initiative as well as through interaction.

However, it is important to note that allowing the child to learn through observation or by instinct alone could be dangerous. A "Social Constructivism Vignette" by Roy Jackson, Jessica Karp, Ellen Patrick, and Amanda Thrower (Kim, 2006) explained this theory better. Jackson *et al.*, narrated the frustration of Mrs. Smith, a high school English teacher who had struggled for years when it came to teaching Shakespeare to her students but students became bored immediately with reading any of the plays aloud in class and consistently complained that the language was too difficult to understand. Mrs. Smith was said to have decided to take a social constructivist approach to Shakespeare's Hamlet with her students by allowing them to act it instead of just reading (Jackson *et al.*, 2006). They explained further that the students, by acting certain roles in the play, were able to grab the message while at the same time, enjoying the whole drama. This lends credence to the emphasis of allowing children to participate in their own affairs as provided for by various laws governing the rights of the child at the local, national, regional and global levels.

The analysis of the four-in-one theory above shows none of the theories could work perfectly in isolation in preparing the child to benefit from childhood and have a secure future. They, however, reveal the potentials in children as far as their ability to learn, be

productive, reason, and be innovative are concerned. The UNICEF-led CPN activities in Oyo State were therefore studied based on the application of these theories. The study espoused the challenges they face in protecting children through educating them about their rights and responsibilities, safety skills and security tips; and the prospects of such venture judging from the successes recorded so far.

2.13 Knowledge gap identification

Extant literatures on child protection and security are generally on the issues of health and legal responsibilities of parents, guardians, care givers, teachers and various authorities at local, national, regional and global levels. Except for few non-governmental organisations and some government agencies that document some safety skills for the children to learn from, there is a dearth of literature on possible responsibilities for the child when he or she is faced with conflict, emergency and threat situations where there are no adults to help. Most of the literatures on child protection dwell on the responsibilities of the adults to protect the child on the one hand, and the legal consequences of failure to do so on the other. This work therefore filled this important gap by identifying certain safe, teachable and learnable skills that the child can use, at least in the interim, when confronted with emergency, conflict or threatening situations, when there are no adults around.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

To understand the nature of the challenges faced by the CPN in carrying out their mandates in Oyo State, survey research design was used employing qualitative research tools to explore relevant areas while appropriate and workable answers were provided to the research questions, thus fulfilling the objectives of the study. Qualitative methods including observation and interview conducted with key informants were employed to generate data which were eventually analysed and used.

This study made use of survey design, using the qualitative approach to extract information from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included the researcher's notes and photographs during fieldwork, responses from the interviews and Focus Group Discussions conducted. Secondary sources of data included the provisions of the child right laws; reports from UNICEF, minutes of the CPN before and during the study as well as photographs from sources other than fieldwork and Internet resources.

3.2 Study population and sample size

The study population was the 50 CPN members in Oyo State; children of secondary schools in Oyo State, existing security agencies including the Nigerian Army, the Oyo State commands of the Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Nigerian Immigration Service, the Nigerian Prisons (renamed Correctional) Service, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, and the Federal Road Safety Corps, as well as the Judiciary.

3.3 Sample size and sample technique

The sample for this study was purposively drawn, because working with children is a sensitive and specialized issue across the world. Also the respondents for the study were specifically chosen because of their specialization in children issues. The sampled population comprised:

1. Ten CPN officials with different identified areas of child protection focus such as; Orphanage home management, child rights advocacy, child empowerment programme, child trafficking, child education, street children, vulnerable children, special children and child rehabilitation. These 10 thematic areas of child protection also represent 20 per cent of the total population of CPN members in the state. Besides, another 12 (representing 24%) members were selected for FGD, thus 44% of the network was sampled. The members were selected based on the ten thematic areas of child protection network (CPN) and the last two was based on their position in CPN that is, the President and the Secretary.
2. In order to ensure fair representation of positions of things as far as the security needs of children are concerned, the heads or authorised representatives of the security and safety agencies in the state were purposively selected for interviews. Thus interviews were conducted for these set of key informants;
 - a. The Commissioner of Police was represented by the Deputy Police Commissioner in charge of Criminal Investigation, the police Officer-in-Charge of Juvenile Welfare (OCJWC), the police Officer-in-Charge of Human Trafficking and the Police Public Relations Officer;
 - b. The Garrison Commander, 2 Div. of the Nigerian Army, Ibadan;
 - c. The Comptroller of Immigration Service and the Assistant Controller in charge of Human Trafficking;

- d. The Controller of Nigerian Correctional Service and his officer in charge of child welfare;
- e. The Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Officer-in-Charge of child protection;
- f. The Commander of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency; and
- g. The Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps.

The reason for the purposive selection of the heads of various organisations involved was to extract accurate information about the operations of these organisations and agencies since the buck stops on their tables and their decisions on all issues are final. These heads were also able to give necessary directives to officers in charge of certain units and departments to release relevant information to the researcher.

- 3. Two stakeholders in the Administration of Child Justice (ACJ) namely:
 - a. The Chief Judge (CJ) of Oyo State; and
 - b. The Chief Magistrate of the Juvenile court, Iyaganku.
- 4. Twelve (12) students that fall within ages 12 and 17 from the most populous secondary schools in Ibadan metropolis, Ogbomoso, and Iseyin where CPN have members were selected for FGDs. The most populous schools in these locations were chosen as they have children with most varied background. As such, Government College, Ibadan; Iseyin District Grammar School and Anglican Grammar school, Ogbomoso were selected for the FGDs having been identified as the most populated schools in their areas.

However, children in each chosen school were randomly selected as FGD participants but purposively selected to cover the six junior and senior secondary (JSS and SSS) classes in equal proportion. Since security is a personal issue, an equal number of male and female children were selected in each school. Thus, a boy and a girl were selected from each of

the JSS and SSS classes which made 12 in each school. They were grouped into junior and senior classes so as to get more information, thus they were divided based on seniority.

3.4 Sources of data

Relevant data for the study were from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included interviews, discussions, observations and photographs taken during the fieldwork. The secondary sources included books, journals, Internet resources, special publications by relevant bodies such as UNICEF, Nigerian Government and Oyo State Government; child protection campaign fliers, maps, records of the CPN in Oyo State including minutes of meeting book and relevant photographs from the agencies that were involved in the study. Various child right protection laws at global, continental, national and local levels were consulted for relevant information.

3.5 Method of data collection

- a. Ten **In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)** were conducted for the heads of selected CPN members in different identified thematic areas of child protection for their professional opinion on the available Child Protection strategies and possible ways of improvement.
- b. Fifteen (15) **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** were conducted in all. Seven were conducted for heads of security agencies in the state including NPF, NA, NSCDC, NIS, NCS, NDLEA, and FRSC, the using KII guide. In addition, the police commissioner who was represented by his deputy in charge of criminal investigation further granted permission to the officer in charge of human trafficking, the officer in charge of juvenile and the police PRO to equally grant KII. Also, the Controller of Prisons, the Comptroller of Immigration and the

Commandant of NSCDC permitted their officers in charge of children issues to give additional information to the researcher during KII. Two KIIs were conducted with the Chief Judge (CJ) of Oyo State and the Chief Magistrate at the state's Juvenile Court, Iyaganku, Ibadan. (see Appendix).

c. Four **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** were conducted in all. Three FGDs were conducted with students of three public schools in Oyo State (12 students in each of the most populous school where CPN have members). This is in fulfilment of the provisions of the Child Rights Law of Oyo state that state children should always have voices in their own affairs. The schools chosen were Government Secondary School, Ibadan; Iseyin District Grammar School, Iseyin and Anglican Grammar School, Ogbomosho. They were all public schools with the most populous schools in major towns with CPN presence. Interview guide was used in asking them open-ended questions on protection issues as they understand them. One FGD was conducted with 12 members of CPN randomly selected to cover other sundry aspects of child protection that were not captured during the IDI session. This also allowed for proper interaction and exchange of opinions among the participating network members.

d. Observations

Participant observation was used while the researcher was attending the CPN meetings. This method is a situation where the researcher will be part of the phenomenon under study. In this case, the researcher used this method to have in-depth understanding of how the CPN conducts its meetings. Six of such meetings were attended between December, 2016 and August, 2017. The operations of the network are based on the trainings, discussions and decisions the CPN have at their monthly meetings, some of which the researcher attended. The researcher also made use of their past records in the form of minutes, for further necessary

information. This was possible because, being a researcher in the field of child security and protection is a form of membership eligibility as provided for in the Nigeria's Child Rights Manual published in 2014. As such, the researcher was allowed into the meetings.

ii. The researcher also used the same observation method at the CPN trainings conducted in schools. Two of such trainings were attended at Oba Akinbiyi High School, Ibadan, where an incidence of rape was recorded and the CPN had to sensitise the children and teachers in the school to prevent further occurrences.

iii. The researcher made use of non-participant observation method in juvenile court sessions. Ten of such court sessions were attended. Of the 10, nine were at the magistrate court, Iyaganku and one at the high court, also in Iyaganku, Ibadan between February and November, 2017.

3.6 Research instruments

Research instruments used for this study were Interview guide, Participant observation list and Focus Group Discussion guide (FGD) as explained below.

3.6.1 Interview guides

The instruments used for this study are interview guides. Specifically,

- a. In-depth Interview and
- b. Key Informant Interview guides were used for data collection.

3.6.2 Participant observation

The types of observation used as part of the instruments for this study were both participant, and non-participant observation methods.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide

Four FGDs were conducted with the use of the FGD guide. Three were for children in selected schools in Ibadan, Ogbomoso and Iseyin in a bid to give them voice in issues affecting them as enshrined in various child right laws. The discussions were conducted in the presence of the children's teachers and caregivers. The fourth FGD was conducted among selected members of CPN with different focused areas from those to be interviewed. Due to the fact that this type of data collection allows for interaction and freedom of expression, genuine information as regards feelings and potentials of the participants were elicited. This was used to seek the children's feelings about their protection, security and ways they think it could be best addressed.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Qualitative data gathered from the In-depth and Key Informant Interviews; observations and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were classified into different thematic areas, discussed and content analysed in line with the research objectives. To be able to content analyse the data, themes and categories were developed along the objectives of the study.

Also, the study made use of the six phases of thematic analysis to provide meaning to the data gotten from the different sources which include FGDs, IDIs and KIIs.

In the first phase after transcribing the data from the various interviews, the researcher familiarised himself with the primary data with the aim of identifying patterns and intrinsic meanings that might be hidden in the primary data. Thus, the researcher found that the objectives were inter-related with the ten thematic areas of the CPN.

The second phase focused on the generation of an initial code. This is the preliminary generation of tables of ideas gotten from the primary data the aim is to bring out useable data for the study. The raw data gotten are evaluated along the lines of the research questions. This remains an integral part of the analysis.

The third phase involved the locating of themes within the primary data that is information gotten from the interviews and FGDs. The idea is to refocus the analysis at a broader level of themes which brought out nuances surrounding child protection in Oyo State.

The fourth phase involves the review of themes. In reviewing the themes, it was discovered that some were redundant since they did not align with the aim and objectives. The motive of the review was to remove defective themes. After removing defective themes with limited data, the fifth phase dealt with the definition of accepted themes. After the themes are defined, a decision is made to capture relevant data needed for each objective.

The final stage involved the generation of report based on themes that were identified examples of the views of respondents are placed in the report. This will be shown in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The issue of child protection is at present a global phenomenon that has taken a centre stage of discourse. This is as a result of the realisation that the future of any society entirely depends on its young ones. Proper handling of children in a given entity will guarantee a prosperous future while vulnerable children without attention in a society could only lead to a doomed future. There is no doubt that what the future of any society will be with respect to peace and conflict in a situation depends on the attitude of those they brought up as the young ones who will eventually take over the affairs of such society. As found out by this study, Child Protection as an evolving area of human endeavour has many challenges especially in a developing economy like Nigeria. There are however indications that if the child protection evolution is pursued with vigour and determination, the future holds a lot of prospects; thus, the overall success of this idea largely depends on the ability of the stakeholders to overcome the challenges plaguing the issue at present.

These assertions were based on the outcome of this study in Oyo State which is the study area for this research work, and indeed, the situation in Nigeria may not be different as shown earlier by various reports that children remain at risk, calling for efforts to minimise certain vulnerability factors for the future of the country to be secured.

This chapter presents the results of analysed responses, discussions and observations from the key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observed activities on the field. The KII were conducted with heads of selected security agencies, the Chief Judge of Oyo State, the State's Chief Magistrate and selected members of CPN. Observed training,

meetings and court sessions involving members of the CPN and children were also analysed as presented below.

This study was designed to answer four research questions by addressing the following related main objectives:

4.1 Objective 1: To identify the peculiar needs of the child and the window of opportunity under the law

The fundamentals of child protection are rooted in various statutes at global, regional, national and local levels. As such, some of the needs of the child in Oyo State have been addressed by certain provisions in the state's Child Right Law enacted on 24 October, 2006. Peculiar needs and protection issues of children in Oyo State as found out by this study are as follows:

i. Need for protection against child rape and defilement

The study shows that sexual abuse is the most common risk being faced by children in Oyo State. This assertion was corroborated severally by the immediate past President of the CPN in the state, a lawyer who is also the National Coordinator of Legal Rights Awareness and Protection Organisation (LERAPO); the current President of the network, the UNICEF appointed child protection Mentor for Oyo State who is also a retired Controller of Prisons (CP) and the Chief Executive Officer of Child Development and Concern Foundation (CDCF); the Director of Children Welfare in the state Ministry of Women and Social Welfare; the secretary of the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) as well as jointly by the FGD conducted with 11 members of CPN in the state. Though the police Officer in Charge of Juvenile Welfare said rape and defilement was no longer rampant "because of the command's efforts," data

collected at the records section of the command showed otherwise (see Table 5) indicating how information at the official quarters could be manipulated by personnel.

While responding to the question, “What are the common risks faced by children in Oyo State and the frequency of their occurrence?” the LERAPO Executive Coordinator stated:

“It is sexual abuse; rape and defilement that are frequently reported. Hardly will a week pass that there would not be a reported case of child being sexually abused by men, especially people of older age. A child of five, six, ten, twelve years being sexually abused in terms of sexual intercourse out of their will and consent. Where the issue of consent comes in, it is a nullity because; a child does not have the capacity to give consent to sexual intercourse with any man” (IDI, 18/2/ 2017).

The above claim is further confirmed by the submission of the current president of the network, thus:

“We have child labour which in most cases lead to rape. We have sexual abuse of children which is very rampant. We have increased the generation of reports, yet cases remains underreported. Children are exposed to child molestation and rape, and most cases are not reported because the communities tend to bury cases” (IDI, 21/2/ 2017).

The UNICEF Child Mentor while corroborating this development described the situation of “defilement of girl child as becoming worrisome”. In his words:

“It is so bad that I had handled a case of the defilement of a three-year-old girl by an adult. And it is not only my NGO, there are so many NGOs that are working on child protection and it is a similar experience all over. If you listen to radio, if you read newspapers, it is stories of child defilement. It is unfortunate; we are not getting to fight the case as it should be fought at least, to reduce the incidence of its occurrence. It is rather unfortunate

and it is for many reasons including the parents themselves as they back out along the line when it comes to prosecution” (IDI, 5/3/2017).

Also, in her submission, the secretary of FOMWAN in the state stated that the most common case her organisation has attended to is “the issue of child rape”. She explained further that each time a case is reported, the organisation will carry out investigations to ascertain its genuineness which she noted is a cumbersome process. According to her:

“There are a lot of child rape cases. If a case is reported, at times, we will invite the suspect and ask whether he has actually raped the child, at times, they do confess, at times, they deny. But during interrogation, even if they deny, their actions speak louder than voice. You can even read from their countenance that they are the perpetrators. But the police do complain of lack of personnel. Some of them don’t know the steps to take and some believe we are hijacking their work. All these keep on encouraging the perpetrators of this particular crime” (IDI, 20/2/ 2017).

These assertions were further corroborated by proceedings of some of the court sessions attended by the researcher during the study. For instance, on February 23, 2017, the chief magistrate of the juvenile court in Iyaganku, Ibadan had to sentence seven boys that gang raped an 11-year old girl to a weekly counselling for six weeks after discharging them because they were all minors with a stern warning that they must not mock the girl either in school or in the neighbourhood. The judge also blamed the boys’ parents for not doing enough, warning they may never be that lucky again as such act could earn them life imprisonment or even death penalty. The magistrate noted that such cases take their tolls not only on the victims, but also the perpetrators as well as the victim’s parents who must abandon their businesses and other family affairs to attend to the issues at hand.

