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# Information Sources and Awareness Level of Child Rights in Lagos State, Nigeria



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## **Abstract**

*The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child prescribes certain rights that children are entitled to enjoy placing the responsibility of ensuring these rights on parents, guidance, government among others. Article 42 of the Convention prescribes that the provisions of the Convention should be widely known even to children themselves since the value of the information given by children will increase as it becomes clear to them that what they think, feel, experience is valuable and important. This study examined the extent to which secondary school students in Lagos state are aware of their rights and explored their views about the exercise of these*

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rights. Through survey method, information was obtained from 500 respondents. The findings show that the respondents professed to know about the rights of the children but many of them (76.2%) have never heard of the United Nations CRC. Television is the most patronized source of information for the respondents from which they have received most of their information on the child rights. They also believe that they have rights and that it is the government's responsibility to make provision for meeting some of their needs like education and health. It is recommended that child rights advocates should increase their efforts in putting the rights of the child in the public space and give information on how children can demand for the fulfillment of these rights.

**Key words:** *Child rights, Information sources, Awareness, UNCRC, Lagos.*

## **Introduction**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees children certain rights including the right to be heard in matters that affect them and to share information freely (Jonyniene & Samuelsson, 1999). Many countries, including Nigeria have domesticated the Convention by passing it into law, like the Nigerian Child Rights Act of 2003. This study examined the extent to which secondary school pupils in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state are aware of their rights and explored their views about the exercise of these rights.

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The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the CRC both speak of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom and equality. The CRC uses the phrase, "the evolving capacities of the child", which means that children will gradually be more involved in matters that concern their lives and that they will actively participate in decision making. Information has many dimensions. It not only includes facts or knowledge but expression, ideals and emotions also. There are various sources of information and it is important in our lives as also for our lives. The sources of information and the content of information play an important role in the development of children. It determines their social participation and identity.

Article 17 of the CRC relating to the information and the role of the media says: "State Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media - shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, State Parties shall: (a) encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child in accordance with the spirit of Article 29; (b) encourage for development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of Articles 13 and 18. As Article 17 states, access to information should be ensured. Children themselves should know about their rights. Article 42 prescribes that the

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principles and the provisions of the Convention should be widely known. Attention should be paid to different forms of communication with children. The value of the information given by children will increase as it becomes clear to them that what they think, feel, experience is valuable and important. The extent to which the above mentioned ideals are practiced in Nigeria is the focus of this study. Are Nigerian children aware of their rights? What are their sources of information in this regard? What do they think about exercising these rights? These and other questions related to the implementation of children's participatory rights in the country are yet to be answered.

### **Literature**

Rogers (1963 & 2003) defines diffusion as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Diffusion is a special type of communication concerned with the spread of messages that are perceived as new ideas. Child rights are seen as the innovation being communicated to the society for development purposes. The main elements in the diffusion of new ideas are: (1) an innovation, (2) which is communicated through certain channels, (3) over time, (4) among the members of a social system. An Innovation is an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. The characteristics of an innovation, as perceived by the members of a social system, determine its rate of adoption. Five attributes of innovations are: (1) Relative Advantage: The degree to

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which the innovation is perceived to be superior to current practice. (2) Compatibility: The degree to which the innovation is perceived to be consistent with socio-cultural values, previous ideas, and/or perceived needs. (3) Complexity: The degree to which an innovation is difficult to use or understand. (4) Trialability: The degree to which the innovation can be experienced on a limited basis, and (5) Observability: The degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to potential adopters.

A Communication channel is the means by which messages get from one individual to another, which could be interpersonal or mass media and originating from either local or cosmopolite sources. Interpersonal channels involve a face-to-face exchange between two or more individuals. Mass media channels are means of transmitting messages involving a mass medium such as radio, television, newspapers, and so on, which enable a source of one or a few individuals to reach an audience of many. Most individuals evaluate an innovation, not on the basis of scientific research by experts, but through the subjective evaluations of near-peers who have adopted the innovation. These near-peers thus serve as role models, whose innovation behaviour tends to be intimidated by others in their system.

