

Analysis of Government Policy on Street Begging in South Eastern States of Nigeria**Inmpey, Joseph Chibuzo & Bernard N. Olewe (Ph.D)***Department of Public Administration**Enugu State University of Science and Technology, (ESUT) Nigeria****Abstract***

The study is titled; Analysis of government policy on street begging in South Eastern States of Nigeria. Descriptive survey research was adopted for the study, which was carried out “ex post facto”. The population for the study comprised of beggars found in various rehabilitation and destitute homes in the south east states of Enugu, Imo, Abia, Anambra and Ebonyi States, totaling 25, 976. A multi stage random sampling method was used in selecting a sample of 2600, comprised of male and female beggars. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two lecturers in the Department of Public Administration, ESUT. The Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistic was used to obtain the reliability index of 0.84, which was considered adequate for the study. Data analysis was aided by SPSS version 16 using frequency distributions, mean scores, pooled mean and standard deviation (SD) while the hypotheses were tested using Z-Test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for interpreting the mean scores was put at mean of 3.0 and above interpreted as agreed while mean scores below 3.0 interpreted as disagreed. For the hypotheses, the decision rule was that when the z- calculated is equal or greater than the z- critical, the null hypothesis will be rejected. Otherwise, it will be accepted. The findings show that there is high prevalence of street begging in South East urban centres especially around market places; church premises; within major streets and road junctions. There are government policies aimed at rehabilitation, empowerment, resettlement, employment generation and outright banning of street begging in some major cities in the South East zone of Nigeria. But these government policies have not had serious positive outcome in ameliorating the high prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria. Thus challenges associated with the menace of street begging still remained phenomenal resulting in criminal activities of all forms. In conclusion the study recommended policy synergy among the governments of the five states in the South East zone in effective rehabilitation, empowerment, resettlement and employment for the poor and disabled street beggars in the area.

Keywords: Analysis, Government, Policy, Street Begging, South Eastern States, Nigeria.

Introduction

Government policy embodies the statements of intention indicating an agreement to a general course of action by the government. It indicates specifically, what the government or an organization proposes to do and thus suggests the values and viewpoints which dominate the government’s or organization’s actions. Policies translate the goals of an organization into selected routes and provide general guidelines that both prescribe and proscribe programmes which in turn

dictate practice and procedures. On the other hand, it is the operation and activities of either private and public organizations or institutions. A policy option made by an individual or private institution is known as private policy while the one by government and its institutions is called public policy (Ozor, 2014). However, the term policy as it is used in this work refers to only the ones made by government and which are as such, regarded as public policies.

Some writers emphasize policy as an action, others see it as choice. Yet, some see it in terms of scope of action (Ikelegbe, 2006). In other words, the way a given scholar conceptualizes a policy depends on the perspective from which the scholar is viewing it and this accounts for the varied definitions of the concept. For instance, in the view of Egonwan (2015) it is a governmental programme of action. Yakubu and Obasi, (2015) posit that a policy refers to patterns of resource allocation represented by projects and programmes designed to respond to perceived public problems or challenges requiring government action for their solution. For Ezeani, (2013) it is the proposed course of action which government intends to implement in respect of a given problem or situation confronting it.

In essence, a policy is course setting action that provides the direction, the guide and the way to achievement of certain goals or objectives desired by government. It is thus indubitable that governments over the years have rolled out various policies and programmes of action aimed at mitigating the impact of poverty and by so doing ameliorating street begging in the South East States and Nigeria in general.

It is tangential from the foregoing; to bring to the fore the fact that, there is apparent mismatch between policy formulation and its implementation with respect to street begging. Thus the next and most crucial stage after policy formulation is its implementation stage. It is, perhaps, for its importance that some scholars refer to policy implementation stage as the hub of policy process. Fundamentally, policy implementation is the process of translating a policy into actions and presumptions into results through various projects and programmes (Okoli and Onah, 2003; Ikelegbe, 2006). Kraft and Furlong (2014) and Ajaegbu and Eze (2015) state that policy implementation actually refers to the process and activities involved in the application, affection and administration of a policy. A variety of activities are involved in policy implementation that may include issuing and enforcing activities, disbursing funds, signing contracts, checking experience and agenda setting, collecting data and analyzing problems, hiring and assigning personnel, setting up committees and commissions, assigning duties and responsibilities and also making interim decisions and so on (Nweke, 2016). Little wonder Wikipedia (2014) defines implementation as the carrying out, execution, or practice of a plan, or method or any design for doing something. Implementation in our context is simply a systematic process of putting into action what has been planned.

