

PRIORITIZING JUVENILE HOME POLICY AND CHILD WELFARE: AUGURY SECURITY FOR THE FUTURE OF LAGOS STATE

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ABSTRACT

Correctional institutions especially custodial homes are core components of juvenile administration globally and Nigeria is not an exception, it serves as evidence of government interest in the reformation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of delinquent juveniles especially those confined, which ascertain that no aspect of the social life of a citizen that has no connection to policy a key process in spelling out intentions and objectives of the government. To realize this interest government has to establish ministries, agencies, and departments saddled with the realization of the welfare of juveniles in various custodial homes this responsibility is managed by the Ministry of Youth and Social Development in Lagos State. Hence, it is difficult to think of any aspect of the social life of a citizen that has no connection to policy, and this is a key process in spelling out the intentions and objectives of the government. Unfortunately, issues concerning children's welfare, rights, and opportunities fall outside the purview for which the National Assembly can make exclusive laws binding across states of the federation in Nigeria, therefore this study examined the credibility of the Lagos State Child Right Law as a foundation for the establishment of Lagos State juvenile homes policy and appraise the performance of the Child Right Law in terms of juvenile welfare in Lagos State custodial homes with key indicators.

Keywords: Child Welfare, Juvenile Homes, Social Welfare Policy, Social Welfare Services.

Introduction

The continuous existence of any society depends on its ability to socialize children into the art of survival and cultural perpetuation because the children in contemporary society are indisputably the custodians of tomorrow's world. Modern states globally have made it imperative to create an environment where children would live not only in peace, harmony, and tranquility but with liberty and welfare. In many countries of the world, child welfare, delinquency policies, justice, practice, and structure remain topics of discussion and focus, a

consequence of the increasing involvement of young people with the law, police, and court due to issues like children living on the streets, children affected by communal conflicts, drug abuse, human trafficking, examination malpractice, bullying, theft among many others, (Modo & Ezeh, 2010; Sanni, Udoh, Okediji and Ugwuoke 2010). Juvenile delinquency varies from country to country in both the developed world and the developing.

Throughout history, the family is the oldest institution that naturally provides all forms of social welfare to its members. The functions of family members were based on a value system defined by their status and geared towards working for the family's well-being with arguably unlimited obligations and limited rights. The family leadership arranged and managed the basic livelihood of all members from birth till death or separation, such as education, marriage, property sharing in case of separation, and respect upon death. Thus it is a total package of living together with affection, protection, nurturance, and help; working to earn a living and sharing; and socializing to live in peace and harmony with dignity (Merto-Metibobo, 2009).

However, these cultural practices for ensuring the protection and perpetuation of childhood values and integration even in Nigerian societies are arguably and gradually becoming undermined, fading out, and misinterpreted due to civilization, globalization, and development. These changes have destabilized the ability of families within Nigerian society to sustain practices, values, and certain disciplines for children. Changes in society range from politics, education, economics, globalization, and the social institution have been the bane in the realignment of children within the cultural context (Atilola, Omigbodun & Bella-Awusah, 2014).

The transition from the traditional practices to statehood and all its requirements, adaptations, inclusion, and borrowing of modern practices and beliefs have twisted to some extent and confounded society with both the good/positive and the bad/negative practices. These practices and the numerous changes in the society at large were miniaturizing the quality in the morality of the Nigerian children and still introducing ways of escape in form of modern solutions by the state, presenting corrective measures like rehabilitation in place of punishment, remand homes, and correctional centers among others. Despite these corrective measures, juvenile delinquency is fast becoming one of the major problems facing contemporary Nigeria society due to different factors ranging from poor parenting to bullying at schools, poverty and the search or desire for survival, civilization, assimilation of exotic cultural practices, cultism, truancy, prostitution among many others. Juvenile delinquency has become a complex problem that exacts a substantial and continuing toll on our present-day Nigeria (Muhammed, Salawu, Adekeye, Ayinla & Adeoye 2009).