Time is involved in diffusion at three levels; one, at the level of innovation-decision process is the mental process through which an individual (or other decision-making unit) passes from first

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knowledge of an innovation to forming an attitude toward the innovation, to a decision to adopt or reject, to implementation of the new idea, and to confirmation of this decision. This process consists of five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Two, at the level of innovativeness, the degree to which an individual or other unit of adoption is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than other members of a social system. Innovativeness determines the type of adopter categories, namely: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards. Three, at the level of innovation rate of adoption, i.e. the relative speed with which an innovation is adopted by members of a social system.

A social system is a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem-solving to accomplish a common goal. A system has structure, defined as the patterned arrangements of the units in a system, which gives stability and regularity to individual behaviour in a system. Social systems can be characterized as heterophilous or homophilous. On one hand, heterophilous social systems tend to encourage change from system norms. In them, there is more interaction between people from different backgrounds, indicating a greater interest in being exposed to new ideas. These systems have opinion leadership that is more innovative because these systems are desirous of innovation. On the other hand, homophilous social systems tend toward system norms (*Wejnert 2002*). Most interaction within them is between people from similar backgrounds. People and ideas that differ from the norm are seen as strange and undesirable.

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These systems have opinion leadership that is not very innovative because these systems are averse to innovation.

### **Child and Childhood**

Mosby's Medical Dictionary (2009) defines a child as a person of either sex between the time of birth and adolescence. Wesley (1993:210) 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 used about 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 and Stevens, 2004: 9). In the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is every human being below the age of eighteen years. Similarly, The Nigerian Child Rights Act (2003), passed into law the House of Assembly, defines a child as a person who has not attained the age of eighteen years. The general conception of a child then seems to limit it below 18 years of age.

According to UNICEF (2005:3), childhood means much more than

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just the space between birth and the attainment of adulthood; it refers to "the state and condition of a child's life: to the quality of those years". It follows then that a child who has been kidnapped for example, by a paramilitary group and compelled to bear arms or forced into sexual slavery cannot have a childhood, nor can a child put to hard labour in a garment factory in the capital city, far from family and home village. Similarly, children living in abject poverty without adequate food, access to education, safe water, sanitation facilities and shelter are also deprived of childhood.

This definition of childhood is based on human rights and it is reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children are neither the possession of parents nor of the State, nor are they mere 'people-in-the-making'; they have equal status as members of the human family. In other words, children have needs similar to those of adults and thus have similar rights like any other human being. Children however rely on adults for the nurture and guidance they need to grow towards independence. Such nurture is ideally found in the children's families, but when primary care-givers cannot provide children's needs, society is expected to fill the gap.

### **Child Rights**

The debate on 'rights' has a long history in the Western world. Its foundations can be traced back at least as far as discussions of natural law among Greek and Romans stoics (Tisdall and Hill, 1997). These discussions were revived, expanded and modified by such philosophers as Locke and Paine who argued for the links between

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natural rights, individualism and liberty.

Tisdall and Hill (1997) note that rights are fundamental and universal; and thus override other values because they are based in nature and are of divine creation. However, there are those who believe that rights are socially or legally constructed rather than natural or God-given (Jones, 1994). Some would say that rights are inextricably linked to a particular society, and are thus the idea that rights can be universalised across societies is incorrect. Those who believe that certain rights are universal posit that the concept of human rights has largely replaced that of natural rights, thus avoiding the theological foundation of most natural rights theories. They rely on a concept of basic human needs to provide the basis for human rights (MacCormick, 1982; Freedon, 1991; Eekelaar, 1992). These needs are said to be irrefutable:

*Certain needs are so fundamental; it may be argued, that they should be treated as a social right and society should accept a duty to provide them to all citizens (Charless and Webb, 1986:71).*

Many distinctions have been made in relation to rights. A useful distinction is made between legal and moral rights. Legal rights are those set out in law, which are thus enforceable. Moral rights are not established in law, but are put forward as what ought to be. Marshall (1963) also identified three types of rights, namely civil, political and social. Civil rights are defined as those necessary for individual

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freedom. Political rights involve participation in the exercise of political power. The social rights range from ensuring a 'modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage' (Marshall, 1963: 74).