The pattern and nature of government policy implementation is the major explanation for the failure or success of any given policy. Nwankwo and Apeh (2013) observe that the implementation of a policy is the most vital phase in the policy process as it is at this stage that the success or failure of a policy is determined. Ikelegbe (2006) and Nweke (2016), in this respect too, note that many policy failures result from ineffective implementation, as it is only effectively implemented policy that solves societal problems; like unemployment, poverty and street begging. This study focuses on street begging with respect to government policy in South East Nigeria.

Though there is hardly any document evidence as to the origin of street begging in Nigeria, but the fact remains that begging is an age-long social and economic phenomenon, which is captured biblically. The Bible alluded to the rich man and the beggar, the beggars at the beautiful gate, and other instances. In the same light, the Holy Koran also gives credence to giving of alms to the poor. There are not any current techniques for begging which have not been used for hundreds of years or are not based on older techniques that are adapted to modern begging behaviours (John, 2016:54).

Undoubtedly, begging is a problematic universal phenomenon, which has generated issues both in developed and developing countries. It is prevalent and least attended to in developing countries (Adedibu, 2015:23). It is a developmental cum social problem that is prevalent in most urban areas of any country. The situation in Nigeria is appreciated with different categories of beggars found at motor parks, religious worship centres, markets, road junctions, venue of ceremonies and worst still on the campuses (Jelili, 2006:16). Characteristics of street beggars in Nigeria are diverse. Some are called Almajiris, others aged and disabled, ranging from the blind to the deaf and dumb seeking means of livelihood. They have no skill for self-employment or for employment by companies.

The major thrust of this work is that begging has become a problematic global phenomenon which threatens the environmental, economic and social survival of humanity. The problem of begging has arrested the attentions of governments of various countries, particularly the advanced countries of the world (Ogunkan, 2009:32). For instance, in Canada, the Province of Ontario introduced its Safe Street Act in 1999 to restrict specific kinds of begging especially certain narrowly defined cases of aggressive or abusive begging (Wikipedia, 2017:3). In United Kingdom, begging has been restricted in British Columbia and in London underground system while it has been banned in some larger cities of United States such as Chicago, Illinois, Santa Cruz CA, and San Francisco CA. In most, if not all US jurisdictions beggars can be arrested and jailed under vagrancy law (Wikipedia, 2017:3).

In Nigeria, Lagos State Government also made efforts to tackle the problem of begging by building rehabilitation centres to cater for beggars (Okoli, 2009:21). However, these governmental efforts to curb the menace of begging have not been effective and rarely dissuade the beggars and the constitutionality of bans on begging has not been fully established by case law (Wikipedia, 2017:4).

Scholars have attributed the problem of begging to a number of factors such as poverty (Adedibu, 1989:34; NCFWD, 2001:11; Jelili, 2006:33) religion (Hanchao, 1999:24) physical disability (Fabregas, 1971:61; Adedibu, 1989:34; Jelili, 2006:32) and culture (Adedibu, 1989:34, Jelili, 2006:33). However, of all those identified factors, poverty and physical disability are most visible in South East Nigeria (Jelili, 2006:35). For instance, an estimate by World Bank indicates that over 45% of the country's population lives below poverty level while about two thirds (2/3) of this group are extremely poor. Therefore, in order to meet their basic needs, some of the poverty stricken people resort to begging as a major means of livelihood. Also from empirical evidences,

physically disabled beggars constitute the bulk of identified beggars in South East Nigeria (Jelili, 2006:32; Ogunkan, 2009:22).

However, it is imperative to state that the increasing incidences of street begging and beggars in Nigerian cities is not only due to poverty and physical disability but also due to the fact that majority of the beggars are satisfied with the “job” (Jelili, 2006:34). Some have apparently become very rich from begging that they have acquired buses and houses, yet they always appear wretched so as to draw sympathy from the general public (KSRB, 1997:32). The Presence of fake beggars and begging criminals has not helped the situation and may be dangerous to the society.