Hence, it is difficult to think of any aspect of the social life of a citizen that has no connection to policy, and this is a key process in spelling out the intentions and objectives of the government. Unfortunately, issues concerning children's welfare, rights, and opportunities fall outside the purview for which the National Assembly can make exclusive laws binding across states of the federation in Nigeria, therefore this study examined the credibility of the Lagos State Child Right Law as a foundation for the establishment of Lagos State juvenile homes policy and appraise the performance of the Child Right Law in terms of juvenile

welfare in Lagos State custodial homes with key indicators. This paper contains eight sections and the following are the breakdown of the expected sections for this study: introduction, methodology, literature review, theoretical framework, data presentation, discussion of findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

Methodology

This study adopt a quantitative method that made use of exploratory research design as a suitable channel which aided the opportunity to observe, survey, discover, analyze and document the existing nature, practice, and challenge(s) of the variables of the study. Information has been sourced from both secondary and primary sources. The secondary data was obtained from textbooks, published and unpublished documents such as journals, websites, and previous projects, while the primary data was sourced and retrieved from questionnaires administered, (Leedy 2010&Creswell 2009, Becker, Bryman &Ferguson 2012). The total population of the study is 1,096 comprises of all workers in the juvenile homes (76) and the juvenile in the custodial homes in Lagos state (1,020), however, the custodial homes were grouped into strata and randomly selected. The procedure gives every home from the various strata in the population an equal chance of appearing on the selection list. It expunges every form of politicization, lobbying, and bias. Therefore, from the 21 (twenty-one) institutions covering Registered Homes Operating in Lagos State and the Custodial Institutions/homes established and operated by Lagos State 10 were selected, for this total enumeration was used for the population this is because the number was sizeable and manageable see the list below.

Table 1: List of Juvenile Homes for Boys Selected

S/N	Names of Homes	Boys/ Girls	Number Per Home	Staff Number
1	Ketu Special Children Centre	Boys	56	7
2.	Special Correctional Centre for Boys, Oregun	Boys	117	19
3	Special correctional Centre for Girls, Idi-Araba	Girls	41	9
4.	Correctional Centre for Senior Boys, Isheri	Boys	42	6
5	Correctional Centre, Idi-Araba	Girls	21	8
6.	Rehabilitation and Training centre, Majidun	Boys	209	5
7.	Bosco Boys Street Home, 55/56 Adeyemo Omole Phase II Lagos	Boys	22	5
8	Grace Springs Rehabilitation Home, Oppo Radio Nigeria, Ibeshe, Ikorodu	Girls	28	6
9	Echoes of Mercy and Hope Foundation. 7, Ogidi Street Mende, Maryland Lagos.	Girls	17	6
10.	Street Child Care & Welfare Initiative, 16 Akinwunmi strt, Alagomeji, Yaba	Boys	10	5
11	Total population of juveniles in the custodial institutions	--	563	76

Source: Fieldwork 2021

Literature Review

Juvenile Homes/ Custodial Institutions

Juvenile Custodial Institutions are facilities built to correct, reform, rehabilitate and render essential services to juvenile offenders across the globe. Custodial institutions remain a core component of juvenile justice administration of every government. To realize these interests of the government, studies have shown that juvenile offenders are particularly vulnerable members of society. There are three (3) recognized and approved institutions for the protection, correctional, rehabilitating, and reuniting the children with their families and society. They are: (1) remand homes, (2) approved schools, and (3) borstal institutions. Suleman (2011) argues that as prisons are meant for adults, the remand and borstal homes are reformatory institutions for young or juvenile offenders (Bella, Atilola & Omigbodun 2010, Adebayo 2008).

Child Welfare

The welfare of any child connotes activities, services, and programs that are focused on ensuring that all children live in safe, permanent, and stable environments that support their well-being. Child welfare simply connotes response specifically to the needs of children. Its focus is to protect children from every form of ill-treatment and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and the ability to take action (s) that enables all children to have the best outcomes (Shireman, 2015, Mallon & Hess, 2014; Child Welfare Information Gateway 2012; Blau & Abramovitz 2004; Kohl, Barth, Hazen, & Landsverk, 2005).

