



Effects of Child Labour on Education: A Case of Selected Primary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia

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ABSTRACT:

Child labour refers to the exploitation of children through any form of work that deprives them of their childhood their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and mental development. Child labour can result in extreme bodily and mental harm and even death. It can lead to slavery and sexual or economic exploitation. The child presence in the labour market carries many implications. This is because the long hours spent on the job result in fatigue, restlessness and lack of concentration in class. Hence, the study aimed at analyzing the effects of child labour on education in Lusaka district at some selected primary schools. The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative methods and a descriptive survey design that sampled head teachers, teachers and pupils. Data was obtained from the respondents by means of interviews and questionnaires. Percentages, tables, graphs, figures and pie-charts were used to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data. Data was then analyzed by the use of software MS access and MS Excel. The findings indicated that domestic work as a child-labour activity, hawking and informal business/ trading. The findings also indicated that some of the pupils were introduced to child labour activities by their friends, they were engaging in the child labour activities because they wanted to provide food for their families. Other findings noted that long distances to school made some children to prefer being home doing domestic work to going to school. It was also clear that the academic performance of pupils not involved in child-labour related activities was higher compared to those who were involved. Most of the child-labour activities such as digging, welding and harvesting negatively and significantly contributed to low academic performance as the pupils were always occupied and tired making it difficult for them to concentrate on school activities.

Keywords: *Ability, Academic Performance, Child Labour, Education, Exploitation and Pupil.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Child labour constitutes a key obstacle to achieving universal primary education and other Millennium Development Goals in Zambia. It not only harms the welfare of individual children, but also slows broader national poverty reduction and development efforts. Children forced out of school and into labour to help their families make ends meet were denied the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for gainful future employment, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty. The current report provides an overview of the child labour phenomenon in Zambia its extent and nature, its determinants and its consequences on health and education. The report also addresses the national response to child labour and policy options for its progressive elimination. Particular attention was given to the links between child labour and schooling and to the importance of child labour as a constraint to Education for All. The report was the product of a collaborative effort involving the Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, other concerned Government ministries, local research institutes, the UCW program secretariat and the ILO/IPEC, UNICEF and World Bank Zambia country offices.

Zambia together with other international organization has been concerned with the elimination of child labour for a long time. Its concern on the plight of children were stated in the National development plan 1997-2001 and in the country's statement at the 1995 world summit for social development. Exploitative work encroaches on the child's growth (UNICEF, 2019) and his or her exposure to accidents and environmental hazards entail prolonged separations from family and interfere with his/her schooling. It also robs them the interest in academic achievements resulting in lack of motivation that impacts both the learning and their future prospects. Child labour undermines the child's dignity and self-esteem and hinders the development of the child at the physical, social and moral. Elimination of child labour was important as it would free the children to be able to participate in the education as process of acquiring knowledge in order to promote their social survival and contribution to their families, society and themselves, though there were some controversy in the empirical literature about the effects of child labour on the educational attainment of children in which some studies have found that child labour did not have significantly adverse effect (Colin, 2014).

In 2018, Zambia made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor among pupils. The government developed national action plans on Child Labor and Anti-Human Trafficking in line with Zambia's 7th National Development Plan. It also increased the number of inspectors, significantly increased the number of labor inspections conducted, identified 511 child labor law violations and achieved 5 convictions for the crime of child trafficking. In addition, the government published studies that provide insights into child labor and child commercial sexual exploitation and included

child labor for the first time in its Labor Force Survey. However, pupils in Zambia were engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Pupils were also engaged in child labor in agriculture.

UNICEF (2019) states that girls clean the house, cook, fetch water and help care for younger children especially when a mother dies, falls ill or were overworked. With all these chores done, girls may be too exhausted to concentrate on their studies leading to poor performance. As an exploitative activity, Onyango argues that child labour was a way by which children under the ages of sixteen years are exposed to conditions of work that may be harmful to their physical, emotional, mental or moral welfare. In addition, Onyango noted that observations made among working children in factories show that work can stunt development during the period of growth, prevents children from going to school and creates cheap labour.