All in all, the greatest problem in Nigeria and South-Eastern States in particular is not with policy making but with policy implementation. Unsuccessful implementation of policies and programmes is because of the communication process, the capacity problem and dispositional conflicts. Accordingly, effective implementation requires that implementers, incompatible requirements and inconsistencies be avoided; that successful implementation is also a function of the implementing organization’s capacity to do what it is expected to do. The ability to implement policies effectively may be affected by such factors as: incompetent and over-worked staff, inadequate political support and financial resources as well as impossible time frame (Ogbonnaya, 2013). In essence, if a policy is effectively implemented, the designed and planned development goals and objectives are realized. This policy and implementation nexus has far reaching effects on street begging in South Eastern Nigerian in particular and Nigeria as a whole.

In the light of the above, this study analysed government policy on street begging in the South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Despite the danger posed by begging to the socioeconomic development of Nigerian urban centres in South East Nigeria like Owerri, Umuahia, Aba, Enugu, Abakaliki, Onitsha and Awka, it is unfortunate that much research works have not been directed towards assessing government policy on street begging in South East Nigerian cities. This is the gap sought to be filled by this study and therefore defines its focus.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria and South East in particular, the government is yet to take far reaching practical measures to put in place relevant policies that can mitigate the prevailing economic hardship, which presently sustains begging behaviour among various classes of individuals. The issue of street begging in major cities is therefore, worrisome to many, especially in Owerri, Onitsha, Enugu, Abakaliki, Awka and Aba, which are the main cities found in South East Nigeria. It has become a common phenomenon for beggars to eke out a living on account of one physical disability or the other. Some use babies to attract sympathy while others pretend to be stranded and need help. The decline in the economy, gradual disintegration of the extended family system, unemployment, lack of state provision of social security for disabled, unemployed and the elderly as well as rural-urban migration all contributed to the noticeable decline in the level of care provided by the government and family in recent times. The situation in South East is appreciated with different categories of beggars found in rehabilitation centres, destitute homes and at motor parks, religious worship centres, markets, road junctions, bank gates, and venue of ceremonies; not excluding school

campuses. This embarrassing situation is enough to scare away foreign investors and tourists. Apart from this, it does not project Nigeria in good light as a society that cares for its citizens.

Against the backdrop of the above, however, there is an urgent need to find solutions to this problem. It is public expectation that government should put measures in place not just by rolling out policies and programmes but more importantly ensuring the implementation of such policies for the purpose of preventing and ameliorating the menace of street begging in South East Nigeria. An analysis of government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria is an imperative this study seeks to realize. In the light of the above, this study seeks answers to the following questions; what is the level of prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria? What are the government policies relating to street begging in South East Nigeria? What is the effect of government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria? Lastly what are the problems associated with menace of street begging in South East Nigeria?

Goal and Objectives of the Study

This study investigated the effect government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria. To achieve this goal, the study shall pursue the under-listed objectives:

- a) To ascertain the level of prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria;
- b) To identify major government policies relating to street begging in South East Nigeria;
- c) To assess the outcome of government policy on street begging South East Nigeria;
- d) To identify challenges associated with the menace of street begging in South East Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the under-listed research questions;

- a) What is the level of prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria?
- b) What are the major government policies relating to street begging in South East Nigeria?
- c) What are the outcomes of government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria?
- d) What are the challenges associated with the menace of street begging in South East Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated as guide to the study:

- H₀₁:** There is high prevalence level of street begging in South East, Nigeria.
H₀₂: There are major government policies relating to street begging in South East, Nigeria.
H₀₃: There are positive outcomes of government policy on street begging in South East, Nigeria.
H₀₄: There are challenges associated with the menace of street begging in South East, Nigeria

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design by ex post facto. The five states of the South East formed the area of study. They are namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. Precisely the study focused on the major cities such as Umuahia, Aba, Owerri, Orlu. Okigwe, Awka, Onitsha, Nnewi, Otuocha, Ogidi, Enugu, Agbani, Awgu, Nsukka, Afipko and Abakaliki. The population for the study comprised of 25, 976 beggars and destitute found in different rehabilitation and destitute homes across the various cities of the south east states. Further, an approximation of 10 percent of the entire study population was used for the study totaling two thousand six hundred (2,600) drawn from among beggars and destitute found in the various rehab homes visited using multi-stage random sampling techniques across the five (5) states in South-Eastern Nigeria. The breakdown of the sample distribution per state was 520 beggars.