Child Welfare is a critical government responsibility that includes protecting children from abuse and neglect, and ensuring that children have safe, stable, and permanent living situations. It also involves providing social services to children and youth whose parents and/or communities cannot adequately provide care (Blau & Abramovitz 2004). Several reports from the Nigerian Police Force, Child Welfare agencies, UNICEF (2005 To 2018), WHO (2018) have raised several concerns about abused, neglected, and children at risk of maltreatment (UNICEF 2005- 2018; WHO 2018; Mallon & Hess, 2014; & Shireman, 2015; Iguh & Nosike, 2011). These concerns have necessitated the establishment of state departments, agencies, and bodies saddled with the responsibilities of child welfare services, child protection, and development to specifically and intentionally uncover legislation and policies that provide specific rights for children, services that support the protection of children within communities and the society at large, as well as cater to families that need assistance in the protection and care of their children; including arranging for children to live with kin or with foster families when they are not safe at home; and arrange for reunification.

Social Control Theory

This theory was introduced into sociology by Travis Hirschi in 1969 in his book "Causes of Delinquency", it became a benchmark for theory construction and research in the delinquency field, this theory was proposed because Hirschi did not buy into the earlier theories of crime and delinquency such as the Strain Theory or Differential Association Theory, he believed that both maintained the belief that criminal behavior was either learned or caused by occurrences or conditions in one's environment.

Hirschi's theory rests on the Hobbesian assumption that human behavior is not naturally conforming, "but that we are all animals and thus naturally capable of committing criminal acts", which proves that delinquency is a part of human nature. Hence, it is conformity that must be understood and conformity is achieved through socialization, the formation of a bond between individual and society. Social control theory, therefore argues that "crime and delinquency occur when an individual's ties to the societal conventional order or normative standards are weak or largely nonexistent" and that the stronger an individual ties with each element of the social bond, the less likely delinquent behavior.

The social control theory also known as the social bond theory explains that there are different bonds an individual must make that will determine whether or not he/she will commit offenses. They comprised four major elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

- (1). the first one is attachment, meaning that the socialization of an individual depends on an individual's interest in another human being. The family environment is the source of attachment because parents act as role models and teach their children socially acceptable behavior.
- (2). the second one is commitment, which means that a lack of commitment toward norms and social laws can lead to delinquent behavior.
- (3). the third bond is involvement which means participation in conventional activities that will lead toward socially valued success and status objectives to reduce delinquent behavior. Hence, an individual who participates in positive activities would not have the time to commit criminal acts.
- (4). the fourth and final bond is belief and it states that when a person does not live in an area that holds the same values or beliefs delinquent behavior is almost inevitable.

This theory proposes that all people from birth are basically 'bad apples' that must be controlled by laws, rules, and regulations to keep society in check. It goes on to maintain that those who have a weak bond to societal controls end up participating in deviant or criminal behavior (Crawford 2014, Pratt, Gau and Franklin 2011&Jones, 2008).

This theory is adopted because of some of its propositions that individuals have an inherent ability for evil, as theory rests on the Hobbesian assumption that humans are all animals and thus naturally capable of committing criminal acts". In other words the environment and circumstances surrounding us as an individual is a major determinant of who and what we become, for children the desire to be like their peers or fit into the world and lifestyle they see, hear of, and imagine, due to the social constraints they most times end up with the delinquent lifestyle.

While this position does not absolve the individual from the consequences of his/her delinquent actions or behavior, the stake focus is seeking to provide separate flexible channels of handling juvenile matters like children's police, family courts, and homes/centers as alternatives to imprisoning. It proceeds on the premise that the rights and disposition of children are different from those of adults and this should be reflected in the way they are treated. Emphasis was placed on rehabilitation instead of punishment, prevention rather than retribution, as the principal goals of the juvenile justice system.

