



A LEGAL EXAMINATION INTO ERADICATION OF STREET BEGGING IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *A common problem firmly ingrained in the social scene of Nigeria, street begging is marked by great poverty rates and notable inequalities. Though one of Africa's biggest economies, about half of Nigeria's people live in abject poverty, which forces many to turn to begging as a survival tactic. Cultural customs, especially the Almajiri system in Northern Nigeria, aggravate this phenomenon by forcing young people who lack support systems to beg. This paper looks at the fundamental reasons for street begging, evaluates the efficiency of present legal systems, and suggests all-encompassing solutions to handle the problem. By means of a qualitative analysis of extant literature, legal frameworks, and case studies in addition to comparative evaluations of successful interventions in other nations, the study reveals that current anti-begging laws are often punitive and poorly implemented, failing to address the underlying causes of begging. The results underline the need for a coordinated approach combining social welfare programs, vocational training, and community support to offer those impacted sustainable substitutes. In the end, the research emphasizes the need to move from punitive policies to a more sympathetic and all-encompassing plan that gives prevention, protection, and rehabilitation priority. By addressing the socioeconomic elements causing street begging, Nigeria may create a more inclusive society and enhance the quality of life for its most vulnerable groups, thus supporting national stability and growth.*

KEYWORDS: Street begging, Nigeria, socioeconomic factors, Almajiri system, urban planning, national security, legal frameworks, social welfare programs.



INTRODUCTION

Deeply ingrained in Nigerian society and intimately related to the nation's larger socioeconomic issues is street begging. Though one of Africa's biggest economies, Nigeria suffers from high degrees of poverty and inequality. The 2020 World Bank study states that about half of Nigeria's population lives in extreme poverty, which fuels many into street begging as a survival strategy (World Bank, 2020). Street begging is not only a sign of poverty but also a complicated problem impacted by cultural, religious, and historical elements in metropolitan areas such as Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt.

Particularly in Northern Nigeria, the custom of street begging is sometimes connected to the Almajiri system, whereby young boys are sent to Islamic schools but are compelled to beg because of insufficient support networks (Imam, 2019). Originally meant to offer religious instruction, this ancient custom has grown to be a major factor in causing street begging and subjecting youngsters to cruel living circumstances and exploitation. Furthermore often seen begging on the streets are other disadvantaged populations, such as elderly people and persons with impairments, therefore underscoring the complex nature of the problem.

Street begging affects national security, public health, and urban growth among other things. Urban planning and public safety are challenged as well as traffic congestion caused by the presence of beggars in metropolitan settings. Moreover, the concentration of street beggars in cities has been connected to public health issues since many of these people live in filthy surroundings and lack access to fundamental healthcare services (Fawole et al., 2022). Street beggars' social marginalization and alienation also make them susceptible to exploitation by criminal networks, therefore aggravating national instability.

Attempts to solve street begging in Nigeria have been erratic and mainly useless. Many state governments, including Lagos, have passed laws against street begging, sometimes using punitive policies without tackling the underlying causes of the problem (Ishaq, 2023). These strategies have been attacked for their short-term concentration and for breaching the rights of those with little choices other than begging. Human rights groups such as Amnesty International have underlined the need for a more compassionate approach considering the socioeconomic elements motivating people to beg (Ndulor, 2022).

A thorough legal analysis of the elimination of street begging in Nigeria is offered in this paper. It examines the current legal systems, evaluates their success, and talks about possible legal changes that can produce a more compassionate and environmentally friendly answer to the dilemma.

According to the legal study, the present regulations controlling street begging in Nigeria are disjointed and poorly enforced. Though well-intentioned, the Lagos State Street Trading and Illegal Markets Prohibition Law, for example, mostly emphasizes punitive measures without offering any workable substitute for individuals who depend on begging for subsistence (Ishaq, 2023). In the same vein, the Child Rights Act of 2003—which seeks to guard children from exploitation—has not been well carried out, especially in the northern areas where the Almajiri system is rather common.