The instrument employed in collecting data was questionnaire. The instrument was structured to elicit relevant answers to the research questions earlier posed in the study. The instrument was subjected to face validation; a process which was carried out with the help of two lecturers in the Department of Public Administration ESUT, Enugu. In this process the items were scrutinized with intent to ascertaining the adequacy of coverage of the scope of the study with respect to the purpose/objectives, the research questions as well as the hypotheses formulated in the study, and by so doing to confirm the instrument was able to measure what the study set out to measure.

In order to ascertain the reliability of the instruments for the study, a test re-test method of two weeks interval was conducted using thirty (30) beggars who are not part of the parent population of the study. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistic was used to obtain the reliability. A reliability index of 0.84 was obtained which was considered adequate for the study. The twenty (20) structured questionnaire items were based on five point scale in which respondents were requested to indicate their preference among the following options; Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Undecided (UND).

Data analysis was aided by SPSS version 16 using frequency distributions, mean scores, pooled mean and standard deviation (SD) while the hypotheses were tested using Z-Test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for interpreting the mean scores was stated thus, any item with mean of 3.0 and above was interpreted as agreed while mean scores below 3.0 was interpreted as disagreed. For the hypotheses, the decision rule is that when the z- calculated is equal or greater than the z- critical, the null hypothesis will be rejected. Otherwise, it will not be rejected.

Results

The result of the data gathered from the questionnaire is presented in four separate tables in line with the research questions.

Research Question One: What is the level of prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Scores, Standard Deviation and Pooled Mean of Respondents on level of prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria

S / N	Items	SA (5)	A (4)	DA (3)	SD (2)	UND (1)	$\sum x$	\bar{x}	SD
1	Street beggars are frequently found around market locations.	600	800	900	108	-	6708	3.79	0.89
2	Street beggars are commonly found around church premises.	604	803	700	301	-	6526	3.71	0.93
3	There is usually high presence of street beggars around major street junctions.	580	606	900	322	-	6260	3.60	0.99
4	Street begging is the major source of livelihood for most disabled and unemployed persons.	601	703	800	299	-	6412	3.67	0.99
5	Most street beggars do not possess any skills that can earn them better income.	509	800	600	418	-	6378	3.65	0.89
							18.42	4.69	
							5	5	
							= 3.684	= 0.938	

Table 1 presents the results of the questionnaire items 1 to 5 which answered research question one. It shows the mean ratings of respondents on the prevalence of street begging in Nigerian urban cities. The summary of the result indicates a grand mean of 3.68 and standard deviation at 0.93. Therefore, going by our interpretation which states thus, “any item with mean of 3.0 and above was interpreted as accepted while mean scores below 3.0 interpreted as rejected”; the result hereby shows that there is high prevalence of street begging in Nigerian urban centres in South East States.

Research Question Two: What are the major government policies relating to street begging in South East Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Scores, Standard Deviation and Pooled Mean of Respondents on major government policies relating to street begging in South East Nigeria

S/ N	Items	SA (5)	A (4)	D (3)	SD (2)	UND (1)	$\sum X$	\bar{X}	SD
6	Government outright ban on street begging in some major cities of South East Nigeria will reduce street begging.	601	800	799	202	6	6610	3.75	0.93
7	Governments in the zone have established rehabilitation centres to make street beggars self reliant.	581	759	900	168	-	6569	3.73	0.91
8	The government has put in place several social welfare packages for the disabled and beggars.	514	801	900	190	3	5359	3.23	1.35
9	The government has made employments available to beggars to discourage street begging.	573	796	800	239	-	6519	3.71	0.94
10	The government sees street beggars as social nuisance.	600	800	700	306	2	6508	3.70	0.98
							18.12	5.11	
							5	5	
							= 3.624	= 1.03	

Table 2 presents the results of data from questionnaire items 6 to 10 which answered research question two. It presents the mean ratings of respondents on the major socio-economic causative factors of street begging in Enugu urban. The summary of the result indicates a grand mean of 3.62 and standard deviation at 1.03. Going by our interpretation as established for the study; “any item with mean of 3.0 and above was interpreted as accepted while mean scores below 3.0 were interpreted as rejected”; the results therefore show that there are some government policies intended to ameliorating street begging in South East Nigeria.

Research Question Three: What are the outcomes of government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria?