The relationship among claims, duties and rights is another consideration:

*A right is a legal capacity in one person to control or limit or require an act of another. The right resides with the first person, the duty with the second. Rights are about obligation, an obligation fixed in law or fought for on moral and legal grounds, a duty placed on someone other than the rights-holder. Rights establish and support relationships (McGillvray, 1994: 354).*

Whether someone can have a right without someone else having a corresponding duty has been the subject of much debate (Dworkin, 1978; MacCormick, 1982; Olsen, 1992). With some rights, it is relatively easy to identify who is the duty-holder and what the duty is. For instance, a child may have a right to its parent's care and supervision. The child has the right; the parent has the duty; and the duty is for care and supervision. However, with some rights, identifying the duty and duty-holder can be more difficult. A child may have a right to adequate standard of living, but who has the duty to provide the adequate standard.

There are those who believe that children had no right (Tisdall and Hill, 1997). For example, Hobbes posited that children have no

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natural rights and are under the absolute subjection of their parents. Locke, however opposed that saying that children have natural rights but only adults are fully rational. Thus, parents have authority over children and the corresponding responsibility to educate children into reason. Purdy (19994) believes that children should have no equal rights with adult. She argued that rationality is important because a society where people behave intelligently and morally clearly works better and is more enjoyable to live in than one where they do not. She believes that societal problems arising from inadequacies of adults are enough to grapple with and the situation would only be compounded if adults' rights are extended to children. Therefore, all children should have welfare rights or protection rights, such as right to survival and adequate standard of living and, in fact, have more welfare rights than adults.

Children's rights are claims that all children have for survival, development, protection and participation. The Child Development Department of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development, Federal Republic of Nigeria (1995: 5), lists the basic principles of Children's rights:

- Every child has the right to life and be allowed to survive and develop
  - Every child is entitled to a name, family and nationality.
  - Every child is free to belong to any association or assembly according to the law
  - Every child has the right to express opinions and freely communicate them on any issues subject to restriction under the law.
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- Every child is entitled to protection from any act that interferes with his or her privacy, honour, and reputation.
- Every child is entitled to adequate rest, recreation (leisure and play) according to his or her age and culture.
- Every child (male or female) is entitled to receive compulsory basic education and equal opportunity for higher education depending on individual ability.
- Every child is entitled to good health, protection from illness and proper medical attention for survival, personal growth and development.
- Every child must be protected from indecent and inhuman treatment through sexual exploitation, drug abuse, child labour, torture, maltreatment and neglect.
- No child should suffer any discrimination irrespective of ethnic origin, birth, colour, sex, language, religion, political and social beliefs, status or disability.

### **Media Role in Protection and Promotion of Child Rights**

While communication is central to development, the media of mass communication play active role in that process because of their efficiency in information spread. Melkote and Steeves (2001) noted that mass media play the role of a catalyst to bring about change in development process. Deane et al (2002) stipulate that the mass media are fundamental to development. The mass media enable people to learn about issues as well as make their voices heard. They can exert a powerful influence, for good or for ill. Free, independent press are important to ensure freedom of speech (guaranteed by the

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Universal Declaration of Human Rights), promote democracy, good governance, peace and human rights, combat poverty and crime, inform people about issues and enable them to participate in public debate.

Okigbo (1991) notes that the print media can contribute to development by disseminating truth and useful information, correlating the parts of society and sensitizing (or conscientizing) the people to the need for planned development and social change. Other important functions of the print media in development process are persuasion, motivation, providing learning materials and appropriate development information for educated members of the society.