In his own submission, the Controller of Nigerian Correctional Service in Oyo State said cases involving sexual assault on children are either lead to sentence or remand were

often received at the prisons. Responding to how often such case is reported he submitted that it was very often and noted as follows:

“Even about two days ago, the magistrate sent four people to Agodi Correctional Service for rape; but the way it is in our society these days, they try to avoid what they call stigmatisation both on the victims and the offenders. Some parents would say, ‘please, don’t stigmatise my child of having been raped because the future is still there’”(KII, 9/2/ 2017).

It appears as if the issue of rape is handled by many agencies due to its prominence and frequency of occurrence especially by the familiar adults’ perpetrators to their girl-child victims. In his account of rape cases his agency has been handling, the Oyo State Commandant of NSCDC, Mr. John Adewoye narrated a particular case of a 74-year old man that impregnated a 14-year old girl:

“An elderly man of 74 recently impregnated a 14-year-old girl who just put to bed (delivered of a baby) about four weeks ago. Initially when the case started, we brought in other agencies with core mandate in such matter, that is, Ministry of Women Affairs and we agreed on a particular position. Normally he should be prosecuted and sentenced, but if we do that, the question is who takes care of that child. If the magistrate found him wanting and send him to jail, now who takes care of the upkeep because we now have two children; a child that has given birth to another child” (KII, 9/2/ 2017).

He informed further that, the Command had to send for the children of the old man and his son-in-law who signed an undertaking to take care of the child and her baby because the father was not earning any income to fend for them. This and many similar cases of sexual abuse of children have become a serious protection issue in the study area.

As earlier noted, though the police officer in charge of Juvenile Welfare said child rape and defilement “is not that serious”; statistics obtained from the police record for the period of 2011 to 2016 stated otherwise. The study found out that reported cases of rape and defilement in the state were more than other child protection issues under the period under review. For instance, while 84 cases of rape and defilement were recorded in 2011, only 12 cases of trafficking and seven (7) cases of kidnapping were handled by the command in the period under review. The tables for the period are presented below.

Table 5: Children related crime statistics in Oyo State from Jan-Dec, 2011

MONTH	RAPE/ DEFILEMENT	CHILD TRAFFICKING	CHILD KIDNAP	CASES PROSECUTED & DETERMINED	PENDING CASES IN COURT
January	5	1	NIL	4	1
February	8	2	1	8	NIL
March	7	NIL	NIL	7	NIL
April	4	1	NIL	4	NIL
May	10	2	NIL	10	NIL
June	7	NIL	1	7	NIL
July	6	2	1	6	NIL
August	9	1	NIL	9	NIL
September	4	NIL	1	4	NIL
October	10	NIL	2	10	NIL
November	7	2	1	7	NIL
December	4	1	NIL	4	NIL
Total	81	12	7	80	1

Source: Oyo State Police Command (Fieldwork, 2017)

Table 6: Children related crime statistics in Oyo State from Jan-Dec, 2012

Month	Rape Defilement	/ Child Trafficking	Child Kidnap	Cases Prosecuted & Determined	Pending Cases In Court
January	13	NIL	NIL	7	6
February	9	1	NIL	5	4
March	12	NIL	NIL	8	4
April	10	NIL	NIL	8	2
May	11	NIL	NIL	10	1
June	12	NIL	5	9	3
July	10	NIL	1	8	2
August	7	2	NIL	4	3
September	10	NIL	NIL	5	5
October	10	NIL	NIL	8	2
November	12	NIL	NIL	10	2
December	12	NIL	NIL	10	2
Total	128	3	6	92	36

Source: Oyo State Police Command (Fieldwork, 2017)

Table 7: Children related crime statistics in Oyo State from Jan-Dec, 2013

Month	Rape/Defilement	Child Trafficking	Child Kidnap	Cases Prosecuted & Determined	Pending Cases In Court
January	7	NIL	NIL	5	2
February	8	NIL	1	6	2
March	8	NIL	1	4	4
April	5	NIL	NIL	3	2
May	9	NIL	1	5	4
June	5	NIL	1	4	1
July	7	1	1	5	2
August	12	1	2	6	6
September	18	NIL	2	11	7
October	5	1	NIL	3	2
November	18	3	1	10	8
December	12	3	2	6	6
Total	114	9	12	68	46

Source: Oyo State Police Command (Fieldwork, 2017)

Table 8: Children related crime statistics in Oyo State from Jan-Dec, 2014

Month	Rape/Defilement	Child Trafficking	Child Kidnap	Cases Prosecuted & Determined	Pending Cases In Court
January	13	NIL	1	10	3
February	9	NIL	1	8	1
March	10	NIL	NIL	6	4
April	10	NIL	4	7	3
May	5	NIL	4	3	2
June	4	1	NIL	3	1
July	4	NIL	NIL	2	2
August	9	NIL	NIL	5	4
September	3	3	4	2	1
October	7	NIL	1	5	2
November	6	1	1	4	2
December	4	NIL	7	3	1
Total	84	5	23	58	26

Source: Oyo State Police Command (Fieldwork, 2017)

Table 9: Children related crime statistics in Oyo State from Jan-Dec, 2015

Month	Rape/Defilement	Child Trafficking	Child Kidnap	Case Prosecuted & Determined	Pending Cases In Court
January	1	9	NIL	5	4
February	9	6	NIL	6	3
March	10	NIL	NIL	8	2
April	NIL	NIL	1	NIL	NIL
May	11	1	NIL	5	6
June	8	NIL	1	5	3
July	8	NIL	1	4	4
August	11	1	NIL	6	5
September	17	NIL	NIL	10	17
October	5	NIL	2	3	2
November	6	1	NIL	2	4
December	9	NIL	4	4	5
Total	95	18	9	58	45

Source: Oyo State Police Command (Fieldwork, 2017)

Table 10: Children related crime statistics in Oyo State from Jan-Dec, 2016

Month	Rape/ Defilement	Child Trafficking	Child Kidnap	Case Prosecuted & Determined	Pending Cases In Court
January	8	NIL	2	4	4
February	1	NIL	1	1	1
March	2	NIL	NIL	1	1
April	9	NIL	2	5	4
May	14	NIL	2	7	7
June	6	NIL	3	3	3
July	13	NIL	4	6	7
August	11	NIL	3	2	9
September	11	NIL	1	3	8
October	5	NIL	2	2	3
November	3	NIL	NIL	1	2
December	5	1	2	1	4
Total	88	1	22	36	53

Source: Oyo State Police Command (Fieldwork, 2017)

The tables as depicted from 2011 to 2016 equally showed that the police received and handled 508 cases of rape/defilement. Despite the unwillingness to report such, there were 128 cases in 2012, 114 in 2013, 84 in 2014, 95 in 2015 and 88 in 2016 as against child kidnapping and trafficking which are 79 and 36 cases respectively for the entire period of six years. By the above submissions and records, there is no doubt that child rape and defilement are the most common risks faced by children in Oyo State. This further confirmed the earlier study of Mejiuni and Obilade (2013) who found out that 80 percent of a total of 3,118 girls sampled in Oyo and Osun States had been sexually violated before age 18.

Having identified rape and defilement as the commonest protection issues in Oyo State, it is pertinent to show the existing windows of opportunity to protect children against such as provided for in various laws including the CRA and the Oyo State's CRL. For instance, sections 31 and 32 of the CRA deal with unlawful sexual intercourse with a child and sexual abuse and exploitation also provides for penalties. Section 31(1-3) states *inter alia*:

1. No person shall have sexual intercourse with a child.
2. A person who contravenes the provision of subsection (1) of this section: commits an offence of rape and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for life.
3. Where a person is charged with an offence under this section, it is immaterial that-
 - (a) the offender believed the person to be of or above the age of eighteen years; or
 - (b) the sexual intercourse was with the consent of the child (Child's Rights Act, Nigeria, 2003: section 31(1-3)).

A careful interpretation of the above indicates that children are protected by these provisions as they are expected to deter attackers. Where a child falls victim despite the law in place, the child could only get justice when the perpetrator is sent to life imprisonment as there is no provision to claim ignorance of the age of the child or a claim

of consent (by the child). Section 32(1-2) specifies other forms of abuses that may not be rape, but could be exploitation in a way:

1. A person who sexually abuses or sexually exploits a child in any manner not already mentioned under this part of this Act commits an offence.
2. A person who commits an offence under subsection (1) of this section is liable on conviction to imprisonment of fourteen years (Child's Rights Act, Nigeria, 2003: section 32(1-2)).

The essence of this section is to further protect the child from molestation that may not lead to actual rape but has affected the victim in a way by causing injury either physically or psychologically. This protection against sexual abuse is further strengthened by the CRL of Oyo State. In fact, sections 31(1-3) and 32(1-2) of the CRA were adopted verbatim in sections 34(1-3) and 35(1-2) of the state's CRL. The CRL however added an extra section 36 which is to take care of "other forms of exploitation not mentioned in its sections 34 and 35 thus:

1. A person who exploits a child in any other form or way not already mentioned in this part of the law which is prejudicial to the welfare of the child commits an offence.
2. A person who commits an offence under subsection (1) of this section is liable on conviction to a fine of five hundred thousand Naira or imprisonment to a term of five years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Therefore, it can be said that victims of this menace and indeed all children, parents or guardians could seek redress using the legal instruments as explained above thus providing opportunity windows for protection.

ii. Need for protection against child trafficking

Another notable child protection issue in Oyo State is the issue of child trafficking. The study found out that the state, being a border entity is prone to high rate of child trafficking especially from Benin Republic. These children are imported mainly to serve

as house helps, or casual workers for food sellers at various locations mainly in Ibadan. The Comptroller of Immigration in the state and the Assistant Comptroller in charge of human trafficking as well as the officer in charge of Anti-Human trafficking of the Oyo command of the Nigeria Police Force affirmed the increasing rate of child trafficking across the border for labour purposes. It was also affirmed that majority of the trafficked children were from neighbouring countries of Togo, Gambia and Benin Republic. Commenting on the rate of child trafficking in the state, the Assistant Comptroller of Immigration (ACI), who spoke on behalf of the comptroller declared as follows:

“Ah! Child trafficking is very high in Oyo State as a result of porosity of borders to Oyo. There are many routes you can follow from Benin Republic to enter into Oyo and most of these routes are illegal. They are illegal routes that are not manned by immigration officers, and these are the kind of routes the criminals like child traffickers seek for so that they can bring in their children for human trafficking and child labour. And Oyo being a town that shares border with Benin Republic is just a prone state to human trafficking” (KII, 10/2/ 2017).

The ACI who noted that “seriously, children are at risk because Oyo State shares border with some foreign countries like Benin Republic” stated further that “the traffickers know that what they are doing is a bad job, as a result of that, they hide themselves in doing it. One, they follow illegal routes into Nigeria; and as a result of that, when they distribute these children to their end users, it is done in secret.” On the rate of trafficking in Oyo State, the Controller of Immigration rated it high by submitting thus:

“The rate is high, for instance, in 2015; we repatriated about 50 children to countries like Benin Republic, Togo and Burkina Faso. In the same year, we referred 15 to NAPTIP in Lagos for prosecution and a lot of them, over 60 children were handed over to their parents, and we reunited them with their parents for rehabilitation” (IDI, 10/2/ 2017).

Corroborating the assertion by the immigration officer, the Superintendent of Police (SP) in charge of the Anti-Human trafficking at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID)

of the Oyo State Police Command submitted that many cases of child abuse and maltreatment have led to some discoveries that the children involved were trafficked to Nigeria to work as housemaids or cleaners and attendants at food canteens. In all cases, those caught were prosecuted and such trafficked children repatriated to their countries of origin.

Windows of opportunity for protection for children against trafficking are many, both in the Nigeria's CRA and the CRL of Oyo State. There are various sections of both laws that guarantee children's dignity and protection against harmful practices of moving minors from one place to another particularly for commercial purposes. As usual, many of these provisions in the CRA are adopted with little or no modification. For instance, sections 8, 11 and 14 of the CRA respectively guarantee children's right to private and family life; dignity, parental care, protection and maintenance. Most of the children trafficked across the border to Oyo State are used for labour according to findings whereas section 11(d) of CRA specifically provides that:

“...no child shall be...held in slavery or servitude, while in the care of a parent, legal guardian or school authority or any other person or authority having the care of the child” (CRA, 2003)

Besides, sections 27, 28 and 30 in sequence prohibit abduction, removal and transfer of children from lawful custody; exploitative labour as well as buying, selling, hiring, or otherwise dealing in children for the purpose of hawking or begging for alms or prostitutions and so on. All these provisions cited above in the CRA are reproduced in the state's CRL in sections 10, 13, 16, 30, 31 and 33. Section 32(1) and (2) (a) (b) of the state law states in clear terms as follows:

- (1) No person shall buy, sell, hire or let on hire, dispose of or obtain possession of or otherwise deal in a child.

- (2) A child shall not be used:-
- (a) For the purpose of begging for alms, guiding beggars, prostitution, domestic or sexual labour or for any unlawful or immoral purpose; or
 - (b) As a slave or for practices similar to slavery such as sale or trafficking of the child, debt bondage or serfdom and forced or compulsory labour (CRL, 2006: 32(1), (2) (a) (b)). Emphasis mine.

Therefore, child trafficking as an identified menace in Oyo State can be confronted with the relevant sections of both the CRA and the state law on child rights.

iii. Need for protection against ‘streetism’

Street children or what is known as ‘*streetism*’ in the child protection parlance is also a serious major issue in Oyo State with high concentration in Ibadan. The issue of street children has been taking different dimensions in the state with some of them becoming criminals according to reports. In 2015, a former police commissioner in the state once revealed that his men arrested ‘kid robbers’ with age ranges between 12 and 14 years who broke into a house and stole eleven thousand naira. He was quoted further by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) to have said:

“They have no shelter of any sort and to them, their future starts and ends on the bridge. Their only means of livelihood is to savage innocent members of the public, involve in pick pocketing, robbery and related criminal activities”

Almost all the stakeholders interviewed testified to the steady growth of this phenomenon. While Fadare, the LERAPO national coordinator described it as “obvious and glaring”, the state Commander of the NDLEA, asserted that drugs keep many of them on the streets. The Director of Child Affairs in the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare (WASW) blamed the development in Oyo State on twin reasons of “beyond parental

control” and “single parent syndrome” which she noted was common in the state.

According to her:

“Many of these children are on the street due to what is called ‘beyond parental control.’ There is also the issue of family stress especially broken homes. The children of such homes particularly men who practice uncontrolled polygamies, i.e. where you see a man marrying wives that are not under the same roof, have to fend for themselves and go out to the street. At times, we raid the streets in conjunction with the police and collaborate with some NGOs that may want to house them” (KII, 20/2/ 2017).

During the FGD conducted among members of CPN for this study, a contributor submitted:

“The issue of street children in Oyo State is serious. You see them everywhere. They are out of school, many of them are beggars and load carriers at motor parks, under bridges, markets, road intersections and road junctions, and in other public places, looking for what to eat. Many of them are not even from Nigeria, especially those who come from Niger Republic. They are everywhere and visible” (FGD, 8/2/ 2017).

Another contributor during the discussion who blamed the development on harsh economic situation and lack of parental care noted further:

“The issue of street children in Oyo State is getting worse especially in Ibadan. They don’t only work as ‘motor boys’ but many minors are now scavengers looking for disuse metal and aluminium objects like broken pots, iron scraps, tins, vehicle parts and other industrial or domestic utensils thrown away by their former users. At times, these boys vandalise some objects including bicycles, motorcycles or vehicles waiting for repair, in order to get their supply. This business seems to be lucrative enough to keep them on the street, and unless government does something decisive, many of them will continue to go back as soon as they are rescued” (FGD, 8/2/ 2017).

The presence of street children is conspicuous in various parts of the state especially in Ibadan where they engage in begging, as bus conductors, truck pushers, load carriers, scavengers and other menial jobs (see Plate 11).

iv. Need for protection against child labour

This study also discovered that there is the urgent need to address the issue of child labour in the state. The practice of using children to carry out almost all types of responsibilities has become more of a norm than some occasional occurrences. Stakeholders testified to the fact that the rate is very high in the state both in the rural and urban centres. In his submission on child labour, Pastor Leye Adefioye, the Executive Director of Rest Anchor, a child-focus NGO stated thus:

“In the past, children of Oyo State were well catered for by past governments, until two years ago when government decided that it cannot continue to take care of the children’s education and we started having many dropouts who need to work and fend for themselves which aggravates the problems” (IDI, 18/2/ 2017).