Table 3 Mean Scores, Standard Deviation and Pooled Mean of Respondents on the outcomes of government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria

S/ N	Items	SA (5)	A (4)	D (3)	SD (2)	UND (1)	$\sum x$	\bar{x}	SD
11	Government policies relating to street begging are not effectively implemented.	578	759	932	139	-	6592	3.74	0.86
12	Despite government policies there is still high incidence of street begging in South East.	600	718	1016	74	-	6660	3.77	0.89
13	There is no unified government policy on street begging in South East zone of Nigeria.	600	800	900	100	8	6708	3.79	0.87
14	Government policies on street begging have not yielded the required results in the South East Nigeria.	516	799	1018	075	-	6572	3.73	0.90
15	The expected benefits of government policies relating to street begging are yet to be felt by the beggars.	596	719	937	156	-	6571	3.73	0.85
							18.76	4.37	
							5	5	
							= 3.75	= 0.87	

Table 3 presents the result of data collected on questionnaire items 11 to 15 which answered research question three. It presents the mean score of respondents on the effects of government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria. The summary of the result indicates a pooled mean of 3.75 and standard deviation at 0.87. Relying on our interpretation as established for the study; “any item with mean of 3.0 and above was interpreted as accepted while mean scores below 3.0 were interpreted as rejected”; the result therefore indicates that government policy on street begging has not impacted meaningfully in ameliorating the prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria.

Research Question Four: What are the challenges associated with the menaces of street begging in South East Nigeria?

Table 4 Mean Scores, Standard Deviation and Pooled Mean of Respondents on the challenges associated with the menace of street begging in South East Nigeria

S/ N	Items	SA (5)	A (4)	D (3)	SD (2)	UN D (1)	$\sum X$	\bar{X}	SD
16	Street begging encourages criminal activities of all forms	515	802	703	388	-	6260	3.60	1.00
17	Street begging is an indictment on the quality of governance in many societies.	600	700	900	200	8	6508	3.70	0.94
18	Street begging robs the country of the economic contributions of the beggars to the GDP.	490	802	1000	106	10	6482	3.69	0.15
19	Street begging is a clear sign of underdevelopment.	567	709	800	332	-	6327	3.63	0.99
20	Street begging is a manifestation of social injustice.	600	799	818	191	-	6624	3.75	0.87
							18.37	3.95	
							5	5	
							= 3.67	= 0.79	

Table 4 showcases the result of data collected on questionnaire items 15 to 20 which answered research question four. It presents the mean ratings of respondents on the problems associated with street begging in South East Nigeria. The summary of the result indicates a pooled mean of 3.67 and standard deviation at 0.79. Relying on our interpretation as established for the study; “any item with mean of 3.0 and above was interpreted as accepted while mean scores below 3.0 were interpreted as rejected”; the result therefore indicates that street begging has enormous negative impact on the development of South East Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

In this paper, four hypotheses were formulated. In this section, we present the result of test of hypotheses to ascertain their level of significance for the study. Z-test statistic is used.

Hypothesis One: There is high prevalence level of street begging in South East, Nigeria.

Table 5: Z-Test Statistic Analysis on Male and Female Responses regarding the prevalence level of street begging in South East Nigeria

Source of Variation	N	\bar{X}	Variance	SD	DF	z-cal	z-crit	Level of significance
Male	1047	2.75	0.5625	0.75				
Female	1361	2.63	0.6561	0.81	2407	3.76	1.96	S

S= significant

Z=3.76 df=2407, $p \leq 0.05$

Result H_{01} = Rejected

Table 5 shows the summary of Z-Test statistic of the level of prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria. The result shows that the z-cal (3.76) is greater than the z-critical (1.96). Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected and alternative accepted which states that there is a significant difference between male and female beggars' responses regarding level of prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria..

Hypothesis Two: There are major government policies relating to street begging in South East, Nigeria.

Table 6: Z-Test Statistical Analysis on Male and Female beggars' Responses regarding major government policies relating to street begging in South East Nigeria

Source of Variation	N	\bar{X}	Variance	SD	DF	z-cal	z-crit	Level of significance
Male	1047	2.62	0.7569	0.87				
Female	1361	2.76	0.8464	0.92	2407	3.78	1.96	S

S= significant

Z=3.78, df=2407, $p \leq 0.05$

Result H_{02} = Rejected

Table 6 shows the summary of Z-Test statistic on major government policies relating to street begging in South East Nigeria. The result shows that the z-cal (3.78) is greater than the z-critical (1.96). Hence the null hypothesis is therefore rejected and alternative accept which states that there is a significance difference between male and female beggars responses regarding major government policies relating to street begging in South East Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three: There are outcomes of government policy on street begging in South East, Nigeria.