Media also shape public opinion and influence public policy. **Graves (2007), citing Jaime Abello Banfi, notes that** media are used to give voice to marginalized groups, such as women and ethnic and religious minorities, as well as to promote their rights. In Burundi, for example, the association BonSem produces a weekly radio show and publishes a newsletter designed to encourage discussion about how civil society can work for the political and economic inclusion of the marginalized Twa communities. Similarly, according to Panos London's 2007 report *At the Heart of Change*, information and the media that deliver it are powerful agents of change that can help reduce poverty and the debilitating effects of disease in the developing world. Sustainable development demands that people participate in the debates and decisions that affect their lives. They

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need to be able to receive information, but also to make their voices heard. The social impact of media includes improving the quality of education, informing the public about health threats and safe practices to avoid them, serving local communities by bringing attention to their needs, and in times of disaster, providing information and sources of assistance to people displaced from their homes (Graves, 2007).

Article 17 of the Convention on the rights of the child specifies the role the media should play in the promotion and protection of children's rights (UNICEF 2002:65-66). The Committee on the Rights of the Child (1996) believes that the media- both written and audio visual- are highly important in efforts to make reality the principles and standards of the Convention. The media can play a pivotal role in monitoring the actual implementation of the rights of the child.

The media are powerful because they penetrate every segment of modern-day society and effectively influence how people view themselves, their neighbours, their communities and their world. Media representations are the primary source of information on social problems for many people (Hutson and Liddiard, 1994). Maley (2000: 37) for instance, notes that: "In social and cultural matters, the various media provide the main platforms of debate, and their choices of subjects, participants and opinions shape the agenda and much of its content." The media play a significant role in forming and influencing people's attitudes and behaviour (Brawley, 1995).

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Goddard and Saunders (2001), draw attention to the essential role of the media in increasing the society's awareness of, and response to, child abuse and neglect. News and features could be used to report child abuse cases, research and intervention strategies. Such media attention to child abuse can positively influence public opinion, professional and political responses to the circumstances in which children and young people find themselves. Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1987:3) observe that journalists play a major role in constructing what is considered "deviant" in our society and, therefore, what is "normal". Journalists do not merely reflect the work of others who define deviance and attempt to control it, but are themselves in some ways agents of social control; they are "a kind of deviance defining elite" who articulates the "proper bounds to behaviour" in our society.

In addition to news stories, feature articles and investigative journalism, sporadic mass media education and prevention campaigns could be launched. These campaigns will broaden community's knowledge of child abuse and neglect, influence people's attitudes towards children and young people and change behaviours that contribute to, or precipitate the problem of child abuse and neglect in our communities.

Though it has been argued that complex attitudinal or behavioural change requires more direct forms of citizen contact and intervention, the media at least are effective in building citizen awareness of an issue (McDevitt, 1996; O'Keefe, and Reed, 1990; **Saunders and**

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Goddard, 2002; Reger, Wootan and Booth-Butterfield, 2000; Freimuth, Cole and Kirby 2001). Besides, mass media campaigns and coverage of the rights of children perform a significant role in placing the relevant issues on the public and political agenda. Lindsey (1994:163) also asserts that: "media has a central role in mediating information and forming public opinion. The media casts an eye on events that few of us directly experience and renders remote happenings observable and meaningful".

Parajuli (2004) also notes that the media can bring forth children's issues by allowing children who have been working (in the worst form) as domestic servants, on the streets, in factories and mines/quarries as well as those rehabilitated from any organization to participate in their media programme. He adds that children, being the future of a country, must be provided with education, socialized, motivated and equipped with all the basic necessities for their personality development. In this connection, the rights of the children like education, health, communication, participation, physical and moral support are some of the major components for their well-being. So, the media have to raise the awareness of children's situation to the concerned NGOs or government. In other words, mass media education and child rights campaigns present one means of breaking the cycles of suppression and denial.