Presentation of Data

This section of this research work is the presentation of data gathered, analysis of results as well as discussions of findings. Copies of the questionnaires instrument were distributed and retrieved, the breakdown is as follows: 95 was the sample size for the staff members of both the custodial homes and the Department of Youth Development while 563 was the sample size for the children (100%), however, 76 and 469 were retrieved.

The demographic characteristics of the civil servants and staff respondents revealed that more of the respondents were female (65%) as opposed to the male respondents (35%). This suggests that more females were in the social welfare profession than males and the ministry employs based on merit and availability, the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It revealed that more of the respondents were female (65%) as opposed to the male respondents (35%). This suggests that more females were in the social welfare profession than males and the ministry employs based on merit and availability, the educational qualifications of the staff members. The majority of the participants had a Degree (42%) with the least educational qualification of the participant being Ordinary Level (8%). This section points to the fact that recruitment of personnel into the ministry and institutions is based on professionalism, while in the area of unskilled labor individuals were recruited based on experience and job training, In the staff category of the staff members, the participants were majorly Social welfare officers I (27%) and Senior Administrative Officers (27%), the years of service of the staff members. More of the participants had less than 5 years of service (31%), while those in the 11 to 15 years (28%) had more years of service.

While the demographic information of the children respondents from the various sampled custodial institutions is as follows: the wards are mostly male (56.7%) and female (43.3%). This suggests that males were more in custodial institutions than their female counterparts probably because more male children were involved in juvenile delinquent behavior. In terms of religious preference, a higher percentage of the wards were Christians (60.1%) and the others choose Islam (39.9%). In addition, when the age range of the wards was considered the majority of the wards were between the age of 16 to 20 (37.5%) and 5 to 10 (37.1%). The level of education of the wards in the system was a mostly primary school (47.3%) and secondary (43.5%) this can be attributed to the fact that the age range of the wards mostly falls from 5 to 20. Lastly, a greater number of the wards have spent 3 to 4 years (39.9%) and 5 to 6 years (27.1%) in their homes. This could be a result of abandonment or a lack of regular checks by the government agency. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data. The details are presented below:

Analysis of Research Questions

While this section appraised the performance of the Child Right Law in terms of juvenile welfare in Lagos State custodial homes with key indicators.

Table 2: Totality of performance of the Lagos State Child Right Law (Response from Staff)

Age classification of children in the institution	SA Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	U Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	Mean	Std. Dev .
There ought to be age specification of children for the different juvenile institution in the state.	54 (58.7)	38 (41.3)	-	-	-	4.58	.495
Establishment and maintenance policy of juvenile custodial institution must be gender conscious.	37 (40.2)	51 (55.4)	-	4 (4.3)	-	4.31	.694
Juvenile are not to be kept with adult offenders	65 (70.7)	27 (29.3)	-	-		4.70	.457
There should be age groupings in various hostels and homes.	49 (53.3)	36 (39.1)	3 (3.3)	-	4 (4.3)	4.36	.910
Average Mean						4.48	.639
Programs and wellness of children in the institution							
Health of children in the institution must not deteriorate while under the care of government through in the institution	76 (82.6)	16 (17.4)	-	-	-	4.82	.381
Life of a juvenile must not be threatened while in custody.(Good food, health, education e.t.c)	54 (58.7)	26 (28.3)	3 (3.3)	-	9 (9.8)	4.26	1.20
Scheduled exercise are to be in place for children's mental development	30 (32.6)	59 (64.1)	3 (3.3)	-	-	4.29	.524
Average Mean						4.45	.701
Average Weighted Mean						4.46	.670

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Decision rule: if mean is ≤ 1.49 =very low, 1.5 to 2.49 = low, 2.5 to 3.49 = moderate, 3.5 to 3.9 = high, 4.0 to 5.0 = very high

Table 2 shows that the totality of performance of the Lagos State Child Right Law in terms of care for the juveniles in custody with the use of key indicators was very high. The parameters used to measure the performance of the Lagos state Child rights law were age classification of the children in the institution and programs and wellness of children in the institution. From the table, age classification had a higher mean score (Mean=4.48) and programs and wellness of the children (Mean = 4.45) which suggests that most of the respondents agreed that the performance of the Lagos State Child Right Law was better in terms of age classification of the children. The results of the age classification of the children revealed that the majority of the participants agreed that juvenile was kept with adult offenders (70.7%), there was an age specification of children for the different juvenile institution in the state (58.7%), and that there should be age groupings in various hostels and homes (53.3%).

