

## EFFECTIVENESS OF RADIO PROGRAMMES IN CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD ABUSE IN IMO STATE

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**ABSTRACT:** The study was on the effectiveness of radio programmes on the campaign against child abuse in Imo State. Child abuse has become one of the social maladies plaguing the global society in varying degrees particularly in Nigeria. Despite all the provisions of extant laws in the country, many Nigerian children are still subjected to physical and mental violence, neglect and maltreatment. The objectives of this research among others were to identify the extent to which Imo State residents are aware of child abuse through Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme; identify the extent to which exposure to Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme improve the knowledge of Imo State residents in the campaign against child abuse; and determine the effectiveness of Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme in influencing the behaviour residents of Imo State residents’ behaviour on issues of child abuse. The study was anchored on agenda setting and social responsibility theories. Survey research method was used for this study. The sample size was 385, statistically determined using Australian online calculator. Multi-stage sampling technique was used based on the three senatorial zones and 27 Local Government Areas of the State. The findings reveal that the extent to which Imo State residents were aware of child abuse through Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme is moderate at 40%; the extent which exposure to Darling 107.3 FM “The consequence” programme improved the knowledge of Imo State residents in the campaign against child abuse is moderate and Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme is effective in influencing Imo State residents’ behaviour on issues of child abuse. The study therefore, recommends that there is need for the persistent use of radio to report issues of public importance like child abuse in other to improve people’s level of awareness and knowledge on child abuse related issues

**Keywords:** Child Abuse, Radio Programmes, Campaign, Imo State

### I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Children are regarded as precious gifts from God, leaders of tomorrow, man’s ticket of continuity on earth; yet, these same children are subjected to different forms of abuse and neglect. Perhaps, it is in recognition of this fact that the United Nations in 1979 designated that year as the ‘international year of the child’ and went ahead to develop a list of children’s rights. Among the rights as enunciated by the United Nations are that every child is entitled to the right to love and understanding; adequate food and health; free education, play, an identity and special attention of the handicapped regardless of colour, sex, religion and nation or social origin (Nwokedi, 2016).

Unfortunately, according to the United Nations, many people are not aware of the existence of these rights. This is why child abuse is rampant in many countries of the world including Nigeria today. Young (2001) in Nwokedi (2016) observe that, “child abuse and neglect are an integral part of the modern world including African society and Nigeria in particular. Corporal punishment is widely given as a result of disobedience in any child. These include caning and in some communities in Nigeria, painful punishment such as rubbing pepper into the genital region is practiced”. According to Akinyemi (2013, p.1) child abuse, “is any act of misuse of a child in any form, it is situation where a child is not being provided the much needed necessities of life, where a child is maltreated physically, sexually or emotionally and this is detrimental to the future growth and development of such a child”.

The effects of child abuse may be anxiety, agitation, guilt feelings, neurotic disorders and the society is also affected by this menace, because most of these young derelicts graduate to become armed robbers and kidnappers of tomorrow. Most dare-devil criminals we have around us today were young delinquents of yesterday. It is a cycle, and will continue unbroken until government civil society groups, parents, school and religious institutions hold the bull by the horns to curb this untold act in our society (Akinyemi 2013). As the

impact of child abuse negatively affects the child, so does it also negatively affect nation-building. Nigerian children are the leaders of tomorrow and the quality of tomorrow's leaders is dependent on the quality of education and social support given to them today. Children are man's ticket of continuity on earth and when wantonly abused, constitute the most destructive element of nation-building, because it destroys the roots of the child's existence and future.