Public attitudes and perceptions, however ill-informed, may profoundly influence political action (Walby 1996). In their analysis of the social construction of youth homelessness, Hutson and

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Liddiard (1994) argued that media representations are the prime source of information on social problems for many people. The media have been essential to the growth of societal awareness of child abuse, not so much from specific community education campaigns as through the news and features reporting on specific cases, research and intervention initiatives. As Goddard notes:

*... in Victoria, if not the rest of Australia, the media coverage of child abuse has played a significant part in the development of "solutions" to the problem. A major restructuring of child protection services, together with a large increase in resources, followed one extensive media campaign (Goddard and Carew 1993). Another intensive print media campaign following the death of an abused child referred to the police and protective services, led to the introduction of mandatory reporting in Victoria. Such campaigns lead to "policy development by press release" rather than responses developed through community consultation, research, and reflection (1996b:305).*

*Hammarberg (1996) outlines the specific functions that the media can perform in realisation of the requirements of the Convention on the rights of the child as follows:*

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**1. *To Monitor Abuses - and Progress***

It is hoped that violations of children's rights be reported in the media. Such scrutiny would probably be more effective than the international procedure prescribed by the convention which requires the government itself to report to the monitoring committee on steps for implementation. However, the media could also draw from the official documentation in their reporting. The convention could be seen as the yardstick against which reality could be measured.

**2. *To Respect the Integrity of the Child***

One of the important aspects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is that it presents a truly modern attitude towards children themselves. It recognizes the vulnerability of children in certain circumstances but also their capacity and strength for development. A major emphasis in the convention is that each child is unique. All this can be undermined through negative stereotyping. Likewise, the media should be careful not to violate the integrity of individual children in their reporting on, for instance, crime and sexual abuse. The convention specifically protects the individual child from violations of his or her privacy, honour and reputation.

**3. *To Allow Children to Participate in the Media***

One of the principles of the convention is that the views of children be heard and given due respect. This is also reflected

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in articles about freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion. It is in the spirit of these provisions that children should not only be able to consume information material but also to participate themselves in the media. The idea is that children, in fact, should be able to express themselves and that their views be sought.

#### 4. *To Protect Children against Harmful Influences through the Media*

While the convention requests access for children to the media, it also reflects concern about the risk of children being harmed by some reports and information material. The idea is that the integrity of the child should be respected in the reporting. Another article says that the state should encourage guidelines to protect children at large from injurious media output, for instance certain violent and pornographic materials.

### **Method**

The method adopted for this study was survey. Survey is useful in collecting original data for describing a population about the characteristics of or prediction about the behaviour of great body of people requiring measurement along feelings, ideas, information and understanding (Backstron and Hursh, 1963). The population of the study comprised secondary school children who are under the age of 18 in Lagos state. Kosofe local government area was randomly

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selected among the 20 constitutionally recognised local governments in Lagos. The secondary schools were furthered stratified into two- the public and private schools. Five schools were randomly drawn from each stratum, making 10 schools in all. From each of the schools, 50 children were randomly selected, making a total of 500 respondents as the sample size. The questionnaire for this study was self administered by the researcher and a research assistant who went to different secondary schools and handed the copies of questionnaires out and the respondents were left alone to complete the questionnaire while the researcher waited to collect the filled copies of the questionnaire.

The data were analysed to show the relationship between respondents' demographic variables, i.e. age, gender, class and the awareness level of children about their rights. This study is descriptive, thus descriptive statistical techniques was used to analyze the study. In other words, percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the data. This was done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program.

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## Result

**Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents Demographic Variables**

GENDER	VARIABLES	PERCENT %
	Male	49.4
	Female	50.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100% n=500</b>
AGE	8 -10	5.4
	11-13	24.6
	14-16	51.2
	below 18	18.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100% n =500</b>
CLASS	JSS3	20
	SS1	30
	SS2	20
	SS3	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100% n=500</b>

Table 1 shows that there are more females than male respondents in the various schools that were used for the study. There were 49.4% of males and 50.6% females. Age distribution of the respondents in the various schools shows that 5.4% of the respondents fall between the age bracket of 8-10, 24.6% fall between the age range of 11-13, 51.6% fall between the age range of 14-16 and 18.8% of the respondents fall under the age gap of below 18. Twenty per cent (20%) of the respondents are in JSS 3, 30% of the respondents are in SS1, while 20% are in SS2 and 30% of the respondents are in SS3.

