

**TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES OF ASIAN CHILD LABOUR VICTIMS IN *BOYS WITHOUT NAMES***

**Bamisaye, Gbeminiyi and Sotunsa, Mobolanle**

Department of Languages and Literary Studies,  
Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State

---

**ABSTRACT:** *Child labour though an age long social phenomenon, has claimed the lives of many Asian children and continues to exist in various forms even in contemporary times. As such, that phenomenon needs continuous interrogation. This paper therefore examines the traumatic experiences of child labour victims in Kashmira Sheth's Boys without Names (2010). Using psychoanalytic theory, the study examined the travails, pains, trauma and emotional struggles of six child labour victims in the selected text. Findings revealed that poverty is the major cause of child labour and until poverty is curbed, child labour will continue to persist. The study also discovered that education is imperative as it is a great tool that can help to combat child labour, hence, every child deserves good and quality education. The study therefore recommended that children and parents should be sensitized on the advantages of education.*

**KEYWORDS:** child labour, Asia, victims, poverty, emotional struggles

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

The International Labour Organization (ILO; 2013) defines child labour as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. According to Sharma (2006), child labour has been an international concern because it damages, spoils and destroys the future of children. Children are the hope and future of a nation yet, there are million deprived children in our country who have never known a normal, carefree childhood. According to ILO (2015), the Asia-Pacific region harbours the largest absolute number of economically active children in the 5-14 age group in the world. The ILO estimates that 218 million children are engaged in child labour all over the world.

The problems faced by these child labour victims are widely diverse, ranging from psychological, physical to sexual abuse. If child labour victims are not given proper attention, they can become threats to the society. Not all work done by children are classified as child labour. According to ILO, "Children's or adolescence's participation in work that does not affect health and personal development or interferes with their schooling, is generally regarded as being positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children's development and their family; they provide them with skills and experience, and help them to be productive members of society during their adult life".

Child labour though an age long social phenomenon has claimed the lives of many children and continues to exist in various forms even in contemporary times. The phenomenon of child labour has become one of the widely discussed social tragedies of our time (Anyidoho, 2003: xix) and this has captivated the interest of so many scholars and researchers. Researches abound on various forms of child labour and the pain, plight and implication of child labour on community development in Asia, (Aqil, 2012; Hansenne: 1998; Rena, 2009; and Lai-Ah: 1982) however, awareness on child labour is not sufficient and it is in light of this that this study examined the traumatic experiences of child labour victims and the factors responsible for child labour. The main objective of this study is to identify and unravel the experiences of Asian child labour victims by examining the factors responsible for child labour, discovering the survival strategies employed by child labour victims and assessing the effects of traumatic experiences on child labour victims.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed qualitative approach to carry out the study and this involved a literary and detailed textual analysis of the selected text. The text was purposively selected because it portrays to a large extent the experiences of Asian child labour victims. Asia as a continent is apt for this study because Asia harbours the largest absolute number of economically active children in the 6-14 age group in the world. For the purpose of this study, the experiences of six Asian child labour victims (Gopal, Barish, Kabir, Roshan, Sahil and Amar) were examined and attempt were made to bring out the factors responsible for their predicament.

### **Factors Responsible for Child Labour**

Many push factors are responsible for child labour and those factors are alarming and still important concerns today for organizations such as ILO, UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO. Those factors include poverty, war, migration, illiteracy, unemployment and family size.

**Poverty:** is the number one factor responsible for child labour. Rena (2012) delineates that the problem of child labour is closely associated with poverty and underdevelopment. It is often pointed out that poverty is the main cause of child labour in general. As in all the developing countries including India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Malawi, Sudan, and Chad, the prevalence of poverty is high and therefore, there is child labour in these developing countries, particularly in Asia and Africa. Akarro and Mtweve (2011) also argue that child labour is a reflection of poverty and therefore tackling poverty will have a positive impact on child labour. Children in rural areas ailed with poverty are usually perceived as income generating resource to supplement their family's income. Poverty causes child labour and child labour usually deprives children of having all smooth and mind development. Based on the research and statistics made by Shah (2013) in an online publication on poverty as a global issue posits that poverty is the state for the majority of the world's people and nations. He stresses further that the poorest people will also have less access to health, education and other services.