Concerning programs and wellness of children in the institution, the majority of the staff agreed that the health of the children in the institution hardly deteriorated while under the care of government through in the institution (82.6%) and that the life of a ward was not threatened while in custody (58.7%). The average weighted mean of (Mean = 4.46) falls within the criteria of very high which indicates that the staff agreed that the totality of the performance of the Lagos State Child Right Law in terms of juvenile welfare in Lagos State custodial institutions, with the use of key indicators (feeding, physical and health care, the physical conditions and sanitation of the custodial institutions/facilities in this State) of juvenile in custody was generally very good.

Table 3: Totality of performance of the Lagos State Child Right Law (Response of Wards)

Feeding, physical and health care	SA Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	U Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	Mean	Std. Dev .
Good food is available in the juvenile institutions	128 (27.3)	113 (24.1)	85 (18.1)	82 (17.5)	61 (13)	3.35	1.38
Eating regularly keeps children away from bad behaviour	102 (21.7)	113 (24.1)	101 (21.5)	75 (16)	78 (16.6)	3.18	1.38
Children in the home are physically fit compared to when brought in	107 (22.8)	121 (25.8)	78 (16.6)	78 (16.6)	85 (18.1)	3.21	1.42
Delinquent behavior is not good for the society	99 (21.2)	135 (28.8)	98 (20.9)	64 (13.6)	73 (15.6)	3.26	1.35
The health care team are prompt and friendly	97 (20.7)	132 (28.1)	107 (22.8)	68 (14.5)	65 (13.9)	3.27	1.31
Average Mean						3.25	1.36
Physical conditions and sanitation of the custodial Institutions							
The environment is tidy and conducive for all children	113 (24.1)	143 (30.5)	82 (17.5)	79 (16.8)	52 (11.1)	3.39	1.31
Hostels and beddings are sufficient for all	110 (23.5)	140 (29.9)	88 (18.8)	67 (14.3)	64 (13.6)	3.35	1.34
Sleeping items available and satisfactory	115 (24.5)	138 (29.4)	72 (15.4)	65 (13.9)	79 (16.8)	3.30	1.41
Repairs are done regularly on all spoilt items	94 (20)	126 (26.9)	101 (21.5)	75 (16)	73 (15.6)	3.19	3.24
Toilet and bathing facility are enough for all children	106(2 2.6)	127(2 7.1)	89(19)	69(14. 7)	78(16. 6)	3.24	1.39
Average Mean						3.29	1.73
Average Weighted Mean						3.27	1.54

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Decision rule: if mean is ≤ 1.49 = very low, 1.5 to 2.49 = low, 2.5 to 3.49 = moderate, 3.5 to 3.9 = high, 4.0 to 5.0 = very high

Table 3, the result showed the totality of performance of the Lagos State Child Right Law in terms of care of juveniles in custody with the use of key indicators was high. The parameters used to measure the performance of the Lagos state Child right law was feeding, physical and health care, and the physical conditions and sanitation of the custodial Institutions. From the table, Physical conditions and sanitation of the custodial Institutions (Mean = 3.29) and feeding, physical, and health care had a higher mean score (Mean=3.25) which suggests that most of the wards agreed that the performance of the Lagos State Child Right Law was better in terms of Physical conditions and sanitation of the custodial Institutions. The results of the feeding, physical, and health care revealed that the majority of the participants agreed that the health care team is prompt and friendly(28.1%), delinquent behavior is not good for society (28.8%), eating regularly keeps children away from bad behavior (24.1%), children in the home are physically fit compared to when brought in (25.8%). Concerning the physical conditions and sanitation of the custodial Institutions the wards agreed that hostels and beddings are sufficient for all (29.9%), toilet and bathing facilities are enough for all children (27.1%), and repairs are done regularly on all spoilt items (26.9%).