According to evaluations of these laws' efficacy, street begging has not been much lessened. Many times, enforcement is uneven and multiple levels of government and law enforcement entities lack coordination. Furthermore neglected by the legislation are the fundamental



socioeconomic factors causing people to beg: poverty, unemployment, and lack of social support networks.

A comparative study of effective strategies in other nations guides the legal revisions suggested in this work. To help street beggars reintegrate into society, India and South Africa have, for instance, put in place thorough plans combining legal actions with social welfare programs including vocational training and rehabilitation services (Khan & Fahad, 2020). Using a like-minded strategy in Nigeria might produce more sustainable and efficient results.

Eliminating street begging in Nigeria calls for an all-encompassing strategy combining social, legal, and financial actions. The present legal systems ought to be changed to give prevention, protection, and rehabilitation priority instead of punishment. More general social measures meant to lower poverty, provide access to healthcare and education, and support underprivileged groups could also help these improvements.

Legal Framework against Street-Begging in Nigeria

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 (as changed) Constitution offers the fundamental legislative framework for handling many social concerns, including street begging. Although the Constitution does not directly address street begging, some clauses might be taken to influence this behaviour. Section 33, for example, ensures the right to life, thus implying that the state must make sure that its people have the fundamental needs of life, thus lowering the demand for people to turn to begging (World Bank, 2020). Section 34 ensures the right to dignity of the human person, a right that is usually violated when people are compelled into street begging because of poverty or lack of possibilities (Ishaq, 2021). Section 17(3) further emphasizes the state's responsibility to guide its policies toward guaranteeing sufficient means of livelihood for its people, a goal hampered by the predominance of street begging.

However, the application of these constitutional clauses in the framework of street begging has been lax; more focus is on punitive actions than on safeguarding and advancing basic liberties. This disparity emphasizes the importance of a rights-based strategy in handling the problem since it helps to match legal systems with the values of the Constitution on social fairness and human dignity (Imam, 2019).

Child Rights Act and Laws of Various States

Crucially important legislation in Nigeria aiming at safeguarding children's rights—including those of those engaged in street begging—is the Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2003. Setting out thorough clauses to protect children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, the CRA, which domesticates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Section 30 of the CRA expressly forbids exploiting children for begging, therefore rendering it a legal violation. Every youngster is supposed to be shielded from hazardous work that can compromise their education or well-being as well as from financial exploitation.

Notwithstanding these clauses, the CRA has not been implemented consistently throughout Nigeria; just 25 of the 36 states have domesticated the Act as of 2020 (Henry, 2023). Children all around the nation, especially in the North where street begging is more common and regulation is less strict, have different degrees of protection depending on this discrepancy.



Apart from the CRA, several states have passed legislation specifically to handle street begging. Lagos State, for example, enacted the Lagos State Child Rights Law, which reflects the federal CRA but adds extra clauses to handle the particular difficulties children in the state experience (Ishaq, 2023). Still, numerous youngsters are observed on the streets begging, especially in metropolitan areas, suggesting that the regulations are not enforced consistently.

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

Signatory to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the document has been domesticated into Nigerian law via the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Ratification and Enforcement Act, Cap A9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004. The Charter offers a general framework for safeguarding human rights, particularly those of vulnerable populations like street beggars. While Article 5 forbids all kinds of exploitation and humiliating of human beings, especially slavery, slave trade, torture, and harsh, inhuman, or degrading punishment and treatment (Khan & Fahad, 2020), Article 4 of the African Charter ensures the right to life and physical integrity. These clauses directly relate to street begging since many of the beggars—especially young children—are frequently exploited and living under appalling circumstances.

Furthermore guaranteed by Article 16 of the Charter is the right to health, which includes the right to enjoy the highest possible state of physical and mental health. Street beggars show a demand for more robust legal safeguards and social interventions since they usually live in appalling circumstances that compromise this right (Fawole et al., 2022). Notwithstanding these assurances, the African Charter has not been widely enforced in Nigeria; street beggars still suffer from notable violations of their human rights (Ndulor, 2022).