Though, assertion that the recent government policy of introducing school fees is a major contributor to increased incidences of child labour, there were records of using children as income earners in the study area as earlier pointed out. It was equally observed during the study that children do a lot of adult works in the study area including serving as load carriers, vulcanizers (Plate 8) and other physical hard engagements that could even be given by parents. Since child labour is not limited to physical tasks for children, stakeholders have also identified an emerging and fast-growing trend of a psychological responsibility being assigned to a child that can be beyond their capacity to handle; which is “child headed homes” phenomenon. The president of CPN in the state described this development as:

“A situation where the eldest child of say 10 to 12 years or less is saddled with the responsibilities of taking care of his or her siblings while the parents have gone for their daily ventures. They only leave food and give

instructions on how to cook. At times, some of these parents do not return for days especially in semi urban centres where they go to farms only to return to home for weekends. A 10 or 12 year old who also needs attention will be forced to be attending to younger ones during the time that should be for his or her leisure or study. These child-heads will work from after school hour till they sleep; and from the time they wake up till they go to school” (IDI, 18/2/2017).

Virtually all the stakeholders affirm the menace of child labour in the study area. For instance, Mr. Afe Rotimi of the NSCDC blamed the development on poverty and ignorance stating that “many parents do not see anything wrong in using their children to assist in earning income for the family especially if such work is what the parents do for a living”. He noted that apart from farming which is always seen as the traditional work and was somehow supported by the various statutes on child rights, artisans such as mechanics, electricians, welders, vulcanisers (see Plate 8) and others routinely engage the services of children irrespective of whether such is beyond capacity of the child or not. He informed further:

“Child labour has become so worrisome that Oyo State government just started a policy to abolish child hawking on the streets. Ibadan is specifically prone to that aspect of child abuse. People living in rural areas especially from Saki, Igboho and other areas bring their children to Ibadan for menial jobs as house helps and labourers” (KII, 8/2/2017).

Child labour has also been taking its toll on children as many parents still see it as a way of training children to be hard working and in most cases to supplement the income of the family. The LERAPO coordinator for instance relayed the case of a girl hawker whose legs were crushed by a truck thus:

“The little girl was hawking banana but she felt tired and slept under a parked trailer. Unknown to the trailer’s driver who had parked his vehicle for hours, he wanted to move and crushed the girl’s legs in the process. The girl survived but the two legs were amputated. You ask; what is the monetary benefit of what she was hawking? It was nothing to reckon with,

it couldn't have compensated to the level of the girl's legs which were eventually amputated" (IDI, 18/2/2017).

Child labour is prohibited under various laws at all levels. Prior the enactment of the CRA of Nigeria and the Oyo State CRL, the Labour Act has various sections dedicated to protection of children against child labour which is defined as any situation where work assigned to the child is beyond his physical and psychological capabilities. While section 28 of the CRA directly prohibits child labour, section 29 of the same Act indirectly prohibits it by adopting sections 58, 59, 60, 61, 62 and 63 of the provisions relating to young persons in the Labour Act. However, it appears the application of provisions on Young Persons in the Labour Act as adopted by the CRA is a negation of the section 28 of the latter. This is because, the Young Persons provision in its various sections permit children under the age of 14, 15, and 16 to work if certain conditions are met. Besides, contravention of any part or whole of these sections (58 to 62) can only attract a fine not exceeding one hundred Naira (N100).

Whereas, Section 28 of the CRA in order to prohibit child labour states *inter alia*:

- (1) Subject to this Act, no child shall be-
 - (a) Subjected to any forced or exploitative labour; or
 - (b) employed to work in any capacity except where he is employed by a member of his family on light work of an agricultural, horticultural or domestic character; or
 - (c) required in any case to lift, carry or move anything so heavy as to likely to adversely affect his physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development; or
 - (d) employed as a domestic help outside his own home or family environment.
- (2) No child shall be employed to work in an industrial undertaking and nothing in this section shall apply to work done by children in technical schools or similar approved

institutions if the work is supervised by the appropriate authority (Child Rights Act, Nigeria, 2003).

Section (3) states that contravention of any of the two sections above will make the offender “liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty thousand Naira or imprisonment to a term of five years or to both such fine and imprisonment (CRA, sec.28(3), 2003). These provisions in Section 28 therefore could protect children better than the subsequent Section 29 that adopts labour Act provisions that awards only a maximum of N100 and without an option of imprisonment. The sub section (4) also provides for a punishment of fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty thousand Naira (N250,000) if the child labour offence is committed by any person who could be “a proprietor, director, general manager, or other similar officer, servant, or agent” on behalf of a corporate body. As with most of other provisions in CRA, the Oyo State CRL in its sections 31 and 32 adopted the CRA provisions verbatim. Despite the shortcomings, these provisions remain windows of opportunity for child protection under the law.

Besides, the use of children for begging, hawking, debt bondage, pornography, and prostitution is seen by the CPN and other stakeholders as a form of exploitative labour which is also prohibited by Section 34 of CRL which stipulates a penalty of 10 years imprisonment on conviction.

v. Need for protection against out of school children syndrome

As earlier pointed out in Chapter two, Oyo has the least number of school enrolments among her peers in the South-West. This study found out that the problem was compounded by the government policy in 2015/2016 session when school fees were introduced following the protest that greeted the earlier plans to hand over secondary schools to private managers. The CPN equally protested then and schools were closed down for weeks. The proprietor of Rest Anchor, whose organisation claimed, has rescued about 1200 from streets and various homes back to school submitted:

“Even the compulsory education as stipulated by Nigeria Constitution, which is from primary school to Basic 9 has been jettisoned. They introduce tuition fees, and the burden is now on many NGOs. I can categorically tell you that even this organisation cannot pay for 400 children’s WAEC in 2017” (IDI, 18/2/2017).

Another NGO, Child Development and Concern Foundation (CDCF) led by Alhaji Yusuf had to design leaflets where estimates of what primary and secondary school children will need in each class per term and distribute same to the willing members of the public that may wish to help in providing the basic needs that can get children of school age back to school or help those in school without learning materials including books and even uniforms. In a project which CDCF tagged “Adopt a School Child: Educational Development Initiative”, basic materials to keep a child either in primary or secondary school in Oyo State were itemised as follows:

Table 11: Estimated materials needed and their costs by students of public primary schools in Oyo State

ITEMS	AMOUNT (N)
School uniform (2 pairs)	3,000
Textbooks/Exercise books	6,000
School bag	1,000
School sandals/socks	1,500
Examination Fees	360
PTA	600
Development levy	600
Supervision/transport cost	12,000
Administrative charges	3,780
TOTAL	28,980

Source: CDCF Leaflet, 2016

Table 12: Estimated materials needed and their costs by students of public secondary schools in Oyo State

ITEMS	AMOUNT (N)
School uniform (2 pairs)	4,000
Textbooks/Exercise books	13,000
School bag	1,000
School sandals/socks	1,500
Examination Fees	750
*Education levy per session	3,000
Supervision/transport cost	12,000
Administrative charges	5,362.50
TOTAL	<u>41,112.50</u>

Source: CDCF Leaflet, 2016

From the above, it should be noted that the examination fee (N360), development levy (N600) and PTA charges (N600) totalling N1,560 at the primary school level go to the government and school coffers which has been leading to withdrawal of children from poor parents from school. Also, at the secondary school level, both the PTA and development levies have been removed and replaced by education levy of N3, 000 making a total of N3, 750 per student when the examination fee of N750 is added. This has also contributed to the out of school children population in the study area.

Ironically, basic education from primary up to junior secondary school is made compulsory and free for children by both CRA and CRL at national and Oyo State levels. Section 15 of CRA in its subsections (1)-(3) state as follows:

- (1) Every child has the right to free, compulsory and universal basic education and it shall be the duty of the Government in Nigeria to provide such education.
- (2) Every parent or guardian shall ensure that his child or ward attends and completes his-
 - (a) Primary school education; and
 - (b) Junior secondary education.
- (3) Every parent, guardian or person who has the care and custody of a child who has completed his basic education, shall endeavour to send the child to a senior secondary school, except as provided for in subsection (4) of this section (CRA, Nigeria: section (15)(1), (2),(3))

From the foregoing, it can be seen that the protection of the right of the child to free and compulsory basic education is guaranteed by the national law which makes it a

responsibility for the Federal Government to bear the cost while parents, guardians or any person that takes care of the child have the responsibility to ensure the child complies. Subsection (3) perhaps envisages possible inability of some parents to continue where government stops and thus, subsection (4)'s provision that such child should be encouraged to learn a trade. In its subsection (15) (5), the law provides that female child who becomes pregnant before the completion of junior secondary education should be allowed back to school after delivery. All these provisions are to ensure there are no out-of-school children which is still a phenomenon in Oyo State.

Aside the above, there are provisions for penalties in subsection (6) as follows;

- (1) Where a parent, guardian or person who has care and custody of a child, fails in the duty imposed on him under subsection (2) of this section, commits an offence and is liable-
 - (a) on first conviction to be reprimanded and ordered to undertake community service;
 - (b) on second conviction to a fine of two thousand naira or imprisonment not exceeding one month or both such fine and imprisonment; and
 - (c) on any subsequent conviction to a fine not exceeding five thousand Naira or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two months or both such fine and imprisonment (CRA Nigeria, section {15}{a}-{c}).

This study found out that despite these provisions and the light sentences, nobody has been convicted under the law. Besides, subsection (1) only makes the government responsible for the provision of basic education without penalty for failure to do so.

It is interesting to note that the Oyo State CRL adopts section (15) (1)-(7) of CRA verbatim. The state only replaces "Federal Government" in subsection (1) of the Act with "Government of Oyo State" which makes it a double protection for the child in the state.

Thus, the problem of out-of-school children could not be blamed on lack of protective laws against the menace.

vi. Need for protection against use of children for trafficking and sale of drug

Another emerging but worrisome threat against child's proper development and survival in Oyo State is the issue of using children as conveyors of drugs to various destinations either for sale or for transition to the intended end user. This study discovered that drug barons see children below the age of 18 as useful instruments of drug trafficking due to the fact that if such children are caught, they will not be convicted. Mrs. Omolade Faboyede who is the commander of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Oyo State succinctly puts it this way:

“The children in Oyo State are at risk. From the different arrests we have been making, we arrested children between the ages of 8, 12, and 14; and what we discovered is that most of them are from broken homes... Also according to the laws of the NDLEA, you find out that we don't take juveniles to court, it's either they go to juvenile court not higher court, so most of these barons use that opportunity to engage young children especially these ones that we are talking about that their parents have not been fending for. So, when we arrest them we only try to reconcile them with their parents” (KII, 9/2/ 2017).

Commenting on the rate of children involvement in drug trafficking in the state, the NDLEA Commander submitted:

“It is very high because of this issue of broken homes; I think that is so peculiar to Oyo State and the issue of marriage is not seen as something serious in Oyo State. A man believes that he can have many wives. By the time he leaves a family, he goes to another family andhe forgets about that former family. This has been a recurring thing in this state. We have a lot of juveniles that are into drugs in Oyo State” (KII, 9/2/2017).

The issue of children involvement in narcotic issues was further corroborated by the Prisons Controller in Oyo State blaming the development on broken homes or lack of parenting skills. He noted:

“If you go to strategic places in the state where you have concentration of youths like motor parks, under the bridges, here and there in the markets; you see children getting involved in what they are not supposed to do like some of them smoking marijuana, some of them getting involved in what we call carriages of load for people, when they supposed to be in primary school...You see, in fact, they are really at risks; there is no doubt about it” (KII, 9/2/ 2017).

There are very stiff provisions against the practice of exposing children to narcotic at any level, be it production, transportation or consumption. Section (22) of the CRA in its subsections (1) and (2) state as follows:

- (1) No person shall employ, expose or involve a child in the production or distribution of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances.
- (2) No person shall employ, expose or involve a child in the use of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances (CRA Nigeria, section (22)(1)(2))

In the same vein, the Oyo State CRL adopted the above provision of CRA verbatim in its section (28) (1)(a) and (b). In addition, the CRL dedicates a separate subsection (2) to the penalty to be meted on whoever contravenes the above section on prohibition of child involvement in narcotic issues thus:

- (2) A person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) of this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction for a term of fourteen years (CRL, Oyo State, subsection (2)).

The study therefore apart from corroborating the earlier findings that children, especially those in the streets engage in narcotics, also found out a new reason for such development

which is the gap in the NDLEA Act that does not allow the agency to prosecute children. As such, the liable adults use children as smokescreen for their narcotic businesses. However, these provisions in the laws as stated above remain relevant windows of opportunity to protect children against exposure to narcotic drugs in any form, if properly applied to serve as deterrents to perpetrators.

(vi) Need for protection against kidnapping

Kidnapping is another notorious child protection issue in Oyo State. Between 2011 and 2016, 79 (see tables) children were kidnapped in the state according to the police record. Commenting on the menace, the Deputy Commissioner of Police in the state noted thus:

“Children are kidnapped for various reasons ranging from social to economic and spiritual. Children should be monitored properly by their parents and guardians. Many of the kidnapped children could be for ritual reasons or used as sex slaves if they are girls. Children themselves should know how to be careful by being conscious of strangers when they are asked questions”
(KII, 7/3/2017).

It is instructive to note that apart from child rape and defilement, kidnapping has the next highest number of cases totalling 79 with an average of at least one per month according to the police records in the state. From the statistics, there is also a particular trend noticed, that except for 2014, kidnapping was recorded in June and July of all other years. Besides, the highest numbers of children kidnapped were in June 2012 with five (5) cases and July 2016 with four (4) cases as shown in the Table 11.

Table 13: Child kidnapping cases in Oyo State: 2011-2016

MONTH/YEAR	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 TOT
JAN	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	NIL	2 3
FEB	1	NIL	1	1	NIL	1 4
MAR	NIL	NIL	1	NIL	NIL	NIL 1
APRIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	4	1	2 7
MAY	NIL	NIL	1	4	NIL	2 7
JUNE	1	5	1	NIL	1	3 11
JULY	1	1	1	NIL	1	4 8
AUGUST	NIL	NIL	2	NIL	NIL	3 5
SEPTEMBER	1	NIL	2	4	NIL	1 8
OCTOBER	2	NIL	NIL	1	2	2 7
NOVEMBER	1	NIL	1	1	NIL	NIL 3
DECEMBER	NIL	NIL	2	7	4	2 15
TOTAL	7	6	12	23	9	22 79

Source: Nigeria Police, Oyo State Command (Fieldwork 2017).

Though, other security agencies have no records of child kidnapping due to the fact that the police is always the point of contact to report such cases, heads of these security outfits

as well as members of the CPN in the state also listed kidnapping as one of the risks facing children in Oyo State.

As regards protection for children under child right laws, both the CRA and Oyo State CRL have provisions against abduction of children. Sections (24) of CRL states *inter alia*:

“No person shall remove or take a child out of the custody or protection of his father or mother, guardian or such other person having lawful care or charge of the child against the will of the father, mother, guardian or other person” (Nigeria CRA, section (24), 2003).

In its section (30)(1), the state CRL adopts the above CRA provision verbatim and proceeds further to add a sub section (2) (a)(b)(c) that stipulates punishments for commission of such offence of abduction which is tantamount to kidnapping thus:

- (2) A person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) of this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction.
 - (a) Where the child is unlawfully removed or taken out of Oyo State.
 - (i) With intention to return the child to Oyo State for imprisonment for a term of fifteen years or
 - (ii) With no intention to return the child to Oyo State for imprisonment for a term of twenty years.
 - (iii) Where the child is unlawfully removed or taken out of the state in which the father, mother, guardian or such other person who has lawful care of the child is ordinarily resident, to imprisonment of a term of ten years, or
 - (b) In any case, to imprisonment for a term of seven years. (Oyo State CRL, 2006 Section (30)(2))

The implication of the above law is that whoever unlawfully takes a child out of the state could be sent to between 15 and 20 years depending on the intention of the

offender whether such person intends to return the kidnapped child to the state or not. Children abducted from other state could have their abductors jailed for a period of between seven and 10 years. With these provisions, it can be said that there is opportunity of protection against kidnapping for children in the state under relevant laws.

Unlike rape and defilement which attract publicity due to the fact that both the perpetrators and the victims were always available in most cases, information about kidnapping does not generate much interest for long as the kidnapper and the victim would be in sight to sustain concerns. While the media would always see news in sexual abuse of children and willingly report same, it is the family of the kidnapped child that would be responsible for such publicity which may attract costs, as such would always come in the form of paid advertisement. This probably could be the reason kidnapping is not as prominent as other vices like child labour and street children found in the literatures on child abuse in the study area. This study has however bridged this gap by identifying kidnapping as a major child protection issue that requires more practical and proactive attention beyond the provisions in various child rights laws.