It is believed that the mass media have always been the major channel through which these programmes are made popular to the people in the country. The mass media, no doubt, is potent in the spread of innovations and mobilization of the people for a particular course, of nation benefit. It means that the media can be a potent tool in the mobilization and education of the people, on the need to participate in the actualization of the campaign against child abuse (Anorue, Obayi & Onyebuchi, 2011). Olayiwola (1991:33) cited in (Anorue, Obayi & Onyebuchi, 2012) sums it up when he notes that, "some kinds of communication on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kind of people under some kinds of conditions (through some kinds of channel) "have some kind of effect". The media, in this case the broadcast media (radio and television), in performance of their various duties in the society, have not been left out in the efforts at eliminating child abuse in the country. The broadcast media by their very nature are influential particularly in issues of creating awareness, mass mobilization and sensitization, influencing public opinion and calling attention to pressing socio-cultural issues in the society. Broadcasting is the primary means by which information and entertainment are delivered to the public in virtually every nation around the world (Nwokedi, 2016). Talking about the influence of broadcasting in the society, Adaba (1997) cited in Emakpor (2008, p.5) avers that "no other medium can deliver as large and instantaneous an audience to politicians or government as broadcasting can. Secondly, rightly or wrongly, the belief persists all over the world that broadcasting is an eminently persuasive medium, omnipresent in people's homes, work places, even in transit. It is akin to a second skin through which most people stay in touch with their immediate environment and the world at large".

The radio is particularly popular in most rural areas that constitute about 65 percent of the country. Radio is arguably the most popular medium of mass communication because of its unique characteristics. Not only that is cheap to acquire and simple to operate, its beauty mostly lies in its ability to penetrate remote, inaccessible areas and to transcend linguistic and literacy barriers. This may explain why most people: traders, civil servants, farmers as well as the nomadic Fulani herdsmen have a radio set within reach in their homes and places of work. With their radio sets, they can access information on different subject matters within their immediate and distant environments. The miniaturized radio sets with multiple band receivers are at the beck and call of most information-hungry people of the world today (Ekwueme, 2012).

In line with the above functions, the broadcast media carry news stories, documentaries, drama programmes, carry out investigative reports and as well launch sporadic mass media education and prevention campaigns against child abuse in Imo State, Nigeria. For instance, Darling 107.3 FM, Owerri, has a programme titled "The Consequence". The programme is anchored by Paul Emoghene (a.k.a, Paul the Magician), time 9am-10am, every Friday. It is through this programme that Child Protection Network carry out their campaign against child abuse. The aim of this programme is to ensure that children are free from all forms of child abuse. This campaign usually endeavors to broaden the masses' knowledge of child's rights and child's neglect, in order to influence their attitudes towards children, and to change behaviours that contribute to, or precipitate, the problems of child abuse and neglect in the Imo State. Thus, this study sets out to evaluate the effectiveness of these broadcast media efforts at combating child abuse in the Imo State Nigeria.

Specifically, this study sets out to answer the following research question:

1. To what extent are Imo State residents aware of child abuse through Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme?
2. What extent do exposure to Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme improve the knowledge of Imo State residents in the campaign against child abuse?
3. What is the perception of Imo State residents on Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme on child abuse?
4. What is the effectiveness of Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme in influencing the behaviour of Imo State residents' behaviour on issues of child abuse?

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Who is a Child?

A child is a young human being who is not yet an adult, a person who is strongly influenced by the ideas and attitudes of a particular time. One significance message from the above definition, which also clearly supports our discourse in this paper, is that "a child is one susceptible to environmental influences either by the state of affairs or the individual's around him". This susceptibility of a child makes it fundamental that a child's welfare is closely monitored to avoid exploitation of all sorts. It was for this reason that the United Nations'

Declaration on the Rights of the Child was made on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1989 for the primary purpose of ensuring child's rights in society and thereby ensuring its survival, development and overall well-being (Anibueze, 2013).

Gove (2002, p. 388) defines a child as a recently born human being or a young person of either sex between infancy and youth. Wesley (1993) cited in Oyero (2009, p. 13) made clarification on different categories of a child. A very young child under the age of about 18 months is a baby or (more formally) an infant. A child who has just learned to walk is a toddler. A child up to the age of 9 or 10 is sometimes a little girl or little boy; and a girl or a boy can be anyone up to the age of about 20. However, someone aged between 13 and 19 may prefer to be called a teenager or a young woman or young man.

According to Article 2 of Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA), enacted in Eastern, Western and Northern regions of Nigeria, a "child" means (a) person under the age of fourteen, while 'young person' means a person who has attained the age of fourteen years and is under the age of seventeen years" (Jacomy & Stevens, 2004, p. 9). In the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is every human being below the age of eighteen years. The general conception of a child then seems to limit it below 18 years of age.