Criminal Code Act and Penal Code Act

Though their tactics differ, the Criminal Code Act applicable in the southern states of Nigeria and the Penal Code Act applicable in the northern states both have clauses about street begging. Under Section 249—which addresses idle and disorderly persons—the Criminal Code Act criminalizes street begging. It describes a "common beggar" as an idle and messy person and sets sanctions, including jail, for those found guilty of begging (Ishaq, 2023). This strategy emphasizes criminalizing rather than rehabilitation, reflecting a punitive attitude toward street begging.

By contrast, the Penal Code Act, which controls the northern states, also includes clauses about street begging. Still, cultural and religious elements particular to the area often affect the way these clauses are used. For instance, enforcing anti-begging rules in the North is complicated by the *Almajiri* practice, which entails children begging as part of their Islamic education (Imam, 2019). Critics of the Penal Code's approach have pointed out that it falls short in addressing the underlying reasons for begging and in offering substitute options for people engaged in the behaviour.

Other Relevant Laws and Regulations

Indirectly addressing street begging are several other rules and legislation passed in Nigeria. One such is the Lagos State Street Trading and Illegal Markets Prohibition Law. Although its main focus is on reducing street commerce, this law affects street beggars since it criminalizes the occupation of public areas for unapproved activities (Ishaq, 2023). Many street beggars



have been arrested and displaced as a result of this law's enforcement, which raises questions regarding human rights abuses and the necessity of more inclusive policies (Ndulor, 2022).

Furthermore covered under the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015, are problems of the exploitation of weaker people, including street beggars. The Act offers victim rehabilitation and reintegration as well as criminalizes the trafficking of people for forced begging. However the application of this law has been uneven; many forced begging victims lack the required help and protection (Khan & Fahad, 2020).

Though not legislation, the National Social Protection Policy is another pertinent framework meant to lower poverty and vulnerability in Nigeria. The strategy has clauses for social safety nets, which can help the most needy groups financially thereby lowering the frequency of street begging (World Bank, 2020). Nonetheless, this policy has had minimal influence and execution has been impeded by bureaucratic difficulties and financial restrictions.

Institutional Framework for Enforcing Anti-Begging Laws

Anti-begging rules in Nigeria are enforced in great part by the Attorney General of the Federation and the Attorney General of many states. Under legislation including the Criminal Code Act, Penal Code Act, and particular state laws, these officers are charged with supervising the prosecution of offences connected to street begging. Their prosecutorial discretion lets them affect the rigour with which anti-begging rules are followed (Adebola, 2021).

Attorney General of the Federation/State

Furthermore, the office of the Attorney General is essential in establishing policies meant to solve poverty and lack of social support, thereby addressing the underlying reasons for street begging. More durable answers to street begging can result from efficient legal systems combining punitive actions with rehabilitative policies (Ojedokun, 2021). Though their influence is great, political pressures and resource limitations might restrict the Attorney General's operations, therefore resulting in often inconsistent application (Ojedokun, 2021).

Nigeria Immigration Service

Particularly in urban areas, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) manages the flood of illegal immigrants who sometimes support the street begging scene. The NIS has the power to deport illegal immigrants caught engaging in begging, so acting as a preventive measure to lower the street begging count (Ojedokun, 2018).

Apart from deportations, the NIS works with other law enforcement departments to organize raids and track border crossings to prevent possible immigrants from entering the nation therefore reducing the demand for poverty. The NIS has drawn criticism, meantime, for some of its strategies, especially in cases where reports of abuses of human rights during enforcement activities have been recorded (Semprebon et al., 2020).

Nigeria Police Force

The main enforcement agency implementing anti-begging policies throughout Nigeria is the Police Force (NPF). The Criminal Code Act and Penal Code Act let the authorities arrest and hold those discovered begging in public areas. Urban areas where street begging is common show the most obvious efforts of police enforcement (Fatai et al., 2020).



The police have come under fire for their sometimes too harsh enforcement style despite their might. Reports of police arresting beggars without granting access to social services or rehabilitation have underlined the need for a more sympathetic method of enforcement (Agbibo, 2015). Furthermore, the police's responsibility in tackling the exploitation of children and vulnerable individuals for begging purposes is vital but usually hampered by resource limitations and claims of corruption (Oke, 2022).