The average weighted mean of (Mean = 3.27) falls within the criteria of high which indicates that the wards agreed that the totality of the performance of the Lagos State Child Right Law in terms of juvenile welfare in Lagos State custodial institutions, with the use of key indicators (feeding, physical and health care, the physical conditions and sanitation of the custodial institutions/facilities in this State) of juvenile in custody was generally moderate.

This section examined the credibility of the Lagos State Child Right Law as a foundation for the establishment of Lagos State juvenile custodial institution policy?

Table 4: Credibility of the Lagos State Child Right Law

Lagos State Child Welfare Policies	SA Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	U Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Social welfare policies are life support for every state	48 (52.2)	44 (47.8)	-	-	-	4.52	.502
The Lagos state child's right law embody the child welfare policies of the state	69 (75)	20 (21.7)	3 (3.3)	-	-	4.71	.520
The Lagos state child's rights law consolidates all legislations relating to the protection and welfare of the child	56 (60.9)	36 (39.1)	-	-	-	4.60	.490
The child's rights law of 2007 stipulates that the best interest of the child shall be the primary consideration of all.	61 (66.3)	31 (33.7)	-	-	-	4.66	.475

The Lagos state child's rights law stated that every individual, institution and body responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards particularly in the areas of safety, health, welfare, and suitability of their staff and competent supervision	50 (54.3)	39 (42.4)	3 (3.3)	-	-	4.51	.564
Average Mean						4.60	.510

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Decision rule: if mean is ≤ 1.49 =very low, 1.5 to 2.49 = low, 2.5 to 3.49 = moderate, 3.5 to 3.9 = high, 4.0 to 5.0 = very high

Table 4, the result on the Lagos state child welfare policies indicated that most of the staff agreed that social welfare policies are the life support for every state (52.2%). They recognize that the Lagos state child's rights law embodies the child welfare policies of the state (75%). The staff also confirmed that Lagos state child's rights law consolidates all legislation relating to the protection and welfare of the child (60.9%). Furthermore, they agreed that the child's rights law of 2007 stipulates that the best interest of the child shall be the primary consideration of all (66.3%). Lastly, they also concurred that the Lagos State child's rights law stipulates that every individual, institution, and body responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards, particularly in the areas of safety, health, welfare, and suitability of their staff and competent supervision (54.3%). From the results, the responses of the staff of these homes recognize the Lagos State Child Right Law as a credible policy framework to cater to the juvenile in custodial institutions in comparison with universal standards and frameworks. On the whole, this result implied that there was recognition by the staff members of the Lagos State child rights law as a credible policy to cater to juveniles in custodial institutions in compliance with universal standards and frameworks was very high (Mean=4.60).

Discussion of Findings

The research objectives for this study aimed at Prioritizing Juvenile Home Policy and Child Welfare for Future Society of Lagos State, Nigeria, the discussion of findings is as follows:

Objective one: Was to appraise the performance of the Child Right Law in terms of juvenile welfare in Lagos State custodial institutions, with key indicators such as feeding, physical and health care, the physical conditions, and sanitation of the custodial institutions/facilities in this State; The findings from the two groups of respondents (civil servants and the wards) revealed that the totality performance of the Lagos State Child Right Law in terms of juvenile welfare in Lagos State custodial institutions, with the use of key indicators of welfare like feeding, physical and health care, the physical conditions, and sanitation of the custodial institutions/facilities in this State was generally commendable because of the attempt to commitment towards the future generation but at the same time requires more to secure laid down efforts and resources for the future society. Child welfare in modern society has become a critical responsibility of government including the institutionalized juvenile (Shireman,