### Child Abuse: An Overview

The concept of child abuse has no specific definition as it varies from individuals to ethnic, religious and professional bodies. The practice of child abuse has manifested in all socio-economic classes, religion, ethnic and cultural groups. Child abuse is not a new social problem in history. There is a considerable evidence to show that prior to the European industrial revolution and certainly during the period, there had been systematic abuse of children for both economic and ideological reasons. Since then, attempts have been made to seek an explanation to the problem and important ways of systematically controlling and preventing it as well as treating the abused child. Despite the attempts and the considerable attention, the problem still remains in recent years, a largely neglected policy area, one in which it has been not possible to obtain any widespread understanding or agreement as to the steps that can be taken to combat it, (Carballo, 1995) cited in Oyero (2009, 18). He further posits that, child abuse is generally defined as 'any act of commission or in the case of neglect, omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical, developmental and emotional wellbeing'. Child abuse encompasses physical, psychological and sexual abuse and neglect.

Child abuse simply means the mal-treatment of a child by an adult person that harms or endangers that child or young person's physical or emotional health, development or well being (Queensland Government, 2017). Child abuse is broadly defined in many states as any type of cruelty inflicted upon a child, mental abuse, physical harm, neglect, and sexual abuse or exploitation. A child who has been abused or neglected may experience a range of problems, such as relationship difficulties, lack of trust of adults, emotional outbursts (or retreat), low performance at school, depression, anxiety, and anger (Criminal, 2018). Violence, abuse and exploitation of children, physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children have come to be recognized as crimes against children. Child abuse have a devastating consequence on children's development and societies (OAK Foundation, 2014).

Child abuse is the physical, sexual or emotional maltreatment or negligence of a child or children. It could be any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child. Child abuse includes: assaulting a child or thrusting any other form of deliberate injury to a child; abuse a child sexually or allowing a child to be sexually abused; bullying by another child; a labor practice that takes advantage of a child; or exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child emotionally or psychologically (YEDI, 2015). Disclosure" occurs when a child or youth tells you or lets you know through a means that she or he has been, or is being abused. Disclosure can be direct, indirect, or a third-party disclosure. Children disclose abuse probably because they seek solution on how to stop the abuse to stop and/or they are ready to take control in order to change their situation (YEDI, 2015)

### III. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

**Egbo (2014)** evaluated Newspaper Coverage of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children in Selected Nigerian Newspaper. The study aimed at ascertaining if Nigerian newspaper give prominence to sexual violence stories; determining how often newspaper report sexual violence issues; ascertaining whether newspaper report sexual violence more as features than as straight news, editorial or letters to the editors. Through content analysis, the researcher found that Nigerian newspapers do not give prominence to sexual violence stories. This they have done by not placing them on the front pages, newspapers do not frequently report sexual violence, the selected newspaper do not amplify utilize features in presenting sexual violence stories. The researcher recommended that women organizations should set up newspaper which would be their mouth piece against sexual violence.

Furthermore, **Nwankwo (2011)** explored Nigerian Journalist's Coverage of Crime Stories. The study sought to find out how Nigerian journalists cover crime related stories in Nigeria and whether there is low or high coverage of crime stories by the Nigerian media and find out the crime stories that are given more

prominence than others as well as those crime related stories that are given low coverage by the Nigerian media. Content analysis research approach was used for this study. The researcher found that the Nigerian journalists give adequate coverage to crime stories. The work, however, found out that one of the most covered and reported crime stories in the Nigerian media in armed robbery while some others like rape and kidnapping are given low coverage. The rape cases, even when reported by the Nigerian media, are denied prominence as they are buried inside the newspaper pages instead of at the front or back pages.

Also, Olube (2015) tried to find out the causes of child labor and women trafficking; ascertain whether the press played any role in stopping child labor and women trafficking and identify the roles of the press in child labor and women trafficking. Through a Content analysis of *The Champion*, *The Guardian*, *The Vanguard* and *The Sunday Punch* newspapers, it was revealed that: the causes of child trafficking include greed, illiteracy, poverty, ignorance among others. Hence, the press has a role to play in putting an end to child labor and women trafficking through programmes of sensitization and surveillance. Thus, the researcher concluded that poor circulation, scanty coverage and illiteracy affect the role of the press in the fight against child labor and women trafficking. Government agencies, the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are identified to be involved in the fight against child labor and women trafficking.