The Correctional Service

Those found guilty under anti-begging statutes are housed and rehabilitated under the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS). Placed in prisons where they are supposed to get vocational training, education, and other kinds of rehabilitation meant to lower recidivism, convicted beggars are required to undergo

Nonetheless, structural problems including overcrowding, inadequate financing, and inadequate staff specialized training have called into doubt the success of the Correctional Service's rehabilitation programs. The shortcomings of the rehabilitation programs provided cause many former beggars, upon release, to find themselves returning to the streets (Alamu & Makinde, 2019).

Nigeria Customs Service

Particularly in connection to the trafficking of people for begging purposes, the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) indirectly but significantly influences the execution of anti-begging rules. Monitoring and controlling cross-border movements—including attempts to intercept and stop human trafficking—the NCS is engaged in (Hartman, 2021).

Working with other organizations such as the NIS and NAPTIP, the NCS helps in operations meant to disrupt trafficking networks using vulnerable people for begging. The NCS's ability to fight trafficking may be hampered, nonetheless, by corruption and low resources (Semprebon et al., 2021).

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)

One major factor in tackling human trafficking for street begging is the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). The mandate of NAPTIP includes rescuing and rehabilitating trafficked victims, punishing offenders, and working on preventive policies to cut human trafficking (Bukoye, 2015).

Many of the victims of trafficking—many of whom are compelled into begging—have been effectively rescued and rehabilitated by NAPTIP. To let victims reintegrate into society, the service offers medical treatment, counselling, and vocational training. Funding constraints, small staff, and the necessity of more public awareness—all of which NAPTIP's activities are often hampered—are factors. To handle the worldwide elements of human trafficking, the agency also works with foreign groups (Hartman, 2021).

State-Level Agencies (e.g., Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs)

At the state level, several organizations—including the Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation—are engaged in enforcing anti-begging rules and offering social services to underprivileged populations. For street beggars—especially women and children—



these organizations are vital in providing shelters, education, and vocational training (Dalhart, 2016).

Public awareness efforts aiming at lowering the stigma connected with begging and enlightening the public about the legal repercussions of the behaviour constitute part of state-level projects. However, depending on regional issues, resource availability, and local governments' political dedication, these agencies' efficacy ranges greatly (Bukoye, 2015). State agencies have more challenges in public participation and enforcement in areas where cultural and religious elements affect the frequency of street begging, including the northern states (Ojedokun, 2021).

Prevalence and Causes of Street Begging in Nigeria

Nature and Prevalence of Street Begging

A ubiquitous societal problem in Nigeria, street begging shows up clearly in both urban and rural locations. Often in crowded streets, markets, and places of worship, the practice entails people or groups asking money from the public. Street begging is more common in some areas than others; in the Northern section of the nation, this is especially true. A major public problem, estimates indicate that thousands of people—including children, the elderly, and those with disabilities—are street begging (Ojedokun, 2021).

Particularly in northern Nigeria, where the ancient Almajiri system helps to explain the appearance of young boys begging on the streets, the phenomenon is rather common. In southern Nigeria, the problem is more usually connected with people displaced by natural disasters communal disputes or economic migrants. In addition to a sign of socioeconomic difficulties, street begging reflects more fundamental structural problems including poor social safety nets and weak law enforcement (Ogunkan & Fawole, 2009).

Factors Responsible for the Persistence of Street Begging

The most important element driving street begging's continuation in Nigeria is poverty. Many of the population lives below the poverty line and have restricted access to basic needs such as food, housing, and healthcare. Particularly among the young, rising unemployment rates cause many to turn to begging as a survival tactic. Particularly in rural areas, the lack of realistic job possibilities drives people to travel to cities where they can wind up on the streets (Bukoye, 2015).

The COVID-19 epidemic along with the economic crises of recent years have aggravated poverty rates, which has resulted in more street begging. The lack of thorough social welfare programs aggravates the issue even more since it leaves the most vulnerable groups of people with fewer choices (Onagun, 2016).