Table 7: Z-Test Statistic Analysis on Male and Female beggars' Responses regarding the outcomes of government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria

Source of Variation	N	\bar{X}	Variance	SD	DF	z-cal	z-crit	Level of significance
Male	1047	2.78	0.8649	0.93				
Female	1361	2.72	0.8281	0.91	2407	1.59	1.96	Ns

NS= Not significant

Z=1.59, DF=2407, $p \leq 0.05$

Result Ho₃= Accepted

Table 7 shows the summary of Z-Test statistic of the outcomes of government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria. The result shows that the z-cal (1.59) is less than the z-critical (1.96). Hence the null hypotheses is therefore accepted which states that there is no significance difference between male and female beggars' responses regarding the outcomes of government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria.

Hypotheses Four

Ho₄: There are challenges associated with the menace of street begging in South East, Nigeria

Table 8: Z-Test Statistic Analysis on Male and Female beggars responses regarding the challenges associated with the menace of street begging in South East, Nigeria

Source of Variation	N	\bar{X}	Variance	SD	DF	z-cal	z-crit	Level of significance
Male	1047	2.71	0.81	0.90				
Female	1361	2.65	0.7744	0.88	2407	1.78	1.96	NS

NS= significant

Z=1.78, df=2407, $p \leq 0.05$

Result H_{04} = Accepted

Table 8 shows the summary of Z-Test statistic of male and female beggars responses regarding the challenges associated with the menace of street begging in South East, Nigeria. The result shows that z-cal (1.78) is less than z-critical (1.98). Hence the null hypotheses is therefore accepted which states that there is no significance difference between male and female beggars responses regarding the challenges associated with the menace of street begging in South East Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study set out to analyse government policy on street begging in South East Nigeria. Four objectives, four research questions and four statements of hypotheses were posed to guide the study. Thus in accordance with data presented above; Table 1 presented the results of the questionnaire items 1 to 5 which answered research question one. It shows the mean score of respondents on the prevalence of street begging in South East Nigerian urban centres. The summary of the result indicates a grand mean of 3.68 and standard deviation at 0.93. Therefore, going by our interpretation which states thus, “any item with mean of 3.0 and above was interpreted as accepted while mean scores below 3.0 were interpreted as rejected; the result hereby shows that there is high prevalence of street begging in Nigerian urban cities especially in Enugu State.

The above finding is in agreement with Abdul et al (2014), which also identified the prevalence of street begging but precisely in Ilorin Kwara State. Both studies confirmed that street begging is a common phenomenon in laces. There are other studies that have as well unraveled the prevalence of street begging as a major socio-economic problem in urban centres. In this respect reference should be made to Bukoye (2015); Adeniran (2016); Harry (2014) and Davies (2015). These studies assessed the causes, incidence and prevalence of street begging and made far reaching findings which align with the present study.

Table 2 presented the results of data from questionnaire items 6 to 10 which answered research question two. It presents the mean score of respondents on the major government policies relating

to street begging in South East Nigeria. The summary of the result indicates a grand mean of 3.62 and standard deviation at 1.03. Going by our interpretation as established for the study; “any item with mean of 3.0 and above was interpreted as accepted while mean scores below 3.0 were interpreted as rejected”; the results therefore show that there are some government policies aimed at ameliorating street begging in South East Nigeria. Aligning with the findings of the study a number of other studies have equally investigated government policies on street begging. These studies agree that government has put in place policies to reduce poverty, unemployment and also street begging (Harry, 2016; Martins, 2014 and Adeniran, 2016).

Furthermore, table 3 showcased the result of data collected on questionnaire items 11 to 15 which answered research question three. It presents the mean score of respondents on the outcome of government policy on Street begging in South East Nigeria. The summary of the result indicates a grand mean of 3.75 and standard deviation at 0.87. Relying on our interpretation as established for the study; “any item with mean of 3.0 and above was interpreted as accepted while mean scores below 3.0 were interpreted as rejected”; the result therefore indicates that government policy has had far reaching impact on street begging in South East Nigeria. The finding of the study with respect to outcome of government policy on street begging differs from that of Kendrix (2015) who identified negative outcomes of government policy on the welfare of the poor and beggars in particular. However, such studies as Garvin (2016); Nandus (2015) and Falola (2014) all are in agreement with the present study with respect of government efforts at mitigating street begging through a number of policy measures and programmes of government. These measures as observed by these studies include empowerment of disabled persons,