With the above findings on the protection needs of children in Oyo State, the study did not only confirm the earlier study of Mejiuni and Obilade (2012) about the dangerous trend of sexual abuse of children in Oyo State especially girls before the age of 18, it also validates the submissions of Olaleye and Oladeji (2010) that children in this part of the world still work as vendors, hawkers, car washers, cobblers, beggars, scavengers, head loaders and bus conductors. However, all these past studies only emphasised the physical exploitation of the child. This study discovered that a new form of child abuse identified is the child headed homes which is being practised by many including those that are not in abject poverty. This act of making the eldest child to be in charge of his/her younger siblings when parents are away has been noted to be taking the child's time for other relevant

things that could properly develop him or her. When 15-year-old for instance will have to cook, wash plates, sweep the house, wash her own clothes and other kids and bath them; she will have little time for her studies and leisure. This study also found out kidnapping is a major child protection issue in the study area with less attention being paid to it aside the provisions against such act by the child right laws.

4.2 Objective 2: Identification of empowerment techniques which are safe for, and learnable by children in acquiring protection skills

It is a common dictum in the security parlance that, the best form of security is the one provided by oneself; while UNICEF itself is an advocate of the need to empower children to protect themselves. As such, a number of techniques were discovered by this study which children can learn to empower them against threats to their worthy childhood. These identified skills, which are also in conformity with various provisions of the Child Right Laws especially at the national and state levels, are as follows:

(i) ***Training in Child Rights Law***

Virtually all the stakeholders emphasised the need to start training programmes for children on the rights granted them by various statutes as the direct beneficiaries. Responding to a question on *what types of training will you recommend for children to ensure their security and protection?* The Controller of Nigerian Correctional Service said;

“...there should be clubs in secondary and primary schools that will train children on how not to get in conflict with the law. They should be trained on their rights as well. So clubs, in primary and secondary schools should enlighten them that getting involved in some kind of activities can make them to get in conflict with the law, and at the end of the day find themselves in prison thereby distorting their future. It is very, very important...and all the security organisations should not wait for children to commit offence before correcting them; we should be proactive in whatever we do” (KII, 9/2/ 2017).

His suggestion is essentially on how children can know their rights, responsibilities and consequently their limitations so that they will not always do what is contrary to the laws of the land. This submission was corroborated by the FOMWAN secretary, whose organisation runs children homes in various parts of the state thus;

“There is the need to go to schools and we have been going there to tell them that there are laws to protect them (the children). We tell them Oyo State Government has signed Child Rights into law and that they have so many rights; right to education, right to decent life and so on. We have also been telling them that even their parents should not abuse them” (IDI, 20/2/2017).

In his own submission, the State Director of Child stated that all the child rights related laws enacted at various levels of governments are for the wellbeing of the child, thus making it important that children, who are the direct beneficiaries, should know what is at stake for them. She informed further about the level of commitment of the Oyo State Government to educating children about their rights thus:

“The government of Oyo State is very serious about helping the children in the state to know the laws that protect them. To this end, we established our own children parliament where they (children) have their own speaker and we empower them to study the laws made for them while we also partner with NGOs to go to schools, churches and mosques to create awareness among children, teachers and parents. This is important to facilitate child protection as provided for in the Child Rights Laws in Oyo State” (IDI, 20/2/ 2017).

In her own view, the Chief Executive of *Treasure Builder*, an NGO that focuses on training of parents and children on street children issues noted that children, as direct beneficiaries of child right laws, should be empowered to know those areas where they can exercise their rights. She informed further that:

“...one of the methods being used is that we run school clubs in some schools...we train children on role model,

self-esteem, self-discovery, career and child right” (IDI, 10/7 2017).

No doubt, training children to recognise their rights and responsibilities is a way to empower them as identified by this study. As seen above, stakeholders did not mince words in agreeing that the child should be taught his rights and how to exercise them. The study also found out that the CPN in the state has started doing this work jointly as a body and severally as individual member organisations; though there is still a huge gap to be covered in this area as would be shown subsequently. It was also discovered that the mode of training children in the area is safe, as such lessons, where and when offered were done in the presence of their teachers, parents or both especially during the Parents/Teachers Association (PTA) meetings.

(ii) *Training in self-consciousness*

Another technique discovered by this study which the CPN has been using is the training of children in self-consciousness as they grow up. The network in Oyo State jointly and severally organised training programmes both in schools and in communities. While that of schools involved both the children and their teachers, the community-based trainings involved children and their parents. For instance, in one of the trainings held at Oba Akinbiyi Memorial Junior Secondary school (see Plate 11 a&b) where a rape case was recorded in early 2017, members of the CPN that went for the training to empower the students on protection skills dwelt on the need for them to be conscious of their body and treat various parts differently. The officer of the NSCDC at the training emphasised the issue of “underwear rules” as advocated by the UK based NSPCC. According to him:

“Underwear rules mean making what is private, private. No opposite sex should touch a child’s private part except on medical ground and for treatment, no matter the relationship. The idea of male cousins, uncles, neighbours, drivers, etc., helping a mother to clean up

for the girl child must be avoided. Even the fathers should not be allowed as much as possible, as there are cases of incest all over, fathers impregnating their daughters. So, tell your parents at home” (Observed training session, 22/2/2017).

The NSCDC Child Protection Desk Officer noted that the underwear rule includes wearing dresses appropriately. According to him:

“Underwear rule is more than covering the body fully but it involves wearing such dresses, especially skirts, trousers and pants in such a way that they are not easily removed. Rather than using elastics to fasten such dresses, buttons, buckles and belts should be used” (Observed training session, 22/2/2017).

Another speaker representing FOMWAN on the CPN training team trained the participating students on what she called “the red areas” of the body thus:

Red areas of the body of especially the girl child start from the neck down to the knee. No girl should allow any male - man, boy, father, teachers and so on to touch or caress that area described as red. Girls must be conscious of this part of the body which covers the chest, back, abdomen, genitals and thighs. Even boys should be careful of either man, fellow boys or females trying to caress those parts of their body as well. Once it happens, the affected person or who witnesses it should report to the parents or teachers immediately. If any of the parents, teachers or others is involved, the child affected is at liberty to report to the CPN, any security agency or the Ministry of Women Affairs (Observed training session, 22/2/2017).

This lesson is also capable of empowering children as it teaches them who they can report to even if teachers and parents are involved. The study discovered that the method of teaching is also safe with the presence of teachers who also listened and asked questions. The fact that students equally asked questions for clarifications after the talk showed that

they learnt and understood the message being passed. For instance, a female student asked if she should stop bathing her younger brothers henceforth and if such action would not pitch her against her ever-busy mother who she said would always leave home at dawn for the restaurant she was operating, and would not return till late at night. The lecturer offered to pay a visit to her home to explain things to the parents even beyond the issue of bath. As such, training of children in underwear rules is not harmful while it is also teachable and learnable.

(iii) Lessons in self-defence skills

Almost all stakeholders think it is high time children started learning self-defence skills to protect them especially from rapists and other attackers. A few also thought the physical ability of the child will determine what he or she can do when facing threats, and thus the need for proper education and modifications in this regard. While some think physical self-defence tactics should be taught to older children in their teens, others think it should be as soon as a child starts schooling as such standard training will also give more skills in discipline rather than promoting or engaging anybody in physical combat. For instance, the Commandant of NSCDC while responding to the appropriateness or otherwise of self-defence skill for children noted that:

“Self-defence skills make a potential victim of attack less vulnerable and nobody needs such skills as much as children especially the girl-child due to what has been happening in our society recently” (KII, 9/2/2017).

In his response, the Garrison Commander, 2 Division of the Nigerian Army, Ibadan, submitted:

“Though, the military does not deal with the issue of child protection in its operations; such are left for the civil populace especially the NGOs; notwithstanding, children need self-defence skills such as unarmed combat. This is not necessarily to start fighting people

but to instil discipline in the child. Professionals in self-defence skills are disciplined and don't fight about because it is part of their training. My boy of about four-year old is already attending self-defence skill lessons. This will enhance discipline and such could also come handy if occasion eventually warrants its use and there are no better alternatives" (KII, 6/3/ 2017).

Similarly, the state's Controller of Prisons emphasised the need to focus more on the girl child as they fall victims of attack more than boys particularly on rape issues. Besides, he noted that that training girls on self-defence for the purpose of protecting herself would give her some level of confidence while she would see such skill as a tool to be used when needed rather than using it as an instrument of bully. He submitted further:

"...there are certain forms of education you want to give a girl-child that would reduce her level of vulnerability to attack. There is also the need for them to be given physical training. Some of them could also be stronger than men. A lady should know where to hit a man that will make the man more vulnerable than woman no matter how old the man is, if he is in a particular condition" (KII, 9/2/ 2017).

In the same vein, the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of criminal investigations in Oyo State who responded on behalf of the CP stated:

"Children should be physically fit to resist certain attacks even if it will mean only the strength to run but that does not mean security agencies will leave the responsibility of securing them in the hand of these children" (KII, 7/3/2017).

The chairperson of CPN in the state categorically advocated for self-defence training as a major way of empowering children against molestation especially the issue of rape. She reasoned that it is not all the time that adults rape children but children could also be threats to themselves. Dr. Walkers submitted further:

“Self-defence is very good. I will support that because if a boy or a group of boys know that, ‘that person, if I move near, I will get some kicks,’ you know, the girls and the boys will be able to protect themselves because some boys are also being abused, though it is not as common as that of girls” (IDI, 21/2/ 2017).

Again, the submission of the Commissioner of Police through the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) for the state, lends credence to the proposal of self-defence training:

“It is always good to include self-defence especially for girls. Girls are prone to rape, sexual abuse, sexual attack; but at times you need to tell them they have to adopt self-defence when it is safe. This is because at times self-defence could be dangerous especially in the case of armed robbery attack, you don’t have to put up unnecessary defence, otherwise you will be jeopardising life, and we should let them know this” (KII, 2/8 / 2017).

In other words, the police which is the leading agency in security matter in the state is also advocating for the impartation of such skills especially in the girl child but with caution when its application is not safe. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that stakeholders in child protection and security experts agreed that training children in self-defence skills is safe, possible and learnable by the intended beneficiaries but there should be caution on when such could be applied as the viable rescue option available.

iv. *Security consciousness training:* Another area that is vital to child survival as discovered by this study is the need to start training children in the aspect of security consciousness and their responsibility to enhance their own protection. This is more so due to the fact that most of the attacks such as rape and kidnapping are carried out secretly when adults will not be available to assist. The tips suggested for learning by children by the stakeholders in child protection are as follows:

(a) **Keeping appropriate company:** In this regard, the Chief Judge of Oyo State, Hon. Justice Mutalib Abimbola warned that children themselves have responsibilities to play safe to reduce their vulnerability. He submitted:

“...most of these children must be seriously trained that you do not put yourself in firing lines. They should be very cautious about their movement, dressing; cautious that anything can happen when they are with male people alone. ...that does not mean security agencies should not put in place mechanisms to prevent crimes, you know most of these do happen in secrecy and that’s why if there is no serious intelligence mechanism going into it, they will not be able to detect it. And that is why I said most children- the rape victims themselves put themselves in firing lines” (KII, 2/3/2017).

The CJ noted further that part of being in firing lines is uncontrolled movement by children themselves and failure to take extra precaution while being with male adult or even colleagues. Of course, telling the children to be cautious when alone with opposite sex could neither be harmful nor difficult to teach or learn.

(b) **Information management skill:** Stakeholders believe children could be tutored on how to manage information at their level for their own security and that of the family as parts of the responsibilities conferred on them by the Child Rights laws. As noted by the PPRO, children for instance should be taught to ask about the details of a visitor before telling such person the whereabouts of the parents or any member of the family whose consent would have also been sought.

(c) **Precision skills:** Security experts among the respondents agreed that children should be trained in the area of giving precise information about issues such as time of occurrence of an event or description of a situation. The Civil Defence Commandant in the state for instance submitted:

“Children can be trained in simple things like reporting the time a visitor came to see their parents for instance.

They can go further to say that ‘Daddy, your friend came to see you at a quarter past three’ or 3.15 instead of just saying ‘your friend came this afternoon’. If anything untoward happens afterwards, security operatives will have quality information to do analysis with” (KII, 9/2/2017).

The Comptroller of Immigration in his opinion noted children should have the skill to be precise in the description of human beings they come across especially strangers that interact with them. He noted that that apart from being able to describe somebody as tall or short which are general and common features, children should be able to note the colour of eye or hair or even the shape of the head or nose noting they all help in tracing criminals in issues that constitute threats to children. He stated further:

“Even when sending somebody to the child to take or give that child a message, we should cultivate the idea of giving notes. Your children must know your signature or password to avoid theft, kidnapping or other forms of abuse; and if it occurs, tracing perpetrators will not be too difficult” (KII, 10/2/2017).

It should be noted therefore that, this skill of being precise about issues could be learnt without any risk involved, thus making its acquisition safe.

(d) **Anti-crime training:** The police explained that sensitising children on what constitute crimes and the repercussions of indulging in such activities is of paramount importance. The CP through the PPRO stated that it was the directive of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) that the police should go to primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions to sensitise these children and teenagers. The CP explained;

“We call it outreach programme. We believe that we should be able to catch them young. If you want to solve crimes and crime-related problems in the society, there is the need to discourage the youths from indulging in criminal activities. Because of this, we identified prevalent criminal activities that students usually indulge in, such as cultism, rape and other heinous crimes but our focus is cultism. Because of this, we have the mandate of the Inspector General of

Police to visit school to sensitise our children on the need to eschew any form of violent crime...” (KII, 2/8/2017).

He however lamented that though such programme will help the students, members of the public and the police; lack of logistics and variation in the school academic calendar have stopped it while efforts are in the top gear to resuscitate it. Thus, imparting security consciousness is not only safe, teachable and learnable but it is also desirable.

- v. ***Anti-narcotic training:*** Experts in narcotic issues emphasised the need to train children on antinarcotics. The study discovered that most of the children that go into drugs do so due to ignorance in the first place. The commander of the NDLEA in Oyo State submitted that the training will go a long way in exposing children to the dangers of illicit drugs whether as users, sellers or conveyors. Such training will include making them to identify the common ones, the improvised ones and those that are seldom available but highly destructive. She informed further that:

“In my agency, we try to establish Drug Free Clubs. The Drug Free Club is an avenue to give them information on anything drugs, what it does, the effects on people; so that they have the first hand information in their primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. What we have been doing and we will keep on doing is establishing Drug Free Clubs in schools. This is because that is an avenue for any child who is ignorant of drugs to learn about drugs, because in most cases when we interviewed some of them, you discover that they get involved due to peer group pressure and when you start asking them, ‘did you know anything about this drug?’ they said they didn’t know, “my friend was just smoking it” or “I found myself in the group of children that are smoking and actually, I decided to smoke it myself” so we feel that, that Drug Free Club is an avenue for them” (KII, 9/2/ 2017).

She also explained that since NDLEA personnel could not be everywhere, teachers are also being trained to not only teach these children about narcotic issues, but to detect those ones that are already into drug abuse among them. She submitted further:

“And also, we went a step further to start training teachers within schools who can serve as counsellors because NDLEA officers cannot be everywhere, those teachers are being taught the signs to watch out for; how do you know a child is on drug? What are you supposed to watch out for? So that at a first contact, they are able to identify a child who is on drug, ok? They then start counselling that child. If they now see that it is beyond their level, they now refer them to us” (KII, 9/2/ 2017).

With the positive outcomes of the NDLEA Drug Free Clubs in few schools in educating children about narcotics, and the stakeholders’ submissions that such knowledge is necessary to address the current level of ignorance, it can be said that training in narcotics is safe and productive.

- vii. **Road safety skills:** The Oyo State Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps lamented the vulnerability of children on the roads due to what he described as ignorance on the part of both the parents and their children. He noted that road safety skill is more than just asking the child to ‘look at the road very well’ which he said has always been the usual layman instructions especially parents. He advocated for the inclusion of road safety skills in the school curriculum as well. Specifically, Salami submitted that:

“Every child should be taught that when walking on the road, they should make sure their parents are between them and the oncoming vehicle; they should insist on sitting at the back of the car and use seat belt. The reason is that if there is an impact, the weight of the person sitting at the back triples if the belt is not holding such person; they should remind their parents of vital safety rules such as the use of helmet” (KII, 11/2/2017).