Egbo (2014) also evaluated Newspaper Coverage of Sexual Violence against Women and Children in Selected Nigerian Newspaper. This study aimed at ascertaining if Nigerian newspaper give prominence to sexual violence stories; determining how often newspaper report sexual violence issues; ascertaining whether newspaper report sexual violence more as features than as straight news, editorial or letters to the editors. The researcher found that Nigerian newspapers do not give prominence to sexual violence stories. This they have done by not placing them on the front pages, newspapers do not frequently report sexual violence, the selected newspaper do not amplify utilize features in presenting sexual violence stories. Doing that could entail analyzing the facts of the stories and injecting emotion slant scent to precipitate public outcry against the problem. The researcher recommended that women organizations should set up newspaper which would be their mouth piece against sexual violence.

Furthermore, Abubakar & Okloho (2016) researched on the implication of girl child abuse on womanhood. The study focused on the informal sector where most of the children are involved in house maid, manufacturing and maintenance activities. Nigeria has a staggering millions of under aged girls who are daily abused in one form or the other both in cities and rural areas. Many of these girls are sexually abused by their employer and his household. These forms of abuse constitute a threat to the girl child in the form of brain injury, school dropout, teenage pregnancies, among others. Recommendations were given, among which include that there should be awareness campaign on the evils of girl child abuse in the country and government should make girl child abuse a criminal offence.

Again, Saint-Jacques; Villeneuve; Turcotte; Drapeau & Ivers (2011) assessed the role of media in reporting child abuse. The paper looks at the short-term impact that the media coverage of children in need of protection had on the number of cases reported to child protection agencies. The number of reports (N = 11,646) made to these agencies in the greater Quebec City region (Canada) was tallied each week over a 24 month period. During the same period, a content analysis of the print media was conducted regarding child maltreatment and/or child protection services so as to identify and count the number of articles published (N = 1,211) and single out media frenzy events. The relation between the number of child abuse reports and the number of published newspaper articles was explored with two tools: (a) a statistical correlation approach and (b) an intervention time-series analyses. They concluded that a statistically significant relationship does indeed exist between media coverage of child welfare agencies and the number of cases reported to child protection agencies. Second, media frenzy concerning child maltreatment and/or CPS does not show a statistically significant effect on the number of reports made to child protective services.

Nwammuo (2015) also ascertained how Nigerian elite women view the coverage of rape cases by Nigerian press. Focus group discussion research method involving ten women selected from five state universities in the South-Eastern was adopted in achieving the aim of the study. The study found that respondents view press coverage of rape cases as "under-representation" and not "mis-representation". This is based on the cited newspapers which contain few rape cases which were mostly buried in inside pages. The study recommends that journalists in Nigeria should be more sensitive to the plight of rape victims by giving rape cases the prominence they deserve. There is no doubt that this will serve as deterrent to others who are likely to engage in this inhuman and devilish act.

Again, Nwaolike (2015) assessed Print Media Representation of Child Trafficking in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to: determine the level of prominence given to child trafficking issues in Nigerian print media; ascertain the level of frequency of media mention of child trafficking issues in Nigerian print media; find out the distribution of child trafficking content in the newspapers covered within the period of study and ascertain the sources of news stories covered in the newspapers. Through Content analysis of *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *The Sun*, and *Tribune* newspapers from 2010 to 2012, the researcher found that all the