2015, Mallon & Hess, 2014; Child Welfare Information Gateway 2012; Kohl, Barth, Hazen, & Landsverk, 2005). This is also in line with Charles, Ikoh, Iyamba & Charles (2005) who defined child welfare as a specialized field of practice with a focus on the protection and welfare services by a nation on behalf of its children, including its educational system, medical services, parks, and recreational facilities, even its road and highways and families. According to the words of Blau and Abramovitz 2004, "providing welfare services to children and youth whose parents and/or communities cannot adequately provide or care for is government responsibility". Ajomo and Okagbue, also said that homes are the social control institutions meant to keep and reform children and adolescents both girls and boys whose ages are between five (5) and sixteen (16) who littered streets with no or poor social guidance. Various Treaties, Charters, Acts, and even the Child Right Law of Lagos state specified that the interest and wellness of the child must be the major concern of every child care institution/home whether private or public (UNCRC/CRC, 1989; African Charter, 1990; Child Right Act, 2003; & Lagos State Child Right Law, 2007). A study like this is a process that keeps governments accountable to the commitments they have made within the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC OR CRC) African Charter and is a great opportunity to raise better measures to end child rights abuse and any form of ill-treatment towards the child (Rights and Welfare of the Child: Initial and First Periodic Report, 2006).

Objective two: Examined the credibility of the Lagos State Child Right Law as a foundation for the establishment of Lagos State juvenile custodial institution policy. From the findings, the two groups of respondents (civil servants and the wards) revealed that the civil servants in the ministry of youth and social development and staff of the various juvenile homes in Lagos state show that the Lagos State Child Right Law is recognized as a credible document already in use as a foundation for policy to cater for juvenile in custodial institutions/homes. This lay emphasis on the fact that whatever governments choose to do or not to do is policy and remains a controller which government has planned for direction and practice in certain problem areas. These are the reasons for expected guiding principles and mechanisms in form of policies for the protection of children and youth from violence, abuse, and all form of negativity. Child welfare policy includes legislation, policies, and regional and national structures on the care and living of a minor/child and it is on this same note that the existing Lagos State Child Right Law serves as a reliable framework for the juvenile homes policy formulation and implementation.

Since the adoption of the Child Right Act Of 2003 in Nigeria, the government has revised its national constitutions to explicitly take into account the rights of children and to domesticate laws that will protect children, with specific regard to Nigeria the ratification of the convention was in 2003 (Gilbert, Parton &Skivenes, 2011; Imoh, & Ansell, 2014 and Memzur 2008). Also, the various states of the federation are to domesticate it by generating a prototype for use. The Lagos State government came up with the Lagos State Child Right Law first developed in 2007 and has been undergoing review to date. Sections of the law pointed out the interest of the child as paramount and cannot be handled otherwise outside the stated premises beginning from the (UNCRC) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Nigeria Child Right Act (2003). UNICEF states as well that building a safe environment for children includes the following core components; strengthening government commitment and capacity to fulfill children's rights to protection; promoting the establishment and

enforcement of adequate legislation; addressing harmful attitudes, customs, and practices; encouraging open discussion of child protection issues that includes media and civil society partners; developing children's life skills, knowledge, and participation; building the capacity of families and communities; providing essential services for prevention, recovery, and reintegration, including basic health, education and protection of children; and establishing and implementing on-going and effective monitoring, reporting, and oversight (UNICEF (nd); Blau & Abramovitz, 2010).

Conclusion/Recommendations

Since Lagos State has domesticated child welfare not sidelining institutionalized children like every modern state has adopted this critical responsibility that focuses on response specifically to the needs of children in recognition of the fact that being born human is not a sufficient condition for becoming responsible enough for oneself and society at large. Hence, prioritizing juvenile home policy and child welfare for the future society of Lagos State is satisfactorily in order. Therefore, the study recommends that policy documents should be extracted from the Lagos State child rights law for the operations of social welfare programs, also the stated key indicators remain as checks on the performance of the policy and wholesome reintegration process of released juveniles to avoid relapse.

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