- viii. **Training in negotiation skill:** Negotiation skill is equally identified by the stakeholders to be an important tool of protection and security especially against rape. Since it appears that in most cases, rape victims are first overpowered by stronger perpetrators, rather than apply force to resist the

attackers; the victim could negotiate and cajole the would-be rapist in order for him to have hope of achieving the aim while buying time to seek help. The head of Living Words Mission which provides special protection to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Ibadan succinctly put it thus:

“In most cases, rape victims are forced by those who are more powerful than them. In most cases, the girl child is the victim and she is always attacked by those who are older than her. Even if they are mates, boys are more energetic and they may not even be one, it could be a gang of two or more. Rather than fighting it out, girls should be taught on how to negotiate first. She may pretend to be cooperating and then turn the table. Rapists’ goal is to have sex, if you can successfully give him such false hope, he is likely to fall for it and then you shout for help” (IDI, 2/3/2017).

He explained further that keeping hope alive by suggesting a future date, a safer place, a pregnancy prevention method and the likes could give rapists fake hope. However, when all the entreaties fail, he suggested that physical self-defence can be resorted to “but not until negotiation fails.”

ix. *Training in functions of Law Enforcement Agencies, CPN and the need to familiarise with them:* As it is now, most children in the study area believe law enforcement agents are wicked oppressors to be avoided. During the FGDs conducted with children in three schools separately in the existing senatorial districts in the state, almost all participants said they were always afraid when they saw policemen or soldiers or any gun wielding security operatives. Responding to a question that “how do you feel when you see a policeman?” A participant during FGD in Iseyin District Grammar School said:

“I am always afraid of police. It is because of their gun, I don’t want to go near them” (FGD, 14/11/2014).

Another participant, a Junior Secondary School student of Anglican Grammar School, Ogbomoso also said:

“I fear policemen not only because of their gun, they don’t also look nice. They don’t look happy, they look as if they want to fight people always” (FGD, 13/11/2017).

A participant who said he used to cry anytime he saw a policeman when he was in primary school said though he no longer fear policemen to the extent of crying but will not go near them. The implication of the above is that children cannot approach security operatives for assistance because of the fear of unknown.

To further interrogate how familiar children are with security operatives, participants in the FGD conducted were asked if any of them had ever shaken hands with a policeman. Of all the 36 participants in the three FGDs conducted, only two said they shook hands with policemen before. One of them said he shook hands with a policeman that stopped the vehicle conveying him and his parents from Ondo to Ibadan at a checkpoint. He narrated his experience thus:

“I was in the passenger bus with my parents and my twin brother. I and my twin brother looked alike very much, so the policeman said ‘twins, how are you’ and extended his hand to us, but I was still afraid but managed to shake him” (FGD, 13/11/2017).

The second participant said he was a member of Boys Brigade and shook hands with a policeman who attended the same church with him, and reviewed a parade during a programme.

The fear of soldiers in children is worse. A participant in IDGS, Iseyin summed it up this way:

“Ah! Why will I go near a soldier? They will only kill you. Soldiers beat one man in my presence before, since that day I don’t even want to see them”.

Responding to a question if they had ever reported a case to the police before, they all chorused “never” except for two female participants in AGS, Ogbomoso and IGS, Ibadan respectively. The participant in Ogbomoso who coincidentally is a daughter of a policeman narrated her experience thus;

“I was going home after school the hours, five boys just blocked my way and started dragging and beating me for no offence. My dress became so dirty and I could not go home straight, I went to my father’s office but my father was not around, so a female policeman sent two male policemen to follow me but we could not find them. My father later came to school and they were all given 25 strokes of the cane each. They wanted to suspend them but I pleaded with my father to beg the principal” (FGD, 10/11/2017).

The other participant in IGS, Ibadan also said she had to call her father when about six boys wanted to rape her and her friend. She explained further thus;

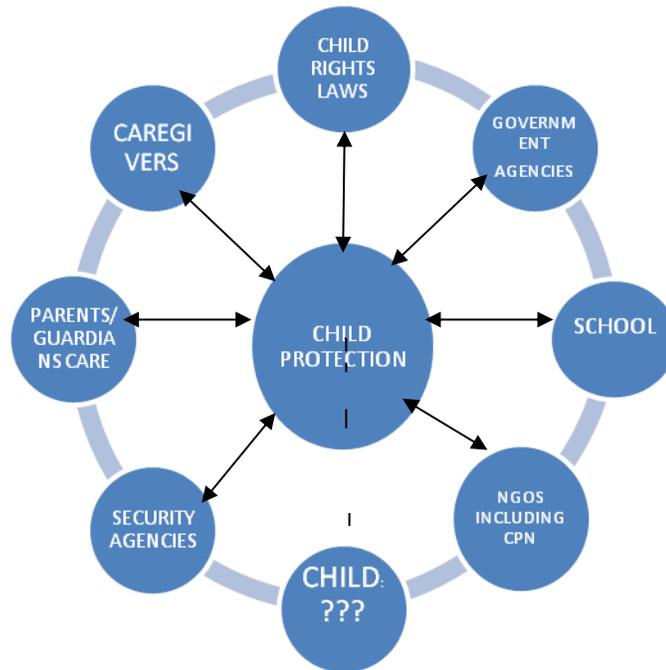
“My friend asked me to accompany her to a place. When we got there, they were all boys, about six of them. They started pushing us inside and I started shouting, they left me but dragged in my friend. I quickly called my father and he came with policemen. They arrested all of them and told me to write a statement. I didn’t know what a statement was but they taught me and I wrote it. My father agreed that they should be released since they didn’t succeed in doing anything to us” (FGD 14/11/2017)

This second objective fills a major gap in literature as it deals with what children can do when they are faced with protection issues and there is no help in sight. As already noted by Newberger and Newberger (1982), prevention has been largely ignored, while children continue to be victims. The focus of professional and public concerns about child protection and security has been identification and reporting of the victims. Thus, with the UNICEF position that “the best way to protect children is to empower them to protect themselves”, embarking on the trainings as identified above is necessary to enhance and ensure a comprehensive child protection strategy.

Though, moral teachings as confirmed by this study have been on for a long time, there is the need to move further to empowerment of the child to take certain actions when danger lurks. For instance, reporting issues to security agencies by children is still a great challenge as discovered by this study. Children are afraid of persons expected to assist them, as such, when a child is threatened, there will be no courage to seek assistance from statutory bodies such as the police or other law enforcement agencies. Besides, when children eventually fall victim due to their inability to seek timely intervention, they are still scared by gun wielding security operatives. They either decide not to talk to the operatives or take instructions from them on what to do and thus become easily manipulated; little wonder CPN members complained bitterly that police often turn cases against victims.

Giving appropriate trainings to children will therefore fill their own contribution gap where we can now have a comprehensive approach to child protection as shown in the diagram below:

Figure 2: Child Protection Radial Cycle



Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The Child Protection Radial Cycle diagram above shows the contributions of various institutions, instruments and efforts aimed at Child Protection which is the focus at the centre as indicated by the double pointed arrows. These are child rights laws, schools (education), advocacy, NGOs (especially CPN), security agencies, parents and caregivers. While there are links between these efforts and child protection at the centre, the child's contribution remain minimal or non existent until trained in such a way that can empower him, thus children relationship with child protection is indicated with a broken line.

4.3 Objective 3: Identified challenges faced by CPN in Oyo State in child protection interventions

This objective is also a core focus of this study as quite a number of challenges were identified confronting the smooth operation of CPN on the one hand and its consequential effect on child protection in Oyo State, on the other. The identified challenges are as follows:

1. Inadequate fund: Though, the network was initiated by UNICEF since 2011, it is expected to be self-sustaining through the support of the state government and members' contributions. The UNICEF is also expected to be providing technical assistance from time to time especially in the area of training. However, the expected support from the state government came only once in the six years of the network's existence while members' contributions were highly irregular. The pioneer chairman of the network presented the financial situation of the organisation thus:

“The CPN was a product of collaboration between the Oyo State Government and UNICEF, but you find out that the support is no more forthcoming. Initially, theirs (UNICEF) has not been financial but technical support in terms of trainings, seminars, workshops and what have you; but in the last three years, we did not take benefit of such training. The state government complained of no money, even when there is the need to investigate, to come to the rescue, the state

government's intervention is zero. I could remember vividly, the last and the only support we have received from Oyo State Government to the advancement of the efforts on child protection in Oyo State was fifty thousand Naira about four years ago. I think that was about the first and the last; no training, nothing" (IDI, 18/2/2017).

He informed further that almost all governmental agencies in CPN did not pay the annual subscription:

"In terms of membership too, I want to be honest with you, the cooperation as regards the financial commitment is not forthcoming. Everybody is interested in what he is going to benefit. Even membership from the state and agencies are not cooperating. They are not meeting their financial responsibilities. We levy a yearly subscription of five thousand Naira; Nigeria Police has never paid; Nigeria Immigration has never paid, Ministry of Women Affairs has never paid, Ministry of Environment has never paid, Nigeria Union of Journalists has never paid. This has gone a long way to stall our activities. You know, when there is no finance, there is little you can do. It hinders our efforts at organising trainings for our members, workshops for our members and even rising up for interventions" (IDI, 18/2/2017).

The story was not different with the current president who equally corroborated her predecessor's claims of how both UNICEF and the state government appeared to have tactically withdrawn their financial support:

"When CPN came on board about five years ago, many NGOs came in but we found out that because of lack of fund or resources, there is problem. This is because it came with the assistance of UNICEF and the Ministry of Women Affairs; interestingly we find out that the two of them just pulled back leaving CPN on its own. So, no resources and we are just struggling. Whatever achievement that must have been done is through passion driven gifts. People gave time, money, office and others. It has affected our operations because we have not been able to do a lot of capacity buildings and other things we ought to be doing" (IDI, 21/2/2017).

The problem of funding was a recurring issue in the CPN meetings as personally observed by this researcher as well as confirmed in the various minutes of meeting of the network. For instance, in one of the minutes, it was recorded under 'Finance' subhead in the 'matter arising' that:

“...only few have paid for their annual dues both for the year 2014 and 2015”. She (the financial secretary) further called names of members that have paid while others whose names were not called were presumed to owe (Minutes of Oyo State CPN meeting of 13 August, 2015) (Fieldwork, 2017).

Earlier, in the month of June of the same year, the chairman had lamented dearth of fund and, “urged members to pay their annual dues” of five thousand naira per organisation as the network needed money to run its affairs.

Commenting on the issue, the state Director, Child of the Women Affairs Ministry noted that though CPN has been of tremendous assistance to the state in protecting its children, government could only assist them when it is feasible. She noted the body had been assisted in the past while the current meeting place for the network is the government building at Samonda area of Ibadan. To worsen the situation, the network could no longer link with UNICEF as the Lagos office had stopped communication with Oyo CPN. The current chairman submitted that “UNICEF has been incommunicado with Oyo CPN and my efforts to link up with them have not been successful.”

2. Uncooperative attitude of the police: Aside lack of fund, frustrations emanating from security agencies especially the police in the course of protecting the child or seeking justice for children have always been the bane of CPN in Oyo State. The most notorious of the protection issues that always put CPN and the police at loggerheads is the case of rape. Virtually all the CPN members interviewed individually and in group discussion agreed that the police are not doing enough to ensure rape victims get justice. This, they noted has been responsible for the increase in the occurrence since perpetrators in most cases are not punished to serve as deterrents to others. The chairman of LERAPO, Mr. Yakubu Fadare

while noting that collaborating with the security agencies to protect children is at its lowest ebb singled out the police in particular thus:

“The resultant effect of money for justice in the society is being applied to the cases of child abuse as well. I have seen cases of children being sexually abused by men and the police would be encouraging parents to go for settlement not known to law. Criminal matters are not settled like civil cases because the victims involved do not have the capacity to decide on their own. Before the age of 18, children are absolutely under the control of the parents and overriding control by the state. So, they don’t have powers and ability to give consent to settle cases of this nature but in most cases, you discover that security agencies encourage settlement in this regard. It is alleged that they do this when they ‘rub their palms’; they mismanage cases out of professionalism, they will refuse to take material statements” (IDI, 18/2/2017).

A respondent during FGD said at times, police would “deliberately” file wrong charges in court if an organisation insists in pursuing the case to a logical conclusion; a situation which he noted would make the judge to dismiss the case. The FOMWAN secretary corroborated this assertion submitting that “there are too many cases with the police while they complain that they have not enough personnel which make them to rush and handle cases anyhow”.

Beside this, the police and other law enforcement agencies as currently constituted are not child-friendly. The FGDs conducted among the children in the selected secondary schools showed that they are afraid of people in uniform especially when they carry guns. In a normal situation, when children are in danger, they should be able to call the police to rescue them even from their own parents, this is not the situation in the study area where children security personnel as dangers to avoid. For instance, a participant during a FGD at IDGS retorted that: “Whether police or soldier or Civil Defence, I don’t like their stern look and their guns” (FGD, 10/11/2017). Another participant in IGS, Ibadan recalled her experience as follows:

“I don’t like police because my mother always told me she would call police anytime I cried. There was a day my mother told me if I ate my remaining biscuits, I will be arrested by police. Though I now know it is a lie, but I still don’t want to go to them” (FGD 14/11/2017).

This is no doubt a great challenge as justice for children will be under serious threats if the agencies saddled with the responsibilities of enforcing child protection laws cannot be trusted neither by child protection institutions nor children themselves.

3. Lack of formal training among stakeholders: Since child protection is relatively a new field of human endeavour especially in this part of the world, most of the stakeholders in the area are either driven by passion or redeployed to the child handling sections of their various organisations as a matter of duty. Aside the Controller of Prisons, all respondents from the security agencies admitted child protection or special security for children was never part of their curriculum while in the training school. For instance, the police Officer in charge of the state’s command Juvenile Welfare Centre stated:

“There is no special training in the police for children protection or security. We are trained to protect everybody whether children or adult. And if the authority feels you should go and work in a section, you go there and work. It is not even based on whether you are trained in certain areas. The authority asked me to move to JWC, and I moved; the same thing with other staff” (IDI, 16/2/2017).

As a matter of fact, the Commissioner of Police initially attempted to turn down this researcher’s request for the police to comment on child protection as he declared he was “not sent to Oyo State to protect only children,” but “to provide protection for everybody.” This attitude no doubt may continue to affect special protection needs of the children as spelt out in various child rights’ statutes.

The NDLEA, NSCDC, and FRSC heads categorically stated that there were no special curricula in their programme of training on child protection at the point of recruitment and training. In the same vein, the Garrison Commander of the Nigerian Army submitted that “all child protection issues are referred to the NGOs during military operations.”

Though, the Controller of Prison of the Nigeria Prisons Service said the organisation's officers and men are specially trained for the running of borstal institutions of prisons where minors are kept, this is just for rehabilitation because only children who are already in conflict with law and housed in borstals are involved. He informed further that:

“The leadership of the NPS is working on that, i.e. programme on child protection, and we want to be proactive these days, we don't want to wait until inmates are brought to our facilities before we begin to handle them. So, there is a section that handles that. They have plans for it but the programme has not started yet except those who are brought to our facilities” (KII, 9/2/2017).

However, the Nigeria Immigration Service started training its newly recruited officers and men on child rights issues in 2015 as revealed by the Comptroller of Immigration as follows:

“...Nigeria Immigration was established in 1963 and that was when the Nigeria Immigration Act was enacted. As a result of that, there was no anti human trafficking and child labour in the training curriculum of immigration. But in the year 2015, it was officially embedded in the Nigeria Immigration Act meaning personnel will now be trained to become experts in this area” (IDI, 9/2/2017).

For the CPN members, various operators of children homes and child-focus NGOs cited either “passion” or “calling” as their fundamental skills of operation. For instance, the Director of the Foundation Builder, an NGO in CPN that specialises on vulnerable children welfare while responding to how she started the social work stated:

“Some people might not believe when you talk about calling but I know I was called and have passion for children. I have been teaching children since my university days, I went for children evangelism, teenager outreach and the likes. That was where my calling lies” (IDI, 10/7/2017).

Even in the government ministry, the staffers were not recruited based on their qualifications as child protection experts, though those eventually drafted to the Children Welfare section learn on-the-job through occasional seminars and workshops.

No doubt, this lack of expertise is having a lot of negative influence on child protection especially among the security operatives. An instance of this was observed by the researcher in the case of a 14-year old girl accused of burglary and was remanded by a magistrate court along with an adult in Agodi correctional service in Ibadan for two months. It took the intervention of the CPN in the state to rescue the girl who was eventually admitted on bail by a high court that has higher powers. The Chief Executive Officer of Child Growth Concern Initiative (CGCI), the lead NGO that facilitated the intervention narrated the case thus;

“We were in a magistrate court for another issue when the warders brought this girl with another accused. The police called her 16 probably to justify her prosecution but the girl and her mother said she was 14. Even if she was 16 as the police claimed, she should not be kept in an adult correctional service. I liaised with the CPN and they rallied round we approached the high court which admitted her on bail” (IDI, 2017).