Additionally contributing to the continuation of street begging are religious and cultural customs. In some areas of Nigeria, especially when it concerns children or people with disabilities, begging is socially acceptable. One shining example of how cultural practices could support begging is the Almajiri system in the northern region, whereby young boys are sent to Islamic institutions and commonly beg for alms as part of their religious training (Oluwole, 2016).



Furthermore, certain religious ideas support almsgiving, therefore preserving the begging habit unintentionally. Although almsgiving is meant to help the less fortunate, it might lead to a reliance on public charity instead of looking for other ways of income, therefore creating a cycle of dependency (Ojedokun, 2015).

Another important contributing reason to street begging is the lack of access to high-quality education. Many beggars—especially young children—are deprived of official education, therefore restricting their chances for future meaningful employment. Inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained professors, and high dropout rates—all of which help to create the cycle of poverty and begging—are among the many obstacles the Nigerian educational system faces (Adebola, 2021).

Apart from the lack of knowledge, the absence of strong social welfare policies leaves underprivileged groups devoid of the required help to overcome adversity. Underfunded or poorly run social services including child welfare programs, disability support, and unemployment benefits cause a reliance on begging as a survival tactic to grow (Ogunkan & Fawole, 2009).

Important causes of the frequency of street begging in Nigeria are internal displacement and migration. Millions of people have been displaced by conflicts including the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, which drives them to flee their homes and find safety in cities. Many of these internally displaced people (IDPs) lack access to appropriate food, shelter, and work, therefore they beg on the streets to live (Oluwole, 2016).

In search of better possibilities, migration from rural to urban areas also frequently ends in an inflow of people unable to find employment and ending in begging. The government's reaction to internal displacement has been poor; IDP camps are often underfunded and packed, therefore aggravating the problem (Aluko & Olanipekun, 2019).

Implications and Consequences of Street-Begging Effects on National Security

Particularly in metropolitan regions where the practice is most common, street begging seriously compromises national security in Nigeria. Many times, begging is associated with organized criminality including terrorism and human trafficking. For example, terrorist organizations like Boko Haram have allegedly recruited members among street beggars—especially children—using espionage and recruiting in northern Nigeria (Olaoye & Bello, 201). These gangs compromise the attempts at national security by using beggars as informants or for small-scale attacks.

Moreover, the presence of many beggars in cities might tax law enforcement resources, therefore focusing less on more urgent security concerns. Further complicating the security scene is the concentration of beggars in some areas leading to a rise in minor crimes such as theft and vandalism (Aderinto et al., 2021). Therefore, the incapacity to properly handle street begging has more general consequences for preserving public order and safety.

Social Welfare Effects

Street begging in Nigeria has a significant socioeconomic effect on people as well as on society at large. For those who are beggars, the habit usually leads to a cycle of poverty and social isolation. Usually stigmatized and underprivileged, beggars have limited access to healthcare,



education, and job prospects. This marginalization prolongs the cycle of poverty, thereby making it challenging for beggars to escape their situation (Bukoye, 2015).

More generally, street begging fuels the deterioration of metropolitan settings. High concentrations of beggars sometimes cause losses in property prices and lower economic activity since their presence may discourage investors and consumers. Furthermore, the funds governments set aside to control street begging—law enforcement and social services among other things—could be diverted to other vital sectors such as infrastructure development and education (Bukoye, 2015).

Street begging carries an economic cost that also affects the healthcare system. Many of them live in unhygienic conditions and are prone to health problems including mental health ailments, malnutrition, and infectious infections. Treating these diseases typically falls on public healthcare facilities, therefore taxing an already strained system (Aderinto et al., 2021).

Effects on education and child development

The effects on children of street begging in Nigeria are among the most worrisome features of it. Many street beggars are young people driven either by criminal networks or by their families into begging. These kids spend their days on the streets instead of in the classroom, thus they frequently miss out on school. Their future possibilities are limited by a lack of formal education, which also traps them in a cycle of poverty and social disadvantage (Adebola, 2021).