newspapers studied provide information regarding child trafficking but adequate information on the child trafficking issues were not given. The newspapers did not give enough space and did not report the issues on child trafficking frequently. Child trafficking issues appeared more on pages of less important in the newspapers. The prominence given to the stories were not much. The source of the news stories came from the journalists and not from the specialists. The study therefore recommends that Investigative journalism on child trafficking should be promoted and encouraged in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Ojiakor, Iheanacho, Nkwam-Uwaoma, & Dibia (2019) worked on Coverage of child right abuse in Nigerian newspapers. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the frequency, depth, direction and prominence of coverage of reports on child rights in Nigeria. Content analysis research method was used to analyze the manifest contents of two major newspapers in Nigeria namely Daily sun and Punch (January-April, 2017). The finding showed that the select newspapers did not give adequate coverage of reports on child rights abuse issues in Nigeria. Both newspapers did not give prominence to the stories reported as almost all were buried in the inside pages. The researchers recommend that newspapers publishers in Nigeria should train reporters that will report daily on child right abuse so as to increase the visibility of child rights reports in the media. Also, newspapers in Nigeria should give more prominence to child right abuse cases by placing them on the front pages of their editions and publishing periodic editorials on child rights related issues.

Also, Agbo & Chukwuma (2015) conducted a study on Audience assessment of the Nigeria Television Authority's contributions towards the eradication of child trafficking in South-East, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to find out the extent to which South-East residents are exposed to NTA's programmes and reports on child trafficking; determine the extent to which NTA's programmes and reports have been able to raise public knowledge on child trafficking in South-East Nigeria and find out whether NTA's programmes and reports have been able to raise public knowledge on child trafficking in South-East Nigeria and find out whether NTA's programmes and reports on child trafficking are persuasive enough to discourage child trafficking in South-East Nigeria. Survey research method was used to execute the study using a sample size of 400. The researcher found that the residents of South-East Nigeria are to a large extent exposed to NTA's programmes and reports on child trafficking; NTA's reports and programmes on child trafficking have to a little extent, raised the knowledge of most respondents and majority of the respondents believe that NTA's programmes and reports are not persuasive enough to discourage the practice of child trafficking in South-East Nigeria. The researchers recommended that: The NTA should see it as a social responsibility to properly raise public knowledge on the evil of child trafficking in South-East Nigeria; the NTA should review her programmes/messages on child trafficking to ensure messages on child trafficking are persuasive enough to discourage the act.

#### IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on two theories namely: agenda setting and social responsibility theories. The agenda setting theory according to Severin and Tankard (2001, p. 222) as cited by Ngoa (2012, p. 4) profoundly came about "during the period 1950's and 1960s when researchers became dissatisfied with the limited effects model. Specifically, the theory resulted from a study conducted by Shaw and McCombs pertaining to the 1967 presidential election in the United States of America (Akakwandu, 2012, p. 88). Cohen. Baran and Davis (2003, p. 311) as cited by Ekeanyanwu (2015, p. 115) in his view contends that agenda setting is where the mass media is accredited with the power to set the agenda of the topic for discussion". This means that it is what the media want us to think about that they project to the public as an important issue and at the end of the day, it appears important in the eyes of the public (Ozuru & Ekeanyanwu 2013, p. 109). The agenda setting theory is relevant in this research because the degree of prominence or importance attached to a story or event such to child abuse by the media (whether print or electronic) that would determine greatly how the public would see or value. Such events story or situation, thus, where the media particularly the print media, give prominence and attention on child abuse issues as well as going further through their editorial comments and other columns on the social religious and cultural implications of child abuse that the public would better appreciate the concept and abstain from same.

Also, the Social Responsibility Theory is an extension of Libertarian Theory, in that the press recognizes that it has a responsibility to society to carry out its essential functions (Hassan, 2013, p.170). Nwabueze (2014, p. 15) summarized the social responsibility theory of the press a theory developed to check the excesses of a free press. The theory posits that much as the press should be free to operate in any society such freedom should carry certain responsibilities or simply the press freedom does not mean the press should do as it pleases. It should operate in recognition of societal needs and aspiration. The relevance of social responsibility theory to this study is that since it is genuinely the responsibility and/or duty of the press to freely inform the members of the society, it is then part and parcel of this responsibility or obligation of the press or the media to bring to the public issues on child abuse in the society with a view to exposing those perpetrating the act. This will go a long way in not only sanitizing the system but also making society a better place. Without proper

framing, representation and indeed, reportage of child abuse as a crime would continue to bestride the society and this would no doubt be seen as an indictment on the press for non performance.