During the court session observed by the researcher, the state counsel still insisted that the girl should not be granted bail but should be kept at the Oyo State-run home which the CPN lawyer objected to as not suitable. However, the judge eventually granted her bail ordering that keeping her as argued by the plaintiff’s counsel will amount to violating the state’s Child Rights Law.

The above implies a high level of ignorance among those who handled the case, especially the police and the prisons personnel as well as the magistrate who should have known that such underage should not have been remanded in the prison in the first instance.

4. Absence of family court: The CRL was enacted in Oyo State in 2006. As at the end of October 2017 which is 11 years after, there was no family court in place to apply the law. This is another serious challenge confronting CPN and child protection activities

generally in the state. The national coordinator of LERAPO painted the picture of the implication of lack of family court this way:

“Since the enactment of Child Rights Law in 2006, basically the only court vested with the jurisdiction is the family court. And when we talk about jurisdiction, it is the hallmark of all trial; if jurisdiction is found wanting, the trial is a nullity no matter how well conducted. If the lists of the offences are spelt there, the only court that has that authority to take such matter is the family court at the level of magistrate; family court at the level of high court” (IDI, 18/2/2017 2017).

The Chief Judge of Oyo State affirmed the importance of family court which he noted is a necessity and key to the implementation of CRL. According to him, the law can only achieve the set goals;

“...particularly for its (CRL) enforcement, it is a must that we establish family court. Family court at the high court and family court at the chief magistrate court and what is the difference? It must be the court that is child friendly apart from the regular law courts that we have” (KII, 2/3/2017).

The CJ explained further that at the family court, the judge and other officials, parents and children sit in a circle like a family where there will be no ‘high table’ that may intimidate or scare the children unlike what is obtainable at present even in juvenile courts (see plate 12). He submitted further:

“So when you have a determination of rights in respect of paternity, in respect of custody, in respect of even the enforcement of certain rights of the child; because all the provisions of fundamental rights, human rights of 1999 Constitution have been adopted in the child’s right law as rights to be enjoyed by the child, you use family court. And for its effective implementation, we have been able to liaise; I set up a committee that was headed by Hon. Justice Aderemi. And they have given me their report, and last week, I set up a ‘take off committee and we have been able to liaise with welfare department, they have been able to make available to us their building, what we just need is just its renovation (IDI, 2/3/2017).

Though, he hinted further that he had met the governor who promised to make money available for the renovation of an old building being used for Juvenile Court, unavailability of family court and other components would remain a major challenge to getting justice for children in the state thus hampering their protection.

5. Lack of borstals and children centre: Borstal institutions are where children found guilty of various offences by competent court of jurisdiction are kept. Some are also kept in such facilities pending the determination of their cases in court, if such involves criminal matters. However, none of these facilities exist in Oyo State as at the end of 2016 as attested to by members of CPN. Daniel Oluwatoyin of the Treasure Builder Foundation, a child welfare focus NGO explained that due to the fact that the better place for the child to grow is with the parent and more importantly, lack of where to keep rescued children, her organisation has resolved to family tracing which she noted is expensive and burdensome. She stated further:

“Several occasions I have picked children on the streets, we do family tracing, it is a very rigour process. When doing family tracing, you might still be going coordinating meeting with this family and they will tell you there is another family somewhere, we keep doing it. Perhaps, the present situation in the country might be the reason for increasing number of street children and the issue at the north where we have people displaced. So, we have so many people and the children on the street and when you do home tracing, you might need to go to Ilorin, go to other towns and so on. Organisations may put their fund in HIV/AIDS programmes but I doubt if there are organisations that would put their fund in home tracing” (IDI, 10/7/2017).

The implication of the above is that those whose home could not be traced will remain on the street due to lack of shelter. The Nigeria Prison Service which runs borstals only have them in designated parts of the country, and children may not be moved there until their cases are determined by courts. As such, children at times are detained with adults who could be hardened criminals thus further jeopardising the rehabilitation efforts. The only children cell which is not up to the size of a standard room is located at JWC in Iyaganku,

Ibadan to serve the entire state. Besides, detention in police custody should not be more than 48 hours even for adults, raiding streets to pick street children could be efforts in futility as there may be no facility to keep them.

Responding on the issues of where to keep child offenders or rescued children in the state, the CJ informed that:

“A child has a right to be protected and to be provided for by the society in case the parent is not around, so all these things are being done by NGOs. The government itself by way of welfare department has not been so much involved because we do not have borstal centres, we do not have training centres for all the children in Oyo State which is something that is disturbing” (KII, 2/3/2017).

As a way of solving this problem of detaining child offenders in the same facilities with the adult convicts and those awaiting trial, the CJ explained that the state is trying to improve on her Justice Administration system by enacting a Community Service Punishment Law (2016). This according to him will allow courts to order community service instead of custodian sentence that would take the affected child to prison. He however noted that “those to implement the law will still be trained, but we already have regalia for whoever that is undergoing community service. It would be particularly geared towards the protection of the child under the law.”

6. Second degree abandonment: An emerging trend in the challenges facing CPN members is what they have coined as “second degree abandonment”. These are situations where parents of rescued children who were taken to various privately run homes are abandoned there. Some of these children grow up in those homes to become adults while parents of the affected children in many cases run away or refuse to show up even to greet their children. Respondents who are home owners said the attitude is discouraging and eating deep into the meagre resources that could have been used for some other younger abandoned or poverty-stricken children. This challenge was affirmed by the state’s Director of Child Welfare when she said:

“...many of the NGOs working with the ministry go as far as organising marriages for children who have grown up to maturity and have been educated to a considerable level. They always inform us and if times permit, we are always represented at such celebrations” (IDI, 20/2/2017).

The FOMWAN secretary corroborated this practice of abandoning children at orphanage homes, relaying a particular episode as follows:

“We always encourage parents of children given to us at birth to come for them after two years in the orphanage. But some of them will not even come back; they will abandon the baby with us. We had an instance of a boy; it was when he was eighteen that the family now came to look for him. They didn’t even remember the name again; we had to take such a father to the Ministry of Women Affairs, Child Welfare Department before we can allow him to see the child again” (IDI, 18/2/2017).

7. Low level of awareness among members of the public: Members of the CPN in the state generally comment that the network is still not known to the public especially children who are the direct beneficiaries of the organisation’s activities. They attributed the situation to limited resources and the need to do aggressive publicity either directly with the media or through various activities which can be covered and reported by the press. This was further confirmed by the participants of the FGDs conducted in the selected schools as they said they did not know the body. A participant in SS3 class at AGS, Ogbomoso explained further:

“I don’t know any group called CPN. They have not come to our school before but a group of people from Bowen University Teaching Hospital came to give us lecture on how girls can protect themselves. It was when we were in SS2 and it was more of a lecture for the girls, but all of us attended” (FGD, 13/11/2017).

Members of the CPN are conscious of this low level of awareness but appeared to be helpless, since many of them spend their personal resources to fund their operations.

8. Low level of security and protection consciousness among parents and teachers: Stakeholders opined that child protection would have been easier if parents and teachers themselves are protection conscious. Since CPN members cannot be everywhere, unconscious population as far as child protection issues are concerned have been the bane of the network's activities. For instance, all the respondents including top security agents interviewed said they were not given security tips as children; thus, such skills may not be with most parents as well as teachers who are always with the children. Even the security operatives among respondents admitted that they still do not give tips at home on regular basis unless an occasion occurs and they want their family members to learn. The PPRO for instance said:

“Yes, I do give security tips at home but it's not regular I must confess and it's not regulated, not scheduled. It's not time bound, this is because of the nature of my job. I am not at home with my children, but occasionally, especially when things happen, I counsel them” (KII, 2/8/2017).

Also, some of the provisions of the CRL and related laws are still seen as “foreign” culture. Even some CPN members think removal of corporal punishment for children as provided for by the law could “spoil” the child; as such, preventing parents and teachers from flogging children is a serious challenge. For instance, the researcher observed that it took a cane wielding teacher to get some students to the venue of a protection training held at Oba Akinbiyi High School, Ibadan, while the same corporal punishments were meted on those that came late or made noise during the programme. When the teacher was approached by a CPN member on the illegality of his actions, he simply retorted in Yoruba:

“This (showing off the cane) is their ‘husband,’ without it, we cannot achieve anything here, they are too stubborn and you know, some of them are ‘children’ of cane” (Field Observation, 22/2/2017).

With this kind of mindset, protecting children against corporal punishment through the implementation of CRL remains a great challenge. In fact, this researcher observed that

there were cane-bearing teachers in all the schools visited as another set of erring students were lined up prostrating waiting for their turn for flogging in one of the schools where FGD was conducted (Plate 10).

Besides, the study discovered that many children were still unaware of the existence of CPN and Child Rights Laws of the state, as such, they do not know if they have certain rights or whether such were violated by anybody.

9. Community interference in criminal investigation and prosecution: Respondents generally agreed that interference by community members any time there is the need to seek justice for an abused child is a major problem facing the CPN and by extension child protection generally in Oyo State. In one of the court cases observed by this researcher at the Chief Magistrate Court in Iyaganku, some members of the community where a rape case occurred were seen at the court appealing to the victim and her mother to take it easy and they were giving assurances the accused boys would not carry out further attack on the victim if the court could release them. The Executive Director of Jesus Kids Home, Mrs. Victoria Okigbo succinctly put the issue of community interference in such cases by relating her experience thus:

“There was a rape case I was involved in; the elders of the community were against the woman and the child. They felt something they would have settled within the community should involve the police, and so, they were victimising them. Even at the court premises, they gathered themselves and were saying things against the woman. Not too long, I discovered that the woman also wanted to succumb and wanted the case to be withdrawn out of court and let the thing be settled in the community” (IDI, 11/7/2017).

This assertion was corroborated by the researcher’s observation at a juvenile court session where the Chief Magistrate presided over a case of rape of a 13-year old by six of her schoolmates. During the session, one of the community leaders became angry with the

mother of the victim when she told the magistrate that the boys had been threatening her daughter for daring to take the case to court. This particular community leader felt the victim's mother should not have raised the issue again in court since she had earlier reported it at the community level and she was given assurances.

Again, these interferences are sometimes made possible in many cases with the collaboration of security agencies especially the police who often encourage the victims and their parents to settle out of court. A respondent during an IDI gave the instance of a 13-year old girl who was defiled by two boys aged 16 and 13 right inside her father's room. He informed further thus:

“Due to the fact that the raped girl's father was a tenant in the boys' parents' house, the police compromised and released the boys. We had to intervene and drag it with the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) before they were rearrested and taken to court” (IDI, 1/11/2017).

10. UNICEF seeming tactical withdrawal: The network as earlier stated was the initiative of UNICEF to assist in the coordination of efforts to protect children. The idea is to help the NGOs pull their resources together to make child protection easier through the exchange of ideas and referrals to where a child in need of protection could receive best services. However, after the inauguration, the Fund appeared to have abandoned the network while the state government followed suit. The pioneer president of the network said the expected technical support had stopped since about two years after inauguration. CPN has not been receiving assistance in terms of training, seminars and workshops from the fund while the state government had only donated a sum of fifty thousand naira since 2011. The current president who said UNICEF has not been featuring in the affairs of the network stated further that when she tried to find out what happened she was told “CPN Oyo is no longer under Lagos office” and, as such could not establish any contact with the fund again.

Appearing to be corroborating this claim, when the researcher contacted the UNICEF office in Akure, the Ondo State capital which was newly created to serve Oyo, Ondo, Osun and Ekiti states, the fund's Focal Officer for Oyo said "there is no Child Protection Officer both at Lagos and Akure office for now." In other words, the CPN at present only survive on its members support while hoping to get aids from the government or the UNICEF in the future.

11. Unwillingness of parents to seek justice: This is a common situation especially with rape and defilement cases as found out by this study. Respondents were unanimous in their submission that most parents do not want such cases announced not to talk of following prosecution to logical conclusions for the victims to get justice. For instance, the CP of Prisons observed:

"Some parents would say, "please, don't stigmatise her of having been raped because the future is still there". So the parents themselves will be suppressing it. Please, I don't want my child to be mentioned in such situation; I will handle it the way I want to handle it and so many cases taken to the police, though I am not a police officer, but I have witnessed some that at the police level, either parents of the victim and the offender normally go to appeal. Please, these children are too young" (KII, 9/2/2017).

The CDCF coordinator submitted that the major challenge facing child protection especially in the area of getting justice were the parents themselves as he noted "they don't want to come out as principal witnesses in cases involving defilement and rape". He corroborated the above by responding thus:

"You see a parent that will be initially shouting, worrying and expressing readiness to pursue the case against his daughter to a logical conclusion only for him to start begging that it should be settled out of court...if such individual who is the parent of the victim is begging to say they are no longer interested, what can a NGO do?" (IDI, 5/3/2017).

He stated further that parents did not know the implication of their actions as they, in many cases would say they wanted to leave everything in the hands of God to deliver judgement while he cited a case of a defiled child that would go through several surgeries that could span a period of five years.

In the same vein, the FOMWAN scribe lamented the unwillingness of the parents of the victims to prosecute their children's attackers. She noted that;

“...the parents do not want to come out. They do not know that law can protect them and they do not know that there is penalty for such offenders” (20/2/2017).

12. Logistics - mobility, office accommodation and staff: As at August 2017, the CPN in the state had no secretariat they could call their own. The state government only allows them to use the Women Development Centre hall located at Samonda, Ibadan for their monthly meetings. However, when there were programmes either by the ministry or the hall was hired out to another user, the CPN members would be forced to hold their meeting outside under trees. In a situation where there was rainfall, the meeting might be cancelled. As such, the network operates a mobile secretariat with their official documents divided between the officials as may be necessary. The pioneer chair for instance offered a room to the CPN to serve as its secretariat in his office along Ring Road in Ibadan between 2011 and 2016 while the secretariat was moved to Sasa, along Oyo Road in the office of the new president.

Besides, there were no personnel to man the secretariat. At one of the network's monthly meeting, the idea of writing to the National Youth Service Corps to post a youth corps member to such temporary secretariat was extensively debated but had to be jettisoned as there was no enough fund to pay the corps member's allowance and accommodation as stipulated in the guidelines of the NYSC scheme.

Another major issue is that individual member-organisations bear the costs of services rendered to protect children including home tracing, medical and educational expenses among others.

13. Members attitude: Both the past and the present chairpersons of the CPN attested that non cooperative attitudes of members have been a major challenge confronting the network. These range from lateness to meetings to absence from either meetings or other programmes designed by the network. The former president noted that when the network started, hopes were high as member organisations anticipated support from UNICEF and the state government but started withdrawing from active participation when such assistance was not forthcoming as expected. His claims were supported by various appeals for punctuality and regularity in almost all the minutes of the meeting sighted by this researcher. Besides, many members do not pay their monthly annual contributions with less than half attending meetings at any point in time. Since organisations are at liberty to send representatives of their choice, the practice of sending different persons to represent them was frequent. The current chairperson noted such practice would always make it difficult to continue a pending issue from last meeting smoothly as the new attendees were always not on the same page with others who were at the previous deliberations.

14. Dilemmas over child offenders

Due to limitations in the resources to handle children cases, CPN members more often than not, were always at the crossroads on what to do with children charged with criminal offences. The child right laws prohibit trials of children in open courts and also make provisions against remanding them in prison facilities meant for adults. However, none of these children facilities were available in the study area, that is, there was neither family court in place nor borstals. As such, children in conflict with laws were also tried in the open courts and remanded in the prisons if there was a need to keep such child. When a child also committed a criminal offence against a fellow child, CPN members were always

at dilemma as the victim could not be denied justice while there would also be the need to protect the rights of the offender. A CPN member during an IDI lamented that child offenders' rights were always violated from the point of arrest. Using a case he was currently handling to illustrate his assertion, he submitted thus:

“A 14-year old girl who was a housemaid was alleged of burglary by her employer and the girl was detained in the police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) for weeks with other suspects who were adults before they moved her to prison. It was also a prison facility meant for either convicted adults or those awaiting trials. This is a gross violation of her rights as a child. We are not talking about the merits or otherwise of the alleged crime, we are talking about the status of the alleged offender” (IDI, 1/11/2017).

These challenges highlighted above constitute serious impediments to the operations of the network in Oyo State, though the individual members' passion remains the major motivation that is still keeping the organisation.