**Table 2: Awareness and Knowledge of Child Rights**

<b>Awareness of Child Rights</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percent%</b>
	Yes	94
	No	6
	Total	100% n-500
<b>Extent of Knowledge of Child Rights</b>		
	Very great extent	4.8
	Great extent	39.4
	Neutral	30
	Little extent	20.2
	Very little extent	5.6
	Total	100% n=500

From Table 2, 94% respondents are aware of child rights, only 6% are not aware. Then, 39.4% stated that they had great extent knowledge of child rights, 20% had little knowledge and 30% could not say the extent of their knowledge of child rights.

**Table 3: Awareness of UNCRC**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Yes	23.8
No	76.2
Total	100% n=500

Table 3 shows the awareness of respondents about the UN Convention on the Rights of the child; 76.2.8% is aware of while 23.8% is not aware.

**Table 4: Sources of Information to the Respondents on their Rights**

Information Sources	Percent %
Family/Parents/Guardian	8.6
Television	50.4
Radio	6.6
Newspaper/Magazines	11
School	9.2
Internet/Website	12
Government Agencies	1.2
Neighbours	0.4
Legal Documents	0.6
Total	100.0% n=500

We also obtain from our data that television is the most enjoyed medium of information by the respondents (54%), followed by the Internet (21.4%). Only 9.4% and 9.2% enjoyed newspapers and radio in that order. Table 4 shows that television remains the best source of information to the respondents on their rights with 50.4%, with Internet and Newspapers/Magazines following with 12% and 11% accordingly. School came after with 9.2%, followed by Family and Radio with 8.6% and 6.6% accordingly.

Our data show that 98% of the respondents believe that children have rights while 2% of the respondents think that children do not have rights. Similarly, 96.6% of the respondents believe that children should be allowed to exercise their rights, while 3.4% of the respondents believe that children should not be allowed to exercise their rights.



**Table 5: Possession of Rights to be respected**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percent%</b>
Strongly Agree	79.6
Agree	17.4
Undecided	0.6
Disagree	1.8
Strongly Disagree	0.6
Total	100% n=500

Table 5 shows that 79.6% strongly agree that children and youths have rights that must be respected, 17.4% agree, 0.6% are undecided about that, 1.8% disagree while 0.6% strongly disagree that children and youths have rights that must be respected. .

**Table 6: Responses on child rights should be the concern of all**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Strongly agree	56.8
Agree	34.4
Undecided	5.6
Disagree	2.8
Strongly disagree	0.4
Total	100.0% n =500

Table 6 above shows that 56.8% of the respondents strongly agree that child rights should be the concern of all, 34.4% agree, 5.6% are undecided, 2.8% disagree while 0.4% of the respondents strongly disagree that child rights should be the concern of all.

**Table 7: Its State Responsibility to Protect Children's Rights**

Responses	Percent%
Strongly Agree	11.4
Agree	23.4
Undecided	17.4
Disagree	31.6
Strongly Disagree	16.4
Total	100% n=500

Table 7 above shows that 11.4% of the respondents strongly agree that only the state or government can protect our rights, 23.4% agree, 17.4% are undecided, 31.6% disagree while 16.4% strongly disagree that only the state or government can protect our rights. Thus, most children believe that child rights protection is not the state's responsibility alone.

**Table 8: Belief that Children of the Rich have more Rights than the Poor**

Responses	Percent%
Strongly Agree	4.6
Agree	11.2
Undecided	11.4
Disagree	28.8
Strongly Disagree	40
Total	100% n=500

Table 8 shows that 4.6% of the respondents strongly agree that children of the rich have more rights than the poor, 11.2% agree, 11.4% are undecided, 28.8% disagree while 40% strongly agree that children of the rich have more rights than the poor. The respondents

do not believe that children of rich parents have more rights.