## V. METHOD

The design for the study is quantitative using survey where as thematic analysis was utilized as appropriate statistic for analysis. The study was carried out in Imo Statespecifically at Okuku- Owerri West; Nguru/Nweke- Aboh Mbaise; Umuduru- Isiala Mbanjo; Aro-Amuro -Okigwe; and Umuamanu –Oguta and Umudim –Nwangele Local Governments Areas with a projected population of 5,061,844 and a sample size of 385 decided with the Australian online calculator.

## VI. RESULTS

The thematic analysis investigated in this include: extent of awareness, extent of knowledge, perception and effectiveness of radio programme in influencing behaviour towards child abuse

**1. On awareness:** Respondents' view on whether they aware of child abuse through exposure to Darling FM "The Consequence" programme

From analysis, 95% of the respondents had access to radio, 90% of the respondents listened to Darling FM radio programmes while 53% agree to have listened to Darling FM "The Consequence" programme. On the level of awareness of child abuse through the select programme, a good number of the respondents were aware of child abuse through their exposure to Darling FM "The Consequence" programme at 62%. In addition, the extent of awareness was largely and moderately at 57%.

**2. On exposure:** To what extent does exposure to Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme improve the knowledge of Imo State residents in the campaign against child abuse?

The findings indicated that majority or 42% of the respondents believed that the extent to which Darling 107.3 FM "The Consequence" programme improved their knowledge about child abuse is moderate. In view of the fact 69% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they were knowledgeable of child abuse through Darling 107.3 FM "The Consequence" programme. This is because 96% agreed that child sexual harassment, followed by child trafficking, child molestation, child labor were the major forms of child abuse that were being discussed in Darling 107.3 FM "The Consequence" programme. The implication is that the programme has become a source of information on issues bothering on child abuse. The Darling 107.3 FM "The Consequence" programme provided the respondents' opportunity to be informed about child abuse and its different forms

**3. On perception:** What is the perception of Imo State residents on Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme on child abuse?

Findings revealed that the perception of the respondents were as follows : (i)71% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme has contributed in shaping their thought on child abuse related issues; (ii) 55% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they got well informed and educated of all forms of child abuse prevalent in the society through exposure to Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme; and (iii) 77% strongly agreed and agreed that Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme helped them call on the appropriate authorities when their child rights are being trampled upon. It means that greater number of the respondents were of the view that this programme helped them know the appropriate authorities to channel their complaint when the rights of the child are being violated.

**4. Oneffectiveness:** how effective is "The Consequence" programme in influencing the behaviour of Imo State residents' on issues of child abuse?

The findings revealed the effectiveness of Darling 107.3 FM "The Consequence" programme in influencing the behaviour residents of Imo State residents' behaviour on issues of child abuse as follows: (i) 71% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they were reluctant to give out their children to relatives, friends or outsiders for housemaid or any form of assistance based on their exposure to Darling 107.3 FM "The Consequence" programme; (ii)56.5 strongly agreed and agreed that Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme on the rights of the child has made most of them who are found of such wicked act to desist from them; (iii) 66% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme on child abuse may have raised the security consciousness level of parents, especially mothers to make sure their daughters are not to be sexually molested by anybody; and 78% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme had been reduced or minimized because the people are well informed about child abuse related issues.

However, 43% of the respondents held no definite opinion on whether exposure to Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme in the campaign against child abuse has given them the boldness to seek for redress in court whenever there is a violation of the child right.

This point out to the fact that Darling 107.3 Fm "The Consequence" programme is effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents on issues of child abuse. It means that Darling 107.3 FM "The

Consequence” programme has been effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents towards child abuse. This has resulted in the drastic reduction in the level of child abuse violation in the state. The implication is that this programme has contributed tremendously in molding the behavior of the respondents positively. Through this measure the issues surrounding child abuse may have been ameliorated. It means that Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme has been effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents towards child abuse. Yet there is a clear indication that Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme may not have been effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents towards child abuse towards seeking redress in the court anytime there is a violation of the child rights.

## VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

When the respondents were asked about the extent of awareness of child abuse through “the consequence”, majority of the respondents at 57% believed that their exposure to Darling FM “The Consequence” programme had increased their level of awareness about child abuse moderately. This is because a good number of the respondents listened to the programme. Also, majority of the respondents at 90% who listened to Darling FM radio programmes, are those of them that had access to radio at 95%. It means that majority of the respondents had radio sets or phones that have radio. The respondents can as well get access to radio by listening to that of their neighbor. The implication is that those who had access to radio listened to Darling 107.3 FM for their information, education and entertainment.

This finding was in line with the earlier study conducted by Agbo and Chukwuma (2015). According to the finding, residents of South-East Nigeria are to a large extent exposed to NTA’s programmes and reports on child trafficking; NTA’s reports and programmes on child trafficking to a little extent. Also, Nwaolikepe, (2015), supported this finding. According to him, all the newspapers studied provide information regarding child trafficking but adequate information on the child trafficking issues were not given. In relation to this, Nwankwo, (2011), found that the Nigerian journalists give adequate coverage to crime stories. The work, however, found out that one of the most covered and reported crime stories in the Nigerian media in armed robbery while some others like rape and house keeper are given low coverage. This finding appears contradictory to the findings of Ojiakor et al (2019) who in their assessment of newspaper coverage of child rights issues, found out that the select newspapers did not give adequate coverage of reports on child rights abuse issues in Nigeria. The select newspapers did not give prominence to the stories reported as almost all were buried in the inside pages. For Egbo (2014) it was the same scenario. The researcher found that Nigerian newspapers do not give prominence to sexual violence stories. This they have done by not placing them on the front pages, newspapers do not frequently report sexual violence, the selected newspaper do not amplify utilize features in presenting sexual violence stories. This could mean that most people in Nigeria are exposed more to broadcast messages and less to print messages.

For the second research question, the respondents were asked **the extent to which exposure to Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme improved their knowledge of the campaign against child abuse.** The findings indicated that majority or 42% of the respondents believed that the extent to which Darling 107.3 FM “The Consequence” programme improved their knowledge about child abuse is moderately. In view of the fact 69% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they were knowledgeable of child abuse through Darling 107.3 FM “The Consequence” programme. This is because 96% agreed that child sexual harassment, followed by child trafficking, child molestation, child labor was the major forms child abuse that were being discussed in Darling 107.3 FM “The Consequence” programme. The implication is that the programme has become a source of information on issues bothering on child abuse. The Darling 107.3 FM “The Consequence” programme provided the respondents opportunity to know ugly was children are being treated. It means that the respondents are yet to be fully knowledgeable of all the forms of child abuse menace in the state. This is the programme placed more emphasis to these forms of child abuse than the others.

According to the finding, Child labor, Child maltreatment, Child sexual abuse, Child trafficking, among others are the mostly known child abuse issues among the respondents. This is line with the earlier study conducted by Abubakar and Okloho (2016). In their study, they concluded that Nigeria has a staggering millions of under aged girls who are daily abused in one form or the other both in cities and rural areas. Many of these girls are sexually abused by their employer and his household. Olube, (2015), in a study concluded that the press has a role to play in putting an end to child labor and women trafficking programmes of sensitization and surveillance are some of the ways the press can help in fighting human trafficking.

Furthermore, the opinion of the respondents on the third research question revealed the perception of the respondents as follows : (i) 71% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme has contributed in shaping their thought on child abuse related issues; (ii) 55% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they got well informed and educated of all forms of child abuse prevalent in the society through exposure to Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme; and (iii) 77% strongly agreed and agreed that Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme helped them call on the

appropriate authorities when their child rights are being trampled upon. It means that greater number of the respondents were of the view that this programme helped them know the appropriate authorities to channel their complaint when the rights of the child are being violated. This finding was supported by the agenda setting theory because the degree of prominence or importance attached to a story or event such to child abuse by the media (whether print or electronic) determined greatly how the public would see or value.