Other Zambian researchers have shown that academic performance is affected by a number of factors, including student-related factors like willingness to learn, school-related factors like adequacy of resources and facilities teacher-related factors like teacher morale, teaching methods and job satisfaction (Nkengo, 2010). A study by Lloyd (2010) in Zambia found out that low performing schools were characterized by inadequate school facilities, lack of active participation of students in the teaching-learning process, and poor overall school atmosphere in terms of organisation, rules and student-to-student interaction. This study aimed at furthering research on the area of academic performance by advancing the research on effect of child labor on the academic performance of pupils in selected primary schools of Lusaka district.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Child-labour is seen to be a very pertinent issue affecting the society today. However, little attention has been given to it, yet it is detrimental to the child's development in many ways especially in education. The children in a society are a bridge between the present generation and the next one and if the child is not nurtured then tomorrow's society is threatened. The complexity of the term child labour was fully recognized and distinctions were drawn between the worst forms of child labour, which substantially denies children their right to education and seriously affects their health, both physical and mental and child work. Child labour is on the rise owing to the emergence of HIV/AIDS especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (Bequele, 2015). Althaus (2009), points out that Child labour was closely associated to low-income, increased urbanization and other economic factors. There was however limited attention on the psychological factors that influence child labour participation. This was critical because it provides opportunities for intervention through psychological counseling or other school based support systems. The study investigated the factors and their effects on education at the selected primary schools in Chawama, Lusaka district. Lusaka district was ideal for the study because of its highest levels of poverty which undermines pupil's school attendance and participation. According to a recent National survey on poverty incidences, poverty levels were much higher than National average for Zambia. In a country where 60% of the population earns less than one dollar per day, these levels were bound to significantly influence school participation among pupils.

1.3. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect of child labour on education at the selected secondary schools in Lusaka district, Zambia.

1.4. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- Identify the predominant child labour related activities among pupils in selected primary schools in Lusaka district.
- Analyze the determinants of child labour among pupils in selected primary schools in Lusaka district.
- Compare the academic performance of pupils who engage in child-labour activities to those who do not in selected primary schools in Lusaka district.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Theory of Expectancy Valency and Social Learning Theory. Theory of expectancy valency explained reasons that make children participate in labour related activities rather than go to school. Vroom's Motivational Theory (1946) in Dwivedi (1979) asserted that an individual's motivation towards an activity at a point in time is ascertained by the anticipation values of all the outcomes including both positive and negative of that activity multiplied by the strength of his expectation that the activity will result in the outcome pursued. The theory explained why children feel motivated to go to school or participate in child labour activities. In situations where the school in view of the pupil does not have a positive contribution towards meeting his expectations, he may opt to absent himself from school. Young people assess the benefits of attending school. When they find that they were minimal compared to those accruing from working, they may feel motivated to sacrifice school attendance. By so doing they get something more rewarding (money) than being in class. The same thing happens when parents decide to remove their children from school to work. At that time the parents weigh the outcomes of a child's work and those of attending school. The parents find that those of a child's work outweigh those of attending school. This was because money that results from a child's participation in child labour activities was valued. It also happened to be the outcome pursued. Thus the parents will always feel motivated to ask a child to sacrifice school attendance for participation in child labour activities.