**Table 9: Believe That Children Deserve To Be Treated Free In Hospitals**

Responses	Percent%
Strongly Agree	29.8
Agree	46
Undecided	19.4
Disagree	3.8
Strongly Disagree	1
Total	100% n=500

Table 9 shows that 29.8% strongly agree that children deserve to be treated free in hospitals, 46% also agree, 19.4% are undecided, 3.8% disagree and 1% of the respondents strongly disagree that children should be treated fee in hospitals.

**Table 10: Belief that it is Government's Duty to Provide Free Education to Children**

Responses	Percent%
Strongly Agree	39.4
Agree	46.6
Undecided	11.8
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	1.8
Total	100% n=500

Table 10 shows that 39.4% of the respondents strongly agree that it is the duty of the state and government to provide free education to

children, 46.6% agree, 11.8% are undecided, 1% disagree, while 1.8% of the respondents strongly disagree that it is the duty of the state/ government to provide free education to children.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The result shows that most respondents (94%) professed to be aware of rights of the child; and over 44% has the knowledge to a great extent. This is impressive because the first step to the realisation of the rights of the child is when children themselves are aware of it since awareness precedes decision to take advantage of an innovation as expressed by Rogers (1963). But, it is also important to take note of 30% respondents who could not rate the extent of knowledge they have. One wonders whether the respondents' knowledge is limited and are ashamed of disclosing it or they could not understand how to gauge their knowledge. This might probably means that they do not know the overall details of these rights and could not determine where to place themselves on the continuum.

We also realize that most respondents (76.2%) are not aware of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Since the respondents do not know about this Convention that spells out the details of child rights, it might then mean that the knowledge that these children have about their rights is superficial. The UNCRC gives the details of the rights of the child, outlines the responsibilities of the State that it should ensure with other sectors in the country. This low level of awareness on UNCRC also calls to question the kind of information that the mass media and other child rights

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advocate give out about child rights. Are such information drawn from UNCRC or from other sources?

Most respondents receive information about child rights from television, followed by the Internet. This is quite in order because television is captivating and attractive. Generally, children are drawn to what they see and they prefer to watch television to attending to other media. It is also not surprising that Internet followed television; the computer/Internet age are regarded as youth age; children and young people are readily at home to browse the Net for various reasons, no wonder they are the set that dominate the spaces on the social network. It is quite unfortunate that the impact of government agencies, schools and families is very low in being source of information on child rights. The families and schools should be a good source of information on child rights since most socialisation for the children takes place there. But this is only possible if parents and teachers themselves are aware of these rights.

Good enough, majority of the respondents believe that children should be allowed to exercise their rights and that those rights should be respected. They also believe that the rights of the child should be the concern of all and it is not the government's responsibility alone to provide and meet those rights.

The respondents also share that all children have equal rights irrespective of the social status of their parents and are of the opinion that they deserve their welfare rights like free health care and free education. Having known this, it is left for the government to provide

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these rights and for children to begin to demand for the fulfilment of these rights.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

We can conclude from the findings of this study that children's knowledge about their rights is still superficial; most of them have not heard of the UNCRC not to talk of the Child Rights Act of 2003. It, thus, means that efforts at popularising the rights of the child should be increased so as to give adequate knowledge of these rights. Television and the Internet should be better explored to inform children about their rights and ways of exploiting them. Media owners and producers can effectively use their media to propagate the rights of the child by informing the children and drawing the attention of policy makers to the need of children as required by UNCRC. Child rights advocate can also host child-friendly websites that are completely devoted to meeting the information and entertainment needs of children and young people. The teaching of child rights should also be included the school curriculum to further enhance its popularity.

Finally, other media like newspaper and radio can be used to reach out to policy makers and NGOs to show more concerns for the plight of children. By these, the realization of child right will be achieved faster and the future of our world will be better secured.

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