**War:** is also a contributing factor to child labour as many people have been rendered invalid and irrelevant in their home country which usually makes them poor and destabilized. Many families have been displaced from their homes due to different wars ranging from tribal, civil, to World Wars. Romenzi (2017) in an online publication on the effects of war on children postulates that millions of children and young people worldwide are affected by armed conflict. They are confronted with physical harm, violence, danger, exploitation, fear and loss. During conflict, children and young people's rights are violated on a massive scale; their rights to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect, to live in dignity and be supported to develop to their full potential. Many children especially boys are taken from their families and recruited as child soldiers, some of these children usually witness the death of loved ones while some are forced to pull the trigger themselves. According to UNICEF (1996), children have, of course, always been caught up in warfare. They usually have little choice but to experience, at minimum, the same horrors as their parents, as casualties or even combatants and children have always been particularly exposed. War is still an existing issue in many under developed, developing and some developed countries.

**Migration:** is another cause of child labour. New Encyclopedia (2007) defines human migration as any movement by human beings from locality to another, often over long distances or in large groups. It further opines that humans are known to have migrated extensively throughout prehistory and human history. The human nature is dynamic and receptive to change; which could be voluntary or involuntary; therefore, humans in their quest to satisfy their basic needs such as food, shelter and security migrate. The movement of populations in modern times has continued under the form of both voluntary migration within one's region, country, or beyond, and involuntary migration. Many migrants leave their motherland with high hopes and unobtainable dreams of the cities and places they are migrating to only for them to get there and be confronted with traumatic experiences such as hostility, slavery, alienation and stranger hood which usually rub them of their dignity and self-respect.

**Unemployment:** is another cause of child labour. Families where child labour is encouraged are families whereby the parents are unemployed or out of job. Many parents have been deprived their responsibilities due to unemployment, most of them have become liabilities to the children who take up parental responsibilities. According to Valencia and Hahn (2010), unemployment is a considerable source of social distress, leading to loss of social contact and activity, increased isolation from others, increased family tensions and loss of self-esteem and self-confidence. A person can be referred to as unemployed when he or she is willing and able to work but is currently jobless. Such people are usually actively seeking job opportunities.

**Illiteracy-**There is a popular maxim that says "Illiteracy is a disease". Illiteracy indeed is a disease as it sometimes rub people off opportunity while at other times land people into unforeseen troubles or problems. Children who are not attending school due to parents' illiteracy and their illiteracy usually have a high tendency of entering child labour. Education is power and it is an important tool that draws children away from child labour. Nelson Mandela also supports this claim in his quote on education, "World revolves around the children, children's future revolves around education. Education is power! Children in underdeveloped and developing countries are at high risk because they are naive and ignorant to the wiles and craftiness of the traffickers and

kidnappers thereby becoming their prey. A large number of parents due to lack of good job or job at all usually encourage their children to engage in child labour by sending those children to the street to fend for themselves and their siblings. These children because they are too young to take up a good job usually become cheap labourers with little pay while some others engage in all sort of vices that are physically, socially, mentally and morally dangerous and harmful to them.

**Family Size:** is also another factor responsible for child labour. Impoverished families with large family size are more prone to poverty and child labour. Children from large families are usually deprived proper care and attention by their parents because those parents have more mouths to feed than they can cater for. Many parents with large family size encourage and contribute to the increase of child labour in the world. Majority of children who are victims of child labour are mostly from large families which could not be managed by their parents hence the compulsion and need for those children to contribute their own quota to the family's little or no income. A large proportion of these children take to the street to fend for themselves and their siblings, some other children are sold by their parents thereby being paid while some others become nuisances and threats to the society due to lack of proper parental guidance and care.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory adopted for the analysis of this study is psychoanalytic theory. Psychoanalytic premises and procedures were established by Sigmund Freud. Freud developed the dynamic form of psychology that he called psychoanalysis as a procedure for the analysis and therapy of neuroses. Freud proposes that literature and other arts, like dreams and neurotic symptoms, consist of the imagined, or fantasized, the fulfillment of wishes that are either denied by reality or prohibited by the social standards of morality and propriety. Aspects of psychoanalysis that will be used for the analysis of this study are, Freudian unconscious, dreams, the id (which incorporates libidinal and other innate desires) and the impossibly stringent requirements of the superego, and the limited possibilities of gratification offered by reality) will help to reveal the painful experiences, wounds, dreams, unresolved conflicts and repression. A large proportion of children who go through traumatic experiences usually repress and suppress their pain and feelings because repression is all they need to survive the harsh treatment they face in the hands of their bosses.