It means that radio messages are being relied upon by the people as it is effective in this dissemination of information about child abuse. This is according to the respondents were made possible through radio commercials, news, commentaries, jingles among others. In relation to this, Saint-Jacques, Villeneuve, Turcotte, Drapeau, & Ivers (2011) in their study revealed that coverage of child maltreatment by the news media increases public awareness about this issue and helps individuals realize the need to report such situations. They concluded that an increase or reduction in the number of such news stories leads to a corresponding increase or reduction in the number of reports made to child protective services.

This finding is in line with the earlier study conducted with Nwammuo, (2015). In his study it was revealed that respondents view press coverage of rape cases as “under-representation” and not “misrepresentation”. This is based on the cited newspapers which contain few rape cases which were mostly buried in inside pages. Also, it was in line with Nwaolikpe, (2015), in their study found that newspapers did not give enough space and did not report the issues on child trafficking frequently. Child trafficking issues appeared more on pages of less important in the newspapers. The prominence given to the stories were not much.

This finding is supported by Okugo, et al (2014). Their findings indicated that there was a causative relationship between media framing of child trafficking and policy formulation. To buttress the findings of this study, Olubunmi, et al (2018), concluded that recovery of human trafficking victims may require very rich programmes designed by different professionals such as social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, medical personnel, legal professional etc. According, Nwaolikpe, (2015), in his study found that setting agenda on child trafficking in the print media and covering the news frequently and prominently is necessary so as to sensitize and mobilize the public to act positively on the issue.

**The last research question was on effectiveness of “The Consequence” programme in influencing their behaviour towards issues of child abuse.** From the result earlier stated, “The Consequence” programme is effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents on issues of child abuse. It means that Darling 107.3 FM “The Consequence” programme has been effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents towards child abuse. This has resulted in the drastic reduction in the level of child abuse violation in the state. The implication is that this programme has contributed tremendously in molding the behavior of the respondents positively. Through this measure the issues surrounding child abuse may have been ameliorated. It means that Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme has been effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents towards child abuse. Yet there is a clear indication that Darling 107.3 Fm “The Consequence” programme may not have been effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents towards child abuse towards seeking redress in the court anytime there is a violation of the child rights. This finding is in line with the social responsibility theory. According to social responsibility theory the press to freely inform the members of the society, it is then part and parcel of this responsibility or obligation of the press or the media to bring to the public issues on child abuse in the society with a view to exposing those perpetrating the act. This will go a long way in not only sanitizing the system but also making society a better place. Without proper framing, representation and indeed, reportage of child abuse as a crime would continue to bestride the society and this would no doubt be seen as an indictment on the press for non performance.

In relation to this, Okofo (2009) in a study found that majority of rural women believe such media contents and most rural women believe such media contents and rural women have disengaged themselves from the barbaric cultural practice just as some have become preacher against the practice. In corroborating this finding, Nwaolikpe, (2015) found that the use of media to create awareness and educate the public on societal issues is effective because the public interests are captured. The same line of thought is captured in the earlier study carried out by Agbo and Chukwuma (2015) who concluded that NTA raised the knowledge of most respondents. According to them NTA’s programmes and reports are not persuasive enough to discourage the practice of child trafficking in South-East Nigeria.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings above, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is need for the persistent use of radio to report issues of public importance like child abuse. This is because a good number of people listen to radio on daily basis.
2. In other to improve people’s level of awareness and knowledge on child abuse related issues radio stations should design specific programmes to child abuse and child rights.
3. To ensure the effectiveness of radio in the campaign against child abuse adequate attention should be giving in the reportage of sensitive issues like child abuse.



## IX. CONCLUSION

Radio is vital in the fight against child abuse in Nigeria. The role of the media in informing, educating, persuading and mobilizing the citizenry into rising up against the menace of child abuse is commendable. Radio as a medium of mass communication has continuously packaged and reported child abuse related issues in their news, commentaries, jingles, commercials among others. It has remained key source for the dissemination of information about child rights and violations, which is in accordance with the social responsibility of the press. All forms of child abuse related are being reported on radio, especially child sexual abuse, child trafficking, child labor, child maltreatment etc. by the adults who are meant to guide and protect them. The level of awareness created about child abuse on radio, has unequivocally, spurred most people to abstain from child abuse as well rise up to protect the rights of the child.

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