Young people who street beg run also the danger of emotional and physical violence. Often subjected to extreme weather, violence, and exploitation, they might suffer long-term consequences on their mental and physical health from all of these things. Trauma young children go through might cause behavioural problems, developmental delays, and increased risk of criminal activity later on (Bukoye, 2015).

Street begging's consequences for children go beyond the personal level and influence society at large. The nation suffers a future workforce less skilled and less productive as these children grow up without the knowledge and abilities required to significantly contribute to the economy. Long-term effects of this will affect the social stability and economic progress of Nigeria (Aderinto et al., 2021).

Factors Militating Against the Eradication of Street Begging

Non-Enforceability of Chapter II of the Constitution

The non-enforceability of Chapter II of the Federal Republic of Nigeria poses one of the main obstacles in eradicating street begging in Nigeria. Provisions for social welfare, education, and the protection of vulnerable groups abound in this chapter's Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. But since these clauses are non-justiciable—that is, they cannot be lawfully enforced in court—Ikpeze & Ijioma, 2022. Consequently, even if the government has obligations to ensure the welfare of its people, those who are deprived of these rights have no legal action available.

Chapter II's non-enforceability has let later governments overlook their responsibilities to solve the underlying causes of street begging, including poverty and ignorance. Furthermore contributes to the poor execution of social welfare initiatives meant to help lower the frequency



of begging under this legal restriction (Aluko & Olanipekun, 2019). Eliminating street begging will remain difficult until these constitutional clauses become justifiable.

Impact of Child Education on Street-Begging

Particularly among children, the lack of access to high-quality education is a main contributing cause of street begging's continuation. Many children in Nigeria, particularly in rural regions, stay out of school due to poverty, cultural customs, and poor infrastructure despite government attempts to support universal basic education (Onifade, 2019). Many times driven into the street begging to help their families or themselves, these children help perpetuate the cycle of poverty and illiteracy.

Furthermore, even in cases when children have access to education, the quality of the instruction is usually poor, which results in high dropout rates and little chances for upward mobility. Problems include overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching tools, and incompetent teachers abound in Nigeria's educational system, all of which help to explain the great prevalence of child labour and street begging (Semprebon et al., 2021). Reducing the number of youngsters involved in begging and breaking the cycle of poverty depends on addressing these learning difficulties.

Cultural Arguments and Resistance to Change

Furthermore important in the continuation of street begging in Nigeria are cultural and religious aspects. In some areas, especially in the North, begging is seen as a cultural practice anchored in religious beliefs and customs, such as the Almajiri system, whereby young boys are sent to Islamic schools far from home and often resort to begging for food (Aluko & Olanipekun, 2019). Communities that see these behaviours as part of their cultural legacy may object occasionally to efforts to reduce public begging.

The perception that almsgiving beggars is a religious obligation adds to this opposition to change and makes it challenging to discourage the practice. Furthermore, some people see begging as a respectable way of living, particularly in the lack of other economic possibilities (Imam, 2019). These cultural debates complicate government and non-governmental groups' ability to carry out efficient anti-begging policies.

Ineffective Implementation of Anti-Begging Measures

Another important element preventing the elimination of street begging in Nigeria is the inadequate execution of anti-begging policies. Although laws and rules exist meant to reduce begging, their execution is often erratic and without the required backing from pertinent parties. Tasked with putting these policies into effect, law enforcement agencies are often underfunded, which results in erratic and unsustainable attempts to handle the problem (Baker, 2021).

Furthermore impeding development are the lack of collaboration among several government departments and the lack of a thorough national plan to address street begging. Many anti-begging campaigns are temporary and neglect to address the fundamental reasons for begging, like poverty, unemployment, and lack of social services (Ojedokun, 2021). Eliminating street begging will remain elusive without a coordinated and continuous effort including the development of alternative livelihoods and social support networks.