### **Factors Responsible for Child Labour in *Boys Without Names***

There are different factors responsible for child labour as exemplified by six child labour victims in the novel. They are discussed under the following:

**Poverty (Gopal):** is one of the causes of child labour that runs through this novel. Poverty is the major cause of child labour discussed in this novel and it is exemplified through the character of Gopal and the other child labour victims. Gopal, an eleven-year old boy who is both the protagonist and narrator is from an impoverished family who are dependent on a small parcel of land. When the land no longer yields its increase, they become extremely poor with no job or whatsoever to change their status. This is evident in Gopal's narration:

Like many other villagers, we have lost our land and can't grow crops. But there are no other jobs in the village as there are in the

cities. And we are poor as the pipul tree is bare in the autumn, in the past few months, the hunger has settled permanently in our stomachs (p. 3)

Gopal's family's fortune changes for the worse in the year of good rain when everyone in the village had a bumper crop of onions. Due to this increase and good harvest, the prices of onions tumbled so, Baba, the father of the house could not pay back the money he had borrowed to buy seeds and fertilizer. And in order to make ends meet, the father besides working on the farm, also works at a quarry splitting stones while Aai, the mother of the house carries luggage for tourists. After so much hard work and the interest on their debt have been made, the family usually have barely enough left to keep five of them from hunger and lack. Gopal's family is so poor that they could not afford to buy medicine when Naren, Gopal's brother becomes sick, so they sell some of their properties. This can be seen in the following excerpt:

The doctor's visit and the medicine were expensive. The pills were each a quarter of the size of a gorus-chinch seed, but they cost Baba almost one month's income. We had to borrow more money. At the end of last year, Baba sold the farm to pay the lender (p. 4).

In a bid to survive, the family keeps borrowing but finds it hard to pay back their debt. In an attempt to change the family's status, Gopal in his desperation and eagerness to get a job becomes a victim of child labour. Many naive and innocent children like Gopal have been swayed into child labour by strangers in an attempt to support their family by adding their own quota to the little income of their family. A large proportion of children from poor homes are usually prone to becoming child labourers due to lack of resources thereby engaging in all vices to make ends meet. Until poverty becomes eradicated, child labour will continue to persist.

**Loss of Parent/Guardian** (Kabir, a.k.a GC) - is another contributing factor to child labour. Children, especially the under aged ones who lose their guardian or parents are usually prone to becoming child labour victims. This is evident in the character of Kabir who is being taken care of by his grandmother. His grandmother takes him as her own and nurtures him; his grandmother rears cows and goat and uses the income from selling the cows' milk to take care of Kabir until she gets sick a day and didn't get well even with medicine. In order to make ends meet and buy medicine for his grandmother, all her goats and cows are sold. After all has been sold, they become hungry and needy; Kabir in the desperation to change their predicament, steals money from a neighbour's house but unfortunately is caught in the act. When his sick grandmother becomes aware of his crime, she cries and dies the same day. This is evident in the following excerpt: "My grandmother was the only person I had in the world and when she died, I had nobody. I killed her. I know I killed her (p. 278)

After the death of his grandmother, he leaves the village and starts wandering and roaming about in search of home and shelter. Moving from one train to the other without ticket and in the course of his wandering, reaches Mumbai where he becomes a street boy and is introduced to pickpocketing business by some street lords. One day in the course of pickpocketing, he meets

with doom when he tries to steal from a child labour boss who in turn makes him a child labour. Many children like Kabir become child labourers because they have no one to cater for them so in the process of trying to cater for themselves, usually engage in all sort of vices to survive.