4.4 Objective 4: Exploration of alternative child protection strategies adopted by CPN in Oyo State

As a result of the challenges confronting the CPN in its efforts to protect children in Oyo State, the network has, severally and jointly, started new strategies to ensure total protection for children. These innovations are employed either as ways of solving some problems created by the conventional methods especially as enshrined in various laws or as means adopted to improve the child protection system. Alternative child protection strategies discovered by this study are presented below.

1. Child placement: Child placement is a situation where a rescued or an abandoned child is sent to a willing person to take care of the child. This is different from adoption which is enshrined in various child right laws with a lot of officialdom. Child placement is done out of compassion and such child can be released to the actual parents anytime the condition is suitable. The suitability of the time of release is determined by the age of the

child and the conditions of the parents to take care of that child. The secretary of FOMWAN submitted that child placement is adopted by her organisation as an alternative to adoption since it appears more natural. She explained further that only couples with children of the same age range can be allowed to have a child placed in their custodies so that the child will grow with such children and their parents having the feeling of staying with brothers and sisters in a family. Unlike adoption, a couple without children cannot have a child placed in their custody since the idea is to let the child enjoy family life. She submitted further thus:

Children on placement are those given to FOMWAN especially when the mother dies during childbirth. The intention of FOMWAN is to take care of that child for two good years for motherly care. After two years we encourage the father to marry another wife so that she can take care of the child as a man cannot take care of babies...this is because Islam does not encourage adoption. Instead of adoption, we place such a child in a member's house so that the child will have family upbringing. And not just ordinary member, it should be a member that has passion for children, not a member that is looking for children; it should be a member that has children.

This is an innovation that is different from what is known as adoption in the literature and child-related statutes. Whereas, adoption is common among childless couples, one of the major conditions that can make child placement possible is the need for the willing couples to have their own biological children that the placed child can play with. Also, while adoption is a permanent method of taking care of the affected child till he or she grows up to an adult, child placement is a temporary solution to take care of such child for a short period of say, two years or until the conditions of the real parents are good enough to take care of the placed child.

2. **School training programme:** Another strategy employed in protecting children in Oyo State by CPN is the idea of going to school to train them on protection issues especially the provisions of the state's CRL. Almost all members of the CPN do this as

individual organisations include the law enforcement agencies. For instance, the Director of CDCF informed that they discovered that both teachers and students are ignorant of how to protect themselves in accordance with the provisions of relevant laws:

“We have adopted 11 schools - four secondary and seven primary schools. We go to them during Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) meetings so that parents, teachers and children will learn together and know their responsibilities” (Fieldwork, 2017).

Similarly, the Sector Commander of FRSC as well as the Commander of the NDLEA confirmed that they do not only go to schools in the state regularly to train students and their teachers on the issues of road safety and narcotics, but they also establish clubs there to perpetuate the teachings. While the FRSC establish Road Safety Clubs (RSCs), the NDLEA have Drug Free Clubs (DFCs) in some schools. Also, the NSCDC’s Education Liaison Office in the state said they invited secondary school students at interval to train them on protection issues while the state’s police command explained that the new Inspector General of Police (IGP) has directed that the command should resuscitate the school enlightenment programme earlier suspended “due to logistics and differences in school calendar programmes.”

Aside the individual organisation’s efforts, the CPN as a body also jointly organise school training programmes especially where there were actual or likely threats in the past. This researcher participated in one of such trainings as an observer at Oba Akinbiyi High School in Ibadan (Plate 6) where the CPN organised trainings for both students and teachers of the school after a rape incidence.

3. Direct interventions: The CPN members have to resort to direct interventions to rescue Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC), rape victims and other categories of Children at Risk (CAR) in the state due to what they refer to as government failure or

inability to take care of these young citizens. Apart from joint interventions, individual CPN member has special areas of addressing the needs of children such as education intervention, scholarship, skill acquisition and other forms of empowerment. For instance, the coordinator of Rest Anchor said due to the new government policy of introducing certain fees in public primary and secondary schools in the state, the NGO had to come in. According to him:

“Even the compulsory education as stipulated by Nigerian constitution, that is from primary school to JSS 3 had been abrogated. In Oyo State, government came out with a position that because they didn’t have money, they introduced fees. Our organisation focuses specifically on vulnerable children, especially those who are orphans. Their plight is so terrible that majority of them who were in school before with government taking care of their education now have to rely on NGOs...we only used to buy books, bags and other things but not school fees, but now that government want us to be paying N3,000 per child, it became a problem” (IDI, 20/2/ 2017).

While describing the current situation as “unfortunate”, the Rest Anchor coordinator said his NGOs could not pay WAEC fees for about 400 children it managed to sponsor up to the final class in various secondary schools in the state. Other NGOs such as CDCF, FOMWAN, and Jesus’ Kids among others have introduced scholarship for secondary education, empowerment skills, and child placement styles that are not part of their conventional responsibilities as part of the new strategies to protect children in the state. One NGO, IICWIN being anchored by Dr Walkers has gone a step further by facilitating bank loans for families, especially widows, with vulnerable children as a way to empower them to establish small businesses to take care of these children.

4. Counselling and monitoring: Many of the CPN members have counselling centres where they mentor children particularly those they rescued from the street before uniting

them with their parents. Those that run orphanage homes also constantly counsel their inmates while they said they also continue to monitor their progress after leaving the homes. The social welfare ministry takes the lead in this idea of counselling as it engages parents of vulnerable children in such exercise. The researcher observed that the juvenile court in Iyagangu is also used for counselling of children in conflict with law.

5. Organisation of protests and rallies: The CPN in the state adopts rallies and protests as part of the strategies to drive home their points. During this study, the network was observed to have participated in two major rallies cum protests against the incessant rate of rape incidences and the government policy to privatise public secondary schools in the state, though, the network does not want to be seen as a pressure or anti-government group. For instance, the CPN joined hands with other Civil Society Organisations to protest the Oyo State Government resolve in 2016 to give its secondary schools to certain private willing members of the public to run. This made the government to jettison the idea but it eventually led to the introduction of certain fees ranging from N750 to N3, 000 or more in all public primary and secondary schools in the state. Also, in February 2017, the CPN as a body protested what it termed the police attempt to frustrate a rape case in Ibadan by taking the case up and followed same up with mass presence of placard carrying members at the juvenile court in Iyaganku (also in Ibadan) on the day of the arraignment of the accused.

6. Media campaign: Both the past and immediate chairpersons of the network in Oyo State admitted that CPN has resorted into making use of the media to reach out to the members of the public particularly to educate them on the state's CRL on one hand and the existence of the network on the other. The current president said as a matter of policy CPN "is making sure that all its activities are giving media coverage including trainings for members, children and advocacy visits in order to reach as many as possible."

7. Teaching parenting skills to members of the public: Another strategy employed by the CPN in the state is a programme of teaching members of the public parenting skill. The network sponsored her members for the training and also organised step-down trainings for other members (Plate 7) before consequently encouraging individual NGOs to start going to various communities to train parents and guardians alike. This researcher observed one such step-down training and discovered that it was made practical as each participant was made to do separate presentations while others watched and did critics of such presentation. The facilitator of the step-down training explained that the principal trainers were a conglomerate of six NGOs which she noted filled the gap of UNICEF expected workshops in a way.

Therefore, the argument of this thesis is that children can no longer be left only at the mercy of the adults for their physical protection. This is more so as parents, caregivers or teachers will not always be available to attend to such emergencies. Giving the child certain protection skills is germane especially when it has been established that the best form of security is the one provided for oneself. The Child Protection Circle will remain incomplete without the contributions of the children themselves.

For children to benefit optimally from other forms of protection, they need to acquire skills too particularly in the areas of child rights and responsibilities, self and security consciousness. Such skills will always become handy where stakeholders in child protection are either lack necessary skills or material to act adequately.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The UNICEF's Child Protection Network initiative in Oyo State has exposed the level of vulnerability of children in the state as various NGO members of CPN at the inception swung into action by researching into, and reporting protection and safety issues as they affect this segment of the population. One of the cardinal objectives of these optimistic members of the network is to ensure the implementation of the CRL enacted law since 2005, and six years after could not be applied in court due to lack of the appropriate court to implement its provisions. It is clearly inserted in the law that there shall be a family court where the laws can be properly applied.

No doubt, the provisions of the CRL are relevant to the protection issues that are inherent in the state topped by child rape and defilement, kidnapping, trafficking, street children, child labour, use of children for illicit drug trafficking and out of school children. Relevant sections of the nation's Child Rights Act as well as the state's CRL do not only protect children against these menaces but also provide punishment for any erring parents, guardians and caregivers.

However, this study apart from identifying various protection issues in Oyo State and the existing windows of opportunity in various relevant laws to address them also found out that the CPN was facing a lot of challenges in the course of protecting children. These inhibitions range from lack of adequate fund, office accommodation, mobility and other logistics, community interference in criminal issues to pervert the course of justice, members waning commitment and timidity on the part of parents to seek justice to lack of continuous government assistance, lack of family court and UNICEF's seeming withdrawal from the project.

Despite the above challenges, the CPN appeared to be forging ahead using alternative strategies such as going to schools for training children, embarking on direct intervention in child safety and development, carrying out advocacy works to relevant stakeholders, organising rallies and protests to drive home their points, employing media campaigns, embarking on joint prosecution of offenders as well as using private homes for counselling and accommodating rescued children.

The future appears bright for child protection in the state, though with certain efforts that are expected to be put in place. This include the need to have separate agency for child protection, the need for the establishment of skill acquisition centres, formulation of a child protection policy and inclusion of protection issues in the school curricula.

5.2 Conclusion

Establishment of CPN in Oyo State as done by UNICEF in many other states of the federation is no doubt laudable. However, the network needs continuous support from the Fund as well as from the state government for it to properly fulfil its objectives. Though the challenges are enormous, many of these would be addressed through the alternative strategies by members of the network while more fundamental ones could be properly handled by the time the family court is in place where the provisions of the CRL and similar laws such as CRA can be adequately applied without legal logjams on the issues of jurisdiction. Besides, training children in certain protection skills as pointed out by stakeholders will not be out of place to ensure a comprehensive child protection system.

Adequate protection of children is critical to the survival of the future of any society especially in the developing economies like Nigeria where such culture is being hindered by number of factors including poverty, illiteracy, broken homes and poor infrastructure facilities have made protection issues difficult with the attendant effects of rape, kidnapping, child labour and other forms of abuses. This has made the United Nations Children Fund to organize child-focused-non-Governmental organizations, security and other government agencies into various groups called Child Protection Network (CPN) to empower children to contribute to their own protection. This study thus examined the prospects and challenges of the UNICEF's CPN initiative in Oyo State.

The study applied a qualitative research method where stakeholders in child protection were engaged through In-depth interview, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussion and Observation. 10 In-Depth Interview with CPN members were conducted, 15 Key Informant Interviews were conducted with the heads of Security Agencies and Justice Administration such as the Nigerian Army, Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigerian Immigration Service, Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigerian Correctional Service and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency as well as the Chief Judge and Chief Magistrate of the Juvenile court in Oyo state. Three FGDs were conducted with secondary school children and one for CPN members. The researcher observed 6 CPN monthly meetings, school training programmes and rallies as well as 10 juvenile court sessions to gather relevant data.

This study discovered that the main child protection issues in Oyo state are rape/defilement, child trafficking, street children, kidnapping, child labour, drug trafficking and out of school children syndrome. Prospects in empowering children through trainings in child rights, self-defence, negotiation skills, self and security consciousness among others were also discovered. However, the challenges facing the CPN include inadequate fund, uncooperative attitude of the police, lack of formal training among stakeholders, lack of borstals and children centre, absence of family court, second degree abandonment, low level of awareness among members of the public, community

interference in criminal investigation and prosecution and UNICEF seeming tactical withdrawal. To address these challenges, the CPN has started applying alternative strategies including child placement, direct interventions, counselling and monitoring, organisation of protests and rallies, media campaign, teaching parenting skills to members of the public and organising school training programmes. The future child protection model being suggested by the study will require that there is a separate agency for child protection, establishment of skill acquisition and educational centre, development of a Child Protection policy and inclusion of child protection education in school curriculums or extra curriculum activities.

In conclusion, for child protection strategy in Oyo state to achieve its goals, the CPN should be strengthened and supported by UNICEF, the state government and security agencies and other relevant bodies saddled with the responsibilities of investigation and prosecution. Though a separate child policing agency is recommended, children themselves also need trainings in child protection, child rights and responsibilities; self-defence, negotiation skills, as well as in appropriate use of information at their disposal to enhance their protection, peace and security.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following is recommended to enhance the operations of the CPN and child protection generally in Oyo State, and by extension, Nigeria.

1. There is the need to start training self-defence skills in schools. This art instils discipline when professionally handled and thus, will eliminate the fear of turning beneficiaries to bullies or overconfident persons when danger lurks. Such skill will rather build enough confidence and reduce vulnerability.
2. Children could also be exposed to negotiation skills with their attackers as a way of giving such potential rapists or kidnappers false hope.

3. From what the stakeholders in child protection have been experiencing, there is no doubt that having separate policing agency to be saddled with children matters will go a long way in getting justice for the victims of abuse and develop the children's sense of responsibility for their own security due to the constant training this agency will be giving in schools and communities.
4. For a worthy future, there is the urgent need to have a child protection policy in place. The idea of seeming concession of child protection in the hands of NGOs who use their individual initiatives and resources could be counterproductive. There were cases of abuse at private homes and only a few of such could be reported.
5. Though CRA and CRL are in place, the appropriate court for their application is the family court which the state should expedite action to establish.
6. Now that the issue of child protection is a multi-agency task, there is the need to amend the existing laws to reflect the names of these agencies as the police always feel contributions from other sources is "illegal" and a form of interference in the police job.
7. There is the need for the establishment of children centres to house rescued abused children. These centres could also serve as skill acquisition and recreation centres for children generally especially during holidays.
8. Children are always afraid of law enforcers; occasional excursions to their formations may go a long way in reducing this phobia.

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

The study has opened a new vista on another form of child abuse as seen in child headed homes. This trend if not checked is as bad as child labour.

Another contribution is the fact that the study has identified some learnable and teachable skills for children in protecting themselves especially in emergencies when adults may not be readily available or may need to attend to themselves first.

This study has also identified the inadequacy in the training of the security operatives as child protectors in Nigeria. Children do not see them as “child friendly” and this could mean neither seeking nor getting appropriate help from the operatives. This new knowledge could spur the appropriate authorities to either create a specialised body or improve on the training of the present operatives to make certain aspect of it child-specific.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I



Plate 1: Teenage girl strapped with explosives for detonation to cause harm

Source:<https://www.google.com/search?q=bomb+strapped+girl+in+nigeria&tbm=isch&tbid=1&source=univ&sa=X&ei=VYweVfCtMcPjap61gYgP&ved=0CB0QsAQ&biw=1366&bih=617>

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Plate 2: FarisOdeh, aged 14 throwing stone at an Isreali military tank

Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children_in_the_Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict-

(Accessed September 13, 2014)



Plate 3: Children receiving training in Emergency response



Plate 3b: Children being trained in Emergency response by INEE

Source:

<https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=picture+of+training+children+in+emergency&ei=UTF-8&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-001>. Accessed June 6, 2016



Plate 4: Anti-Rape Bra

The anti-rape lingerie (left) and the electronics that make it work (right).

Source: British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Retrieved from:
<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-22110443>



Plate 5 Alert Jeans on display by the inventors

Source: *New York Post* June 26, 2014 retrieved from

<http://nypost.com/2014/06/26/rapes-in-india-so-rampant-women-invent-anti-rape-jeans/>



Plate 6: Rape Axe displayed by the inventor

Source: Cable Network News (CNN) June 21, 2010.
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Plate 7: A Teenager load carrier observed at Iwo road, Ibadan
Source: Fieldwork, 2017



Plate 8a: A CPN member training students of Oba Akinbiyi Memorial Secondary school

Source: Fieldwork, 2017



Plate 8b: Another member in CPN jacket giving lecture on self-consciousness and defence

Source: Fieldwork, 2017



Plate 9: School Children prostrating and waiting for their turn to be caned in one of the schools

Source: Fieldwork, 2017



Plate 10: Sitting arrangement at an Ibadan juvenile court not considered to be child friendly

*Source:*Fieldwork,2017

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS

**UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN
INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES**

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN CHILD PROTECTION IN OYO STATE

My name is Hammed ABODUNRIN, a PhD candidate with the above named university.

This interview guide is designed to elicit information on PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND CHILDPROTECTION NETWORK INITIATIVE IN OYO STATE,

NIGERIA. Information obtained by the candidate will be treated with confidentiality and used strictly for the research purposes with the institute please.