Additionally, the social learning theory was used to explain other reasons that may drive children to participate in child labour activities rather than go to school. The theory was put forward by Bandura (1977) who explained how children learn in their environment as they interact and observe significant others. Such learning assisted them in becoming socialized so that what they do was congruent with the norms and expectations of their societies. This therefore, explains how children acquire adult behaviors and even skills. Reinforcement plays an important role in social learning. If a model was rewarded for a particular behavior, the chances for such a behavior (hawking, shamba work, domestic work, sisal harvesting activities) being modeled were higher since the observer (pupils involved in hawking, shamba work, brick making, domestic work) shares the model's reward vicariously. If the model had been punished, the observer was likely to avoid such behavior. When children see their peers with money gained from participation in such activities, they were likely to be tempted to miss school and participate in hawking, shamba work, domestic work, brick making and sisal harvesting in order to get the same money. Others after participating in these activities receive good comments from their parents. Hence they were reinforced to continue participating in hawking, Shamba work, domestic work, brick making and sisal harvesting. When parents remove a child from school to participate in hawking, shamba work, domestic work, sisal harvesting and brick making activities, the child obeys. This was so because the parents happen to be significant, others in the child's life.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study provided empirical evidence about the effect of child labour on education and also provided a comprehensive reverse causal relationship of child labour and academic performance in primary school examination. Further, the study provided measures that would contribute in effecting programmes which monitor child labour and ensure education as a fundamental right for all the children. It is also hoped that the findings of this study would be used by the policy makers to educate the public against child labour. Significantly, the parents to pupils that are involved in child labour activities would be enlightened by the findings of the study and the detrimental effects of these activities on academic achievement of their children. Further, the study was useful to those who offer guidance and counseling in the schools. The finding of the study would be used to suggest possible solutions for the teachers, parents and other stakeholder on how to stamp out, reduce or eliminate the practice of child labour. Finally, the findings would be used to make recommendations with regards to child labour related issues and this will help with the improvement of academic achievement in schools.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study Design

The study adopted a mixed methods approach which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Exploratory and descriptive designs were as well considered appropriate as they also allowed for more flexible strategies of data collection in order to answer the research questions. The study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative aspects of research. It was aimed at collecting information from respondents on the effects of child labour on education at the selected primary schools in Lusaka district, Zambia.

2.2. Research Site

The research was conducted in Lusaka district in Zambia at some selected primary schools from which respondents were also sampled.

2.3. Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The population for the study comprised of head teachers, teachers and pupils at the selected schools. The target population was 1000. The sample size involved a total of 100 respondents which included four (4) head teachers, one from each selected school. Twelve (12) teachers, three from each selected school. Eighty-four (84) pupils, twenty-one (21) from each selected school. The study employed both purposive and simple random sampling on different participants from the selected secondary schools. Simple random sampling was used on the teachers and pupils, this is because there were too many to participate, hence simple random selection of was preferred. On the other hand, Purposive sampling was used on the head teachers for convenient purposes.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed qualitatively as the semi structured interviews schedules were used as data collection instruments. Thematic approach was used, where data analysis started with the categorization of themes from the semi structured interviews schedules. The data gathered was analyzed according to the themes of the study and the order of the research objectives. Data generated from the questionnaires was analyzed manually by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 26) and Microsoft Excel (version 16) to come up with frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs.

2.5. Ethical Issues

Permission from Rockview University and the District Education Board for Lusaka district was sought in carrying out this study. Interviews were not conducted on one-to-one basis; instead, participants were grouped and identified using their titles. An informed consent was sought before collecting information from the informants and guaranteed them with security of the information they provided. Furthermore, the main objective of gathering such

information was made clear to the respondents. The researcher avoided pressuring respondents to take part in the research. Alternatively, permission consents, assents were obtained from respondents involved in the research and the research topic was strategically selected to ensure that there was no harm whatsoever to the research respondents. In this research, the researcher was fully conscious of the need to abide by the ethical rule of respecting the privacy of individuals taking part in the research. In the same way, all the respondents of the research were to remain unidentified to the public as all their valuable views, opinions and perceptions were only known by the researcher for use only in the research and participant's identities will forever remain hidden.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following findings and discussions were presented according to set research objectives:

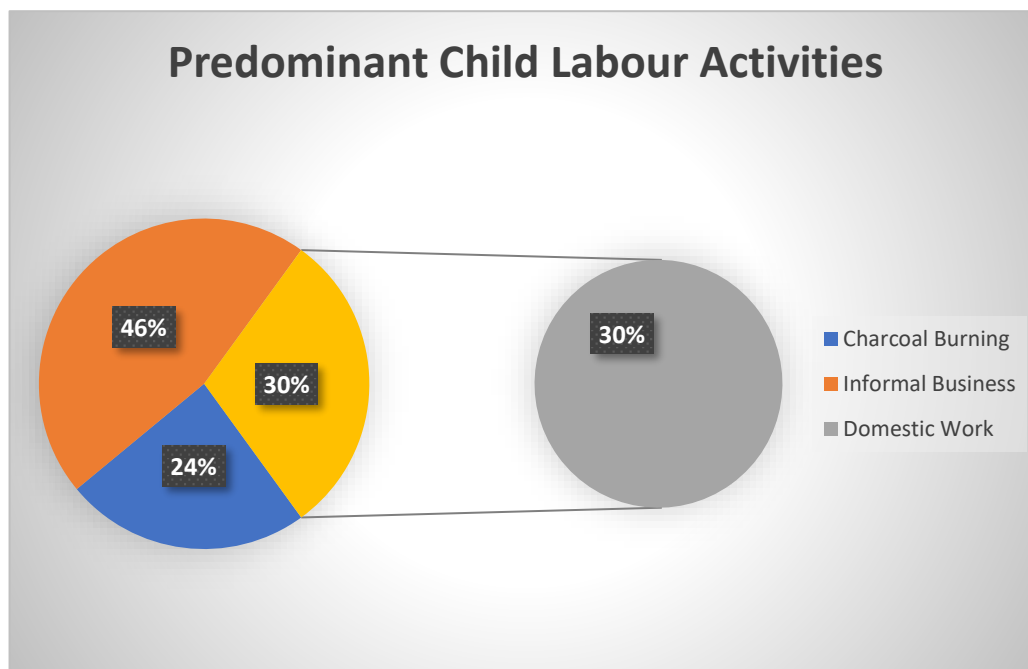
3.1. Predominant Child Labour Activities

Table 1 and the chart 1 below represented the respondents' responses on the predominant child labour activities. 24% of the respondents cited charcoal burning as one of the leading predominant causes of child labour. 46% of the respondents pointed out informal business as another activity. 30% of the respondents cited domestic work as another child labour activity.

Table 1: Predominant Child Labour Activities

| Respondents | Predominant Child Labour Activities | Percentage |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Head teachers | Charcoal Burning | 24% |
| Teachers | Informal Business | 46% |
| Pupils | Domestic Work | 30% |
| Total | | 100% |

Chart 1: Predominant Child Labour Activities



According to the research conducted, the researcher found out that poverty has contributed a lot to the rise of child labour and some parents or guardians engage their children in doing extra work to support their families. Thus, domestic work appears to facilitate the socialization of children to child labour activities. Mkandawire (2016) positing that children in traditional African societies are given work tasks by parents to train them in perseverance. Additionally, MCD (2010) narrates that, a child does not start out as a worker rather he or she is transformed into one where the transformation is a learning process to the individual, but to the society, it is a process of socialisation. Therefore, the researcher noted that, the majority of the pupils were involved in child labour activities. It was also discovered that many pupils get involved in domestic works at homes, while others stated that they were into informal businesses and gambling like bola bet, they were involved in farming activities in order to earn extra income.

The researcher discovered that many pupils miss classes or come for class tired because they are involved in domestic works at home. However, these children were engaged in informal business like selling of scorns, freezits and groundnuts has influenced a lot of pupils into informal businesses, were as

farming activities especially in the rainy season has influenced a lot of pupils to miss class while some children are involved in charcoal burning. According to past literature, there are many forms of child labour with some of them being mentioned from the findings of this study. Researchers such as Otieno (2013) have shown that some of the forms of child labour are, the agriculture sector, fishing, mining and quarrying, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, transportation, domestic activities as well as drug trafficking activities. As such, past literature has revealed that most of children engage in informal child labour activities with 80% of the child workers being in this sector (Ochieng, 2012). Therefore, it was noted that most children especially from the humble backgrounds involve pupils in domestic work which hinder their academic attainment. However, informal businesses have been one of the prevailing factors where pupils were involved in beer selling and other substances. Furthermore, farming activities influence most pupils to engage in piece works to earn something while it is difficult to find charcoal burning within the central business district, some pupils are able to go in the bush such that they end up missing classes. However, although not to large extent pupils reported that they were introduced to labor activities by their relative and guardians. These findings clearly indicate that pupils were introduced to labor activities to those they trust like parents and friends.