**Parental Neglect (Amar, a.k.a Dimpled Chin)** - is another cause of child labour. Neglect generally refers to the absence of parental care and the chronic failure to meet children's basic needs. Many parents have deprived their children care and failed repeatedly to meet their children's basic needs such as quality education, good medical care and shelter. Department for Education and Skills (2006b) defines neglect as:

...the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of adequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Amar, a six year old boy becomes a child labourer as a result of inadequate parental care. His father who should protect him from the psychological abuse inflicted on him by his step mom usually supports his wife who always finds fault in Amar and everything he does. His father usually misbehaves anytime he drinks, and one day beats Amar who he complains of as naughty. Amar explains:

My baba said I was a naughty boy, and that is why he hit me so I would behave better. It only happened when he came home smelling bad and said bad words. He slept until the sun was way up in the sky (p. 194).

Children who are abused physically by their parent especially their fathers usually go through psychological trauma because the father is supposed to be the all protective patriarch in the family. Amar, an underage child did not have a good father figure in his life and the mother figure he was privileged to have usually treats him like a slave and makes him look bad in front of his father while she always protects her own children. This is seen in the following excerpt:

...I had stepmother who was busy with my younger brothers and sisters, and they always behaved well. That is what my stepmother told my father even when I was good, I was bad. I was always bad (p. 195).

Amar's father though aware of the psychological abuse inflicted on him, decides to keep quiet. This really affects Amar's psyche which makes him believe his father hates him:

I was not bad, Amar says. "My stepmother wanted me out of her house, so she complained to my father about me. He knew it wasn't true. I guess He didn't love me, because he never, even once, took my side" (p. 275)

Children, especially the underage ones constantly desire and yearn for the warmth of parental care, but many parents have denied such children proper parental care and smooth mind development. Amar, becomes a victim of child labour due to lack of parental care, so many Asian children have become child labour because of parental neglect.

**Parental Illiteracy (Roshan, a.k.a Night Chatterer)** - is another cause of child labour that is prominent in the novel. Parental illiteracy is one of the causes of child labour, parents who are illiterates usually encourage their children to become child labourers. This is exemplified through the character of Roshan, one of the child labour victims. He is from a family of ten, his parents are illiterates and at the age of six, he usually accompanies his sisters to the forest to get fruits, firewood and medicine. When he becomes eight, he follows his sisters to the farm and the market to sell their goods in the market until one day, some strangers from the city come with their megaphones and sugarcoated tongues to announce publicly that they would find jobs in the big city that will pay well.

Many parents fall victim of this deception including Roshan's father who wants his son to work and get paid in the big city. His father asks them how much he would make and they said "Yo-yo-your son will make enough to feed your family and he will attend school and have a city adventure" (p. 206). After Roshan's father is deceived into engaging his son as a child labourer, he gets some money and more is promised. Roshan, therefore becomes a child labourer as a result of his father's ignorance and lack of education. "I-I-I hate my father," Roshan declares. "I hate him for believing in strangers and sending me away with them. And, and ..." (p.275). Many Illiterate parents usually trade their children to strangers and third party in exchange for food, money and fame. Many children like Roshan have become child labour victims due to their parent's ignorance and illiteracy. Illiteracy as a major cause of child labour must be curbed so that the decrease of child labour can be guaranteed.

**Natural Disaster (Sahil, a.k.a Rocking Boy)** - is another factor responsible for child labour in the novel. Many families have been displaced due to natural disasters such as earthquake, sandstorm and tsunami, Sahil's parent had many goats and camels, his father also owns a shop before the earthquake that strikes his village. Sahil explains:

One day when I was in school the earth began to shake and the building and the building collapsed. I escaped and got escaped and got caught in the sand. The sea of it whirled around, slapped my face, and stung my eyes (p. 226).

On a day when the earth shook, plenty houses and homes were destroyed and many people were crushed, Sahil goes home from school but unfortunately meets their house in ruins and his parents nowhere to be found. He never saw his parents again and in the midst of the sandstorm, a stranger comes to him rescue but makes him a child labour. Children who are displaced and without any shield are majorly preys to kidnapers and traffickers

**Debt (Barish, Thick Finger)**-is another factor contributing to child labour. Many who are in great debts are usually eager to engage in all sort of vices so as to be free from debts. Barish becomes a child labourer because of the guilt he feels for borrowing his uncle's bicycle without his consent. After the damage, he becomes scared to tell his uncle so he runs away before his uncle finds out what he has done. In the course of his escape, he hid behind a temple for two days and there he meets a man who promises to take him to the city where he could work in his tea stall and make so much money that he could buy a new bike for his uncle. For the few months Barish stays with this man from the city, he was well taken care of till the man passes away. Though he already saved money but unfortunately for him, it was stolen. The death of this savior changes his fortune, Barish in order to make ends meet gets a new place to work where the boss promises to pay him well but all the words were vain words. For two years he served tea, washed dishes, swept floors and cleaned tables until one day, a customer creates a scene and Barish's boss beats him and sends him off to Scar's place as a child labour. Children who are in debt and burdened are usually targets of kidnapers because those kidnapers believe those children will be very desperate to free themselves of unwanted emotional stress through any method.

### **Appraisal of Traumatic Experiences of Asian Child Labour Victims in Kashmira Sheth's *Boys without Names***

Sheth's *Boys Without Names* tells the unpleasant and traumatic experiences of child labour as exemplified by the characters of six child labour victims in India. The novel opens with Gopal, an eleven year-old boy whose impoverished family flee from their village, Matheran to Mumbai in search of greener pastures and hopes of finding work. In the course of migrating, the father gets lost and Gopal along with his mother, Aai and two siblings traces the address of Jama, his mother's brother in Mumbai. Gopal who enjoys telling stories and reading, has great dream of being educated but because of his family's poor standard of living struggles to look for a job to no avail. Gopal in his desperation and eagerness to support his struggling family, jumps at an offer when a stranger boy promises to get him a job at his uncle's factory. "But I do want to work. I'll go look for Jatin and if I find him I will ask him about working in his uncle's factory until school begins" (p. 105).

Gopal, in his excitement and desperation, gets by the boy, Jatin who also kidnaps him. Little did he know he has become trapped as a child labourer until he regains his consciousness and sees himself in a strange location. He recalls:

"I am lightheaded. Jatin, the cups, the stall all float around me. I wobble along with him. The footpath seems to rise up and meet

When I wake up, a man with a crescent scar on his right cheek looms over me. I have never seen him before. He is small-boned with a large head and close-set eyes. Who is this man? Where am I? Where is my family? The faint memory of Jatin, tea, and the taxi wash over me... "Who are you?" (p.1 12)

Many children's dreams and aspiration have been thwarted by kidnappers and bosses who use them as labourers thereby depriving them the opportunities to have all round mental development. These children do the work adults should do and in return for their labour, get little or no pay. Gopal, a child labour victim, meets five other child labour victims (6-15yrs old) at the picture frame shop. At the picture frame shop the children are made to make picture frame designs all day using glue, beads and needles. Any child that makes mistake with the designs is usually beaten and denied food. Child labourers go through traumatic experiences that stresses them physically and mentally. These children who should be under the protective care of their parents, are usually deprived the conducive environment to actualize themselves.

The six child labour victims, (Barish, Kabir, Gopal, Sahil, Roshan and Amar) are forbidden to talk or even call one another by their real names and to their boss, Scar, they are nothing but cockroaches which deserve little of his attention and care. This is seen in the way he treats the children: "Scar fixes his stare on me. "So? You're working for me. I'll call you cockroach if I want. No names are allowed in this place, you understand?" p. 121. Gopal, a very smart child realizes that storytelling might be the boys' key to survival, so at the picture frame shop, the children mingle secretly with one another though it is against the rules. They open up and tell stories about their family that they have repressed for a long time. These stories usually help them to connect and unite with one another.

The travails and traumatic experiences of these child labour victims come to bare as children who should be under the protective care and guidance of their parents have to adjust being without them, catering for themselves and making sure their survival is core. These children after becoming child labour victims usually brace themselves for the harshness that is meted out on them by their bosses who usually treat them in inhumane ways. Many of these children have numerous dreams and aspirations; they desire and constantly yearn for the warmth of parental care and above all, their freedom. Freudian's dream provides a psychological explanation for children's desire and yearning for better life and memorable childhood. These children who usually repress their pain and hurt in their subconscious usually dream about either their past or present. This is evident in the characters of Gopal and Roshan. Gopal usually dreams of becoming a Mogul King and riding on horses "I dreamed of being a king and riding on horses. If I was able to build air palaces there, I can build them now" (p. 123). Child labour victims who cannot suppress their pains and sadness usually express it through tears while those that are macho amongst them usually suppress their tears. Gopal expresses his feelings through tears whenever he remembers his family:

My jute bed is scratchy, but what I feel on my skin is nothing compared to what I feel in my heart. It is as if someone rubbed this rough sack on my heart over and over again and made it bleed. Tears roll down my cheeks as I think of Aai...With Jama's help, I was

supposed to go to school, work, and make sure Naren and Sita get an education, (p. 130)

Roshan on the other hand usually talks in his sleep bringing to bare his suppressed guilt and sadness. Gopal narrates:

The boy with fringy eyelashes next to me talks in his sleep. He stutters and speaks a different language. Maybe he comes from far away. But even though I don't understand what he is saying, I recognize his tone it is sad and begging, as if he has done something wrong and is pleading for forgiveness (p. 131)

Many children like Roshan usually suppress their guilt and sadness which is only expressed while they are unconscious. Gopal, the protagonist often have regrets about his desperation to work because it is desperation that lands him in the picture frame shop. This is revealed in his thoughts:

I was eager to make money, and now I am trapped. I can only blame my foolishness. Aai must be heartbroken. I wonder if Naren has stopped talking like he does when he is upset or angry? And Sita? Just thinking about it brings tears to my eyes...If Baba is back he must be miserable (p. 152)

The traumatic experiences of these child labour victims is so enormous that it usually have great effect on their psyche. Children who are naturally vibrant and blooming with life have become redundant due to fear of being punished and deprived food. Roshan, a.k.a Night Chatterer is always silent when other child labour victims are talking due to excessive fear which has been put in their heart by their boss, Scar:

Everyone is talking, but for Night Chatterer is silent. All this time I have not heard him say a word except in his sleep. He reminds me of Naren. Shutting up has been Naren's way of dealing with fear... (p.171)

Many child labour victims go through distress, trauma and are confronted with negative experiences which usually leave an indelible prints and marks in their heart and silence is the only survival strategy they put on. Freud's id also comes to play through the character of Gopal whose unconscious hatred for their boss comes to play after he displays his inhumane nature when Sahil, one of the child labour victims becomes sick:

I want to smack him for not caring at all. Sahil has been here for such a long time. He must have made hundreds of frames for Scar, and when Sahil is sick, Scar doesn't show even little kindness to him! I am so upset that I can hardly swallow the food (p. 219)

Child labour victims just like Sahil usually work round the clock, doing work that are harmful to their bodies and health with little food which is not enough to sustain them throughout the day. Many children like Sahil when sick usually get little or no sympathy from their bosses. Scar, the children's boss didn't show any iota of kindness towards the sick boy, instead, becomes more aggressive towards him. Gopal imports from the unconscious to conscious as he demonstrates his repressed feelings and emotions about his boss, Scar who he disdains with passion:

...I am so mad with Scar for not even getting Sahil a pill to bring his fever down. I punch Scar's bench with my fist. "I hate Scar.I hate him...I hold my breath. This is the first time I have called Boss by that name aloud "(p.223).

Gopal's id reveals again through his thoughts "I want to hit him over the head with the bead tray. If we had all done that as he came up the ladder he would have collapsed" (p. 280). Gopal's ego keeps him in check regularly and usually incapacitates him from becoming aggressive like his boss, Scar. "I have to concentrate or else I will get punished.. .The only way I can do it is if I work faster...so my mind can't wander like a goat (p. 281). At the end, Gopal displays his smartness by getting in touch with people that rescued them from child labour. The novel has a happy ending because Scar, their boss is prosecuted for encouraging child labour. "You kept these children as your slaves...You will pay for such cruelty many times over. I will personally make sure of that" (p.298). The other five children whose families are not in Mumbai are returned to their different homes.