Thank you Sir/ma.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the major child protection issues in Oyo state?
2. Are there relevant laws to protect the children in Oyo state?
3. How effective are these laws?
4. What is major hindrance to the child protection laws?
5. Would you say children are at risk in Oyo State?
6. How cooperative the security agencies in Oyo State as far as children protection issues are concerned?
7. In what areas do you think there should be improvement?

8. What are the major challenges faced by the network?
9. What major interventions had been carried out by the network since its establishment?
10. How often does UNICEF train or provide logistics for training for members of the network?
11. What is your opinion about the future of the network?
12. What protection skills would you advocate for children?
13. Will you recommend self-defence skills?
14. Do you think other skills such as swimming, information management handling, fire prevention, environmental management etc could be useful?
15. Do you think children should be educated on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)?
16. Do you think children should know about guns and their dangerous characteristics?
17. Do you think shooting skills should be given and what is the reason for your answer?
18. What is the commonest protection issue do you have in Oyo State?
19. What can the children themselves do to reduce their vulnerability to child labour, rape, trafficking etc?
20. Do you think security operatives are adequately equipped for child protection?
21. Would you recommend special policing body for children like that of EFCC (for economic crimes), ICPC (for corruption) and NESREA (for environmental policing)?
22. Were you given any skills in child protection as a child?
23. In your opinion, are there social, cultural or religious barriers to modern child protection principles? Give examples.
24. How did you handle child protection issues reported to you in the past?
25. What are the sources of finance for the CPN in Oyo State?

26. How effective is the idea of networking among members?

27. Do you exchange or transfer cases?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHILDREN

Based on article 4(2) that emphasizes actions in the best interest of the child, and the children's Participation in their own affairs; and article 7 that guarantees freedom of expression, the following questions are to be asked the children

Name

School.....

Age.....sex.....class.....

Ambition.....

Do you want to be trained to swim? Yes/no

Give reason

Do you want to be trained in self-defence/martial arts?.....

Give reason

Do you want to be trained in shooting?

Give reason

Have you ever been faced with any danger? Yes/No

What type of danger?

- I. Near accident/accident
- II. Threats of kidnappers
- III. Threats of armed robbers
- IV. Flood
- V. Fire outbreak
- VI. Bully at school
- VII. Riot
- VIII. Threats from rapists
- IX. Collapse building

What did you do to escape?

- I. Ran away
- II. Laid down

- III. Begged the attacker
- IV. Ran to the police
- V. Ran to the teacher
- VI. Ran to the neighbour
- VII. Prayed
- VIII. Shouted and closed my eyes

Have you ever seen a gun before?

Have you ever hoped to have one?

Did you touch/handle a gun before?

If yes, how did it get to your hand?

- I. I quickly touched/carried it before the owner looked/came
- II. The owner asked me to bring it for him/her (indicate him/her)
- III. I normally carry it for my father/mother
- IV. We used it for drama in school

Who owns the gun?

Do you know the name of the gun?

What is your father's work?

Do you belong to a voluntary paramilitary club?

What is the name?

Why did you join the club?

How do you feel when you see a policeman?

How do you feel when you see a soldier?

Have shaken hands with a policeman/soldier/civil defender etc before?

Have you reported a case to the police before?

Have you ever been threatened that police will take you away if you cry for anything?

APPENDIX IV

List of Key Informant Interview respondents

S/N	Name of Key Informant	Organisation	Designation	Date
1	MR. John Adewoye	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps	Oyo State Commandant	8/2/2017
2	Mr. Afe Olurotimi	NSCDC	OC/Child Protection Desk	8/2/2017
2	Kasali Oladipo Yusuf (Mr)	Nigerian Prisons Service	Oyo State Controller	9/2/2017
3	Omolade Faboyede (Mrs)	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency	Oyo State commander	9/2/2017
4	Mrs. Victoria Isang	Nigeria Immigration Service	Oyo State Comptroller	9/2/2017
5	Mr. Joshua O	Nigeria Immigration Service	Assistant Comptroller/ Human Trafficking	10/2/2017
6	Mr. Yusuf K Salam	Federal Road Safety Corps	Oyo State Sector Commander	10/2/2017
7	OC/Juvenile Welfare Centre (JWC)	Nigeria Police Force	Oyo state Command OC-JWC	16/2/2017
8	Hon. Justice Muktar Abimbola	Oyo state Judiciary	Chief Judge (CJ) of Oyo State	2/3/2017
9	Brig. General A. Yusuf	Nigerian Army	Garrison Commander, 2 Division, Ibadan	6/3/2017
10	Mr. Muhammed Wayah	Nigeria Police Force	Deputy Commissioner of Police(Criminal Investigation)	7/3/2017
11	Mrs. Aderonke Obafemi	Nigeria Police Force	OC-Antihuman Trafficking	7/3/2017
12	Mr. Adetunji Ajisebutu	Nigeria Police Force	Oyo state Police Public Relations Officer	2/8/2017

Source: KII, 2017

List of In-depth Interview Respondents

S/N	Name	Organisation	Designation	Date
1	Barr. Yakub Fadare	Legal Rights Awareness and Protection Organisation (LERAPO);	Coordinator/ Pioneer chairman, CPN, Oyo state	18/2/2017
2	Pstor. Leye defioye	Rest Anchor	Founder/CEO	18/2/2017
3	Alhaja Airat Ogungbenro	FOMWAN	Secretary	20/2/2017
4	Mrs. Vitoria Abioye	Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare	Director	20/2/2017
5	Dr. Ebun Walkers	Child Protection Network	chairperson	21/2/2017
6	Ojo Caleb		Desk officer	22/2/2017
7	Pst. Marcus Williams	Living Word Mission	CEO	2/3/2017
8	Alhaji k. yusuf	Child Development and Concern Foundation (CDCF)	CEO/UNICEF Mentor	5/3/2017
9	Mrs. Daniel Oluwatoyin	Treasure Builders	Founder/CEO	10/7/2017
10	Mrs. Rosemary Odigbo	Jesus Kids Mission	Founder/CEO	11/7/2017

APPENDIX VI

Researcher with some of the respondents



The researcher with the Garrison Commander, 2 Division, Nigerian Army, Ibadan



Researcher with the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of Criminal Investigations, and the OC Anti-Human Trafficking



Researcher with the Commander, NDLEA, Oyo State Command



Researcher with the Sector Commander, FRSC



Researcher with the Police PPRO, Oyo State Command



Researcher with the Chief Judge of Oyo State



Researcher with some CPN members after an observed court session



Researcher during FGD with students at Ibadan Grammar School, Ogbomoso



Researcher during FGD with students at Iseyin District Grammar School, Iseyin.



Researcher during FGD with students at Anglican Grammar School, Ogbomosho



Researcher with pioneer chairman of CPN in Oyo State



With a member of CPN

APPENDIX VII

CPN MEMBERS IN OYO STATE

S/N	NAME OF CONTACT PERSON	NAME OF NGO	AREA OF SPECIALIZATION	ADDRESS	CONTACT & EMAIL
1	Yakub . Fadare	LERAPO	Child Advocacy	Right 2 nd Floor, Owoade House No. 1A Akinyemi Way, Ring Road, Ibadan.	08030660066/ ademolayakub@yahoo.com
2	Pst. Akinsulie Ali	Nigeria Immigration	Anti-Human Trafficking Unit	Beside NYSC Office, Opp. State Govt. House, Gate Agodi.	08077287575/akinleyealli2008@yahoo.com .
3	Comrade Kehinde Akinyemi	Child Growth Concern Initiative (CGCI)	Child Advocacy	Rights No. 1, I. K. Dairo Street Agodi Gate, Ibadan	08068300078/cgciakingyemi@gmail.com
4	Jesuyayi Omotayo	LIFE Restoration Ministry (LRM)	Child Rights	Igbo-owe Mission field off Moniya, Ibadan	08060254190
5	Alh. I. G. Yusuf	Child Development And Concern Foundation	Child Development and Protection	Suite 23, Lamlat Office Complex, Old Ife Road, Ibadan.	08023424561/childanddevelopment@yahoo.com
6	Pst. Leye Adefioye	Rest Anchor	Advocacy & Child Rights, Vul. Children	Iyana Church, Ibadan	08032486796/restanchor@gmail.com
7	Pst. Marcus Williams	Living Word Mission	Home for OVC (special protection)	3, Olanipekun Street, Ososami, Ibadan	08038565552/livingwordmission@yahoo.com

8	Mrs.Ogunkunle I. M.	Family Counseling Centre (FCC)	Home Based care	Ile Oloko, Iseyin Junction, Iseyin.	08036066688/fcciseyin@gmail.com
9	AlhajaOgungbenroAirat	Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN)	Orphanage, OVC	1, Unity Road, off AlhajiOyebamiji Street, opp. Bashorun Market, Ibadan.	08060918609/fomwanoyo2004@yahoo.com .
10	AdetonaVicortia O.	Rural People Development Initiative (RUPEDIN)	HCT, Advocacy, OVC	Babalola's Compound, OkeObeere, Isemule, Kajola LGA	07039894429/rusel_77@yahoo.com
11	AfeoluwaRotimi	Civil Defence Corps	Child Welfare	33, Dick Road, Railway Headquarters Iyaganku, Ibadan	08056683364
12	AdewumiOyeniran	Ministry of Justice Oyo State Mediation Centre	Custody, Inheritance, paternity	Ministry of Justice, Secretariat Agodi, gate.	08052072840
13	AdijatTiti Malik	MAGI –Mother and Girl-child Protection Initiative.	Eradication of Trafficking in Oyo State	High Court of Justice, Ibadan	08052270867
14	ASP OmoladeAdeyeri	The Nigeria Police Force	Prevention of child offenders protection	Divisional Hqters, Iyaganku Police	adeyeriomolade@yahoo.com

- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|
| 15 | Mrs.Omotosho | Family Health and Population Action Committee (FAHPAC) | of child
Caring for ovc, providing support for the less privileged | Station.
Fahpac Complex AdesolaOrita-Aperin, Behind Omoyeni, Primary Sch. | 08023357142/flam4real@yahoo.com . |
| 16 | AdenijiOlayinka (Mrs) | International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) | To Enhance & promote welfare of women and children | NBA OPP NTC, Leaf Road, Ibadan | 08023516964/lawcom@yahoo.co , |
| 17 | Miss. Gloria Akpore | Nigerian Bar Association | Human Right Protection | Aare AfeBabalola Bar Centre, Opp NTC, Iyaganku | |
| 18 | Rev Timothy Ojo | Safe Harbor Baptist Children's Home, Ogbomoso | Caring for ovc, focusing on fostering | Plots 1&2, Ogbomoso South Local Govt. Estate Scheme | timron501@yahoo.com |
| 19 | Dr.Ebun Walker | Initiative for integrated community welfare in Nigeria (IICWIN) | OVC care & support, promotion of child rights & prevention of abuse | 8, Alfonso Rd, Sasa/Ojoo | 08034370171/iicwin2005@yahoo.com |
| 20 | Dupe Awosemusi (Mrs) | International Federation of women layers (FIDA) Oyo. | Enhance & promote welfare of women & children | NBA Centre, Iyaganku, Ibadan | 08038549885/dupetocom@yahoo.com |

21	Fola-Kayode O.Y.	Oyo State Ministry of Women Affairs	Child Welfare of	Oyo State Secretariat Agodi, Gate	08060024399/modamidep@yahoo.com
22	Pst. Mrs.OloladeAdemoleku	Jesus Kids Orphanage	Home for the physically challenged, orphans and the vulnerable children	18, Ifelodun Str. Monatan Iwo Road, Ibadan.	08051022233/Jesuskids2007@yahoo.com
23	BabalolaRotimi	Ministry of information & orientation, Ibadan	Public & Enlightenment orientation	Oyo StateSecretariatAgodi, Gate.	Notbabs2008@yahoo.com
24	Mr. Gabriel Omikunle	Family & Community Development Initiative (FCDI)		Sasa Comm., Akinyele LGA, Ibadan.	08073715193/Fcdisasa@yahoo.com
25	LadipoOlaide A. (Mrs)	Oyo State Primary Education Board, 1	Mobilization, Education, HIV & AIDS Prevention	Agodi, Gate, Ibadan.	Lailadipo@yahoo.com
26	Adewale Mathew AdeoyeEsq.	Child vanguard, Oyo	Child Advocacy	Ibadan	07033902468
27	IdrisOwolarafe	Nasru-Lahi-ii-faith Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) Ibadan	Child welfare & Education care for street children	Ibadan N/East LG Secretariat, Iwo Road, Ibadan.	08072575338/Idrisowolarafe@yahoo.com

28	Mrs. S.O. Okewoye	Community Development Alliance	Community Development	No. 218, Adelabu Shopping Complex, Orita Challenge, Ibadan	08057212433/Comeval2003@yahoo.com
29	Pastor Ayo Ogunseye	Hebron Foundation	OVC	Ibadan	08033285100/ogunseyeayokunle@yahoo.com
30	AdekanbiOluwaseun	Centre for mass Reformation	OVC	Ibadan	08032180278
31	Abu Stephen	Rural Child Support Initiative (RUCSIN)	OVC	Gofamint Camp Ground, Along Igb-Oloyin Road, Ojoo, Ibadan	08055253779/rural_child@yahoo.com
32	Mrs. C.B. Omidiji	Association of Nigeria Women in Business	HIV/AIDS, Gender Right, OVC, Malaria & TB, Conflicion Management	No. 82, Lebanon Street, Gbagi, Ibadan.	08023470269/omidijicb@yahoo.com
33	Alhaja F. O. Balogun	Channel for Widow Relief	Widowhood and OVC	B12, Nikem Plaza, Opp. NNPC Depot, Apata, Ibadan.	08023517920/widowrelief@gmail.com
34	Obi Adesola	Ministry of Education Oyo	Protection of Children	of Ministry of Education Secretariat Agodi, Ibadan	08166728126
35	Mrs. M. F. Adisa	Mercy of God Home	OVC	Mercy of God Home Behind Diamond Bank, Iwo Road, Ibadan.	08022750509
36	OwolabiFunmilayo	Redeemed Aids	HIV, OVC, HCT,	Ope-Oke Shopping	08033446238/funmykenny@yahoo.com

		Project Committee (RCCG/RAPAC)	SRH	Complex NNPC Area, Apata, Ibadan.	
37	Pst. Mrs. Ademolekun	Jesus kids Home for Disabled	Disabled Children	No. 18, Ifelodun Street, Monatan, Iwo Road, Ibadan.	08057022233/Jesuskids2007@yahoo.com
38	Temiloluwa Morenikeji	His Heritage Home Operated by Abundance Ministries	OVC	Plot abc 7, Olapade Agoro Bus top, Oluyole Extension, Ibadan.	08023692267/JC4MI@yahoo.com
39	Owoyomi Olayinka	CCRAN	Child Rights	Block x, Training Development, Old NTC OXSSIC Complex, Iyaganku GRA leaf Road, Ibadan.	07031353734/ccranigeria@yahoo.com
40	Odigbo Blessing	Jesus Child Mission	VC	No. 5, Ladipo Tejumola Street, Ibadan.	08034298538/b.odigbo@yahoo.com
41	Sunday Oyetunde	Divine Mercy Princess Foundation		Ibadan	08054263629/divinemercypeace@yahoo.com
42	Idris Farouk	Oyiza orphanage		Ibadan	08059556467/oyiza.orphanagehome@yahoo.com
43	Eshiet Victoria F.	SOS CV Nigeria	Child Welfare	Sasa Community Ibadan, Akinyele LGA.	08107250797/victoria-festus@sosvillage-nigeria.org
44	Kayode Oluwarenu	Kent Home	Child Welfare	Ibadan	08023357711/sammyfolafoundation@gmail.com

45	Olubanjo Victoria F.	Patricia Abokede Foundation	Child Welfare	Ibadan	08169569799/Pabokede@gmail.com
46	Mrs.Aiyeola	Winnies Castle	Child Welfare	Ibadan	08139651608/kenni-osaro@wcloh.org
47	Mrs.Babatunde	Salvation Praise Orphanage Home &	Child Welfare	Ibadan	08182189917/Salvationpraiseorphanagehome@gmail.com
48	Daniel Oluwaloyin	Treasure Builder Foundation	Child Welfare	Ibadan	08035693996/treasurebuilder@yahoo.com
49	OyelekeOmowunmi	Guidance Community Development Foundation	Child Welfare	Ibadan	08057783260/omowunmioyeleke@yahoo.com
50	Hewatch E. E.	Wings of Love	Child Welfare	Ibadan	08023854207/lizzyhewatch@gmail.com