CONCLUSION

It is evident from the study that street begging is a common phenomenon in Nigeria but most pronounced in the northern part particularly child street begging “Almajare” due to culture, poverty and certain religious obligations. Irrespective of the problems caused by street begging in the country; the government has not put in enough effort towards its eradication but providing only lip services during international gatherings to portray a good image of the country. If the government continue to show this attitude, the activities of these beggars will degenerate into serious security challenges that will be worse than Boko Haram, Kidnapping, armed bandits, and Cattle Rustling which will in turn affect the socioeconomic development of the country.

At the end of the study, the following answers were deduced to the research questions raised;

The findings of this study show that the pluralistic nature of the Nigerian Legal System is not left out in the conduct of street begging in Nigeria and as such, it seems impossible to arrive at a unified legal framework to eradicate street begging. Thus, it has also been found from the course of this study that the reason is the current state of our laws, the attempt at achieving a unified legal framework may not be possible by exploring the existing laws. It has been argued elsewhere in this study that by the provisions of Article 18 (3) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ which states that:

The state shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of the woman and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions.

This is owing to the validity of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights through the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Cap 10 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990. To properly advance this argument, the provisions of Section 12 (1), (2) and (3) of the Constitution are useful. Section 12 (1) provides as follows:

No treaty between the Federation and any other country shall have the force of law to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly.

Section 12 (2) further extends the power of the National Assembly beyond the Exclusive Legislative List by providing that the National Assembly may make laws for the Federation or any part thereof concerning matters not included in the Exclusive Legislative List to implement a treaty. This means that when giving effect to a treaty, the National Assembly can make laws relating to matters which would ordinarily have been ultra vires (including street begging excluded from the Exclusive list). In a way that looks like ratification, Section 12 (3) provides that:

A bill for an Act of the National Assembly passed under the provisions of subsection (2) (that is, effecting treaty on matters not included in the exclusive legislative list)¹ of this section shall not be presented to the President for assent, and shall not be enacted unless it is ratified by a majority of all the House of Assembly in the Federation.

Thus, the ACHPR having passed through the requirements above and being an Act of the National Assembly will override the state laws on street begging based on the doctrine of covering the field.² Section 4 (5) of the Constitution provides as follows:



If any Law enacted by the House of Assembly of a State is inconsistent with any law validly made by the National Assembly, the law made by the National Assembly shall prevail, and that other Law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

This phenomenon of covering the field if well utilized will resolve the issue of plurality of legislation in curbing the menace of street begging in Nigeria as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having observed earlier in this study that the problems of street begging outweigh its desirability, the following are recommended;

The National Assembly is to evoke their power as provided in Section 4(5) of the Constitution to ensure that the plurality of law on street begging is brought to an end.

The Government through its Ministry of Employment should ensure adequate provision of jobs to engage the youth and other citizens positively, which will activate the fight against poverty therefore curbing this social menace. This can be achieved if the government provides employment opportunities for all irrespective of class, religion, gender and tribe. People with disabilities who are educated and willing to work should also be given due consideration to enable them to feel a sense of belongingness like their fellow citizens thereby reducing the population of beggars on the street.

The government in collaboration with nongovernmental organizations should provide soft loans with menial interest for Nigerians to start up small businesses to avoid any form of begging.

The government should also see the education of its citizens particularly children as its priority because the large number of these out-of-school children constitute a nuisance for society in no time to come. In so doing the dearth of ignorance will be broken and will have a cumulative positive effect on the human capital and the economy in general.

Equal distribution of the nation's economic resources is another important aspect that will assist in curtailing street begging in Nigeria. Agitations such as communal crisis, war, terrorism, kidnapping, and Boko Haram among others that may erupt and tear people apart and further into begging will be avoided.

Parents of the child beggar should be arrested and prosecuted for not meeting up to their responsibility thereby sending the children to the street to beg.

Government in collaboration with Islamic clerics and other stakeholders to integrate the Almageri schooling system with the circular schooling system to ensure that out-of-school children are brought to an end.

The government should come up with stringent punishment for defaulters if they are found arrested on the street to ensure compliance.



The enforcing institutions like the Police, Immigration and other law enforcement agencies should be properly equipped to enforce the laws banning street begging in their jurisdiction. And to corroborate in dealing with transnational street beggars.

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