## **FINDINGS**

The study discovered that poverty is the major cause of child labour and until it is curbed, child labour might still be persistent. A large proportion of impoverished families because of their poor economic status cannot cater for their children hence, those children are therefore saddled with different responsibilities and in their eagerness and desperation to make ends meet usually fall victims of child labour. In *Boys Without Names*, parents who had great plans for the future of *their* children could not meet up with their responsibility due to illiteracy and lack of fund. The study revealed that many children are still victims of child labour especially children from underdeveloped and developing countries. In the text, factors responsible for child labour are not limited to poverty but includes loss of guardian, natural disaster and parental neglect.

It is also evident that education is a powerful tool which can help to a large extent to combat child labour; therefore children who do not get good education are at great risk of becoming nuisances to the community they live in. Gopal, the main protagonist was able to save himself and other children from child labour because he could read and write. In addition, education was greatly promoted by Sheth. Any child who wants to be mentally and physically free needs to be empowered through education. The study also revealed that children who are deprived of proper parental care are usually at high risk of becoming kidnappers' prey. Amar, a five year old boy became a child labour because he was deprived proper care and attention by his father and step

mom. Furthermore, child labour victims usually go through emotional and psychological trauma such that, they repress and suppress their feelings and doubt adults' intentions and capability to protect. Another finding of this study is that child labour victims usually employ different strategies to survive the harsh realities of life such as storytelling and silent mode. Storytelling helped the children to connect, unite and have confidence in one another while the silent mode is usually used to stay out of trouble.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident from the foregoing that underdeveloped and developing countries are still characterized by high rate of child labour that usually deprive children of their dignity and the atmosphere to actualize themselves. The welfare of the children is of great importance to the furtherance of any society as any society whose children are not well catered for will later on grow up to become threats to such society. Kashmira Sheth in *Boys Without Names* through her novel stimulates the readers' consciousness and attempts to dissuade child labour in the society. Finally, education is highly needed because it is a powerful tool that can be used to combat child labour. Child labour therefore should not be promoted in the society, rather should be seen and tackled as a communal problem.

## References

- Akarro, R.R and Mtweve, N.A. (2011). *Poverty and its Association with Child Labour in Njombe District in Tanzania: The Case of Ilima Ward*. Curr Res.J. Soc Sci 3(3):pp199-206.
- Aqil, Z. (2012). *Nexus between Poverty & Child Labour: Measuring the Impact of Poverty Alleviation on Child Labour*. A Research Report for Good Thinkers Organization for Human Development, Kasur.
- Department for Education and Skills (2006a) Statistics of Education. Referrals, Assessments and Children and Young People on the Child Protection Registers, England: Year Ending 31 March 2006 (Final). National Statistics: DIES.
- International Labour Organization. *Poverty the Trafficking and Labour Experiences of Children World Education Projects by Sector Child labour and trafficking*.  
www.worldedu.org/listprojects.cfin
- Nolas-Alausa, T. (2011). *The Oedipal Dynamics: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Sophocles Oedipus Rex*. In (ed.) Sotunsa, Mobolanle. From Theory to Practice: Advanced Literary Text Analysis. Lagos: Asaba Communications Ltd, 91-103.
- Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. (2001). Oxford University Press, New York.
- Rena, R. (2009). *The Child Labour in Developing Countries: A Challenge of Millennium Development Goals*. Indus Journal of Management & Social Sciences 3(1): 1-8.
- Sharma, S. (2006). *Labour in India*. International Journal of Research and Discovery (IJRD) vol 1, issue 3, December 2006.
- Sheth, K. (2010). *Boys Without Names*. Harper Collins, New York.
- UNICEF. *Childhood under Threat: The State of the World's Children 2005*  
(<http://www.unicef.org>)