Table 4 presented the outcome of data elicited on questionnaire items 16 to 20 which were in response to research question four. It presents the mean scores of respondents on the challenges associated with the menace of street begging in South East Nigeria. The summary of the result indicates a grand mean of 3.67 and standard deviation at 0.79. Therefore, based on our interpretation as established for the study; “any item with mean of 3.0 and above was interpreted as accepted while mean scores below 3.0 were interpreted major urban locations such as markets, churches, major street junctions, schools and other public places. Therefore the findings indicate that the persistent prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria constitutes serious social, economic and developmental threat.

Relying upon evidences from the result of the study, it must be stated that street begging paints negative picture of government social policies and responsibilities to the under-privileged population. It is also in view of the above that in the recent times, increasing academic attention has been directed to the menace of begging, the findings of which corroborate the current study (Adedibu, 1989; Okoli, 1993; Hanchao, 1999; Smith, 2005; Jelili, 2006; Ogunkan, 2009). The major thrust of these works is that begging has become a global phenomenon which threatens the environmental, economic and social survival of humanity. Although, the menace of begging is a worldwide phenomenon, it is more pronounced in the third world countries (Adedibu, 1989).

Summary of Findings

The following findings were made by the study:

- a) There is high prevalence of street begging in South East urban centres more especially around market places; church premises; within major streets and road junctions; and street begging has become a major source of livelihood for some disabled and unemployed persons.
- b) There are a number of government policies relating to street begging. These are aimed at rehabilitation, empowerment, resettlement, employment generation and outright banning of street begging in major cities in the South East zone of Nigeria.
- c) Existing Government policies have not yielded the required outcome in ameliorating the high prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria. Such policies are far from been implementation and thus hardly helps in mitigating the menace of street begging.
- d) The menace of street begging still remains phenomenal; accompanied by numerous challenges such as encouraging criminal activities of all forms; Street begging is an indictment on the quality of governance in many societies; street begging robs the country of the economic contributions of the beggars to the GDP.

Conclusion

A number of findings were made, which confirmed that there is high prevalence of street begging in South East Nigerian urban centres and street begging has become a major source of livelihood for some orphans, destitute, disabled and unemployed persons. The study further found that there are a number of government policies relating to begging. These policies focus on rehabilitation, empowerment, resettlement, employment generation and outright banning of street begging in some major cities in the South East zone of Nigeria. These policies are intended to reduce poverty, but are far from realizing their objectives.

Following from the above, it was equally ascertained based on available data that government policies have not yielded the required outcome in ameliorating the high prevalence of street begging in South East Nigeria. This was due to poor and inconsistent implementation of such policies. This accounts for the apparent rise in the prevalence of street begging in the study area despite government policies. Consequently, the menace of street begging still remains highly phenomenal; with it associated challenges such as encouraging criminal activities of all forms; street begging is an indictment on the quality of governance in the study area; street begging robs the country of the economic contributions of the beggars to the GDP. Street begging further perpetuates homelessness, poverty, unemployment and family rejection.

In conclusion therefore, it is noteworthy that it is no longer in doubt that street begging remains a socio-economic and developmental challenge facing society today. There is need to find solution to this street begging phenomenon. In the submission of this researcher government alone cannot achieve this. It therefore, requires the commitment and cooperation of individuals, governments at all levels, religious organizations, civil society groups and non-governmental organizations to ameliorate the high prevalence and menace of street begging in South East Nigeria and Nigeria as a whole. The recommendations below will be value added pursuant to the above imperative.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- a) The governments of the five South Eastern States need to synergize in working out measures aimed at breaking the cycle of high prevalence of street begging in the area. This could be in the form of social security for some disabled and unemployed persons.
- b) There is need for the government of these states to work out a uniform policy on street begging which will be effectively implanted to arrest cases of beggars migrating from one state to another within the geo-political zone. Emphasis should be on rehabilitation, empowerment, resettlement and gainful employment for those who denounce street begging.
- c) There should be synergy among governments across levels and in collaboration with religious groups, civil society organizations, philanthropic individuals, and corporate organizations; in the effort to ameliorate the challenges associated with the menace of street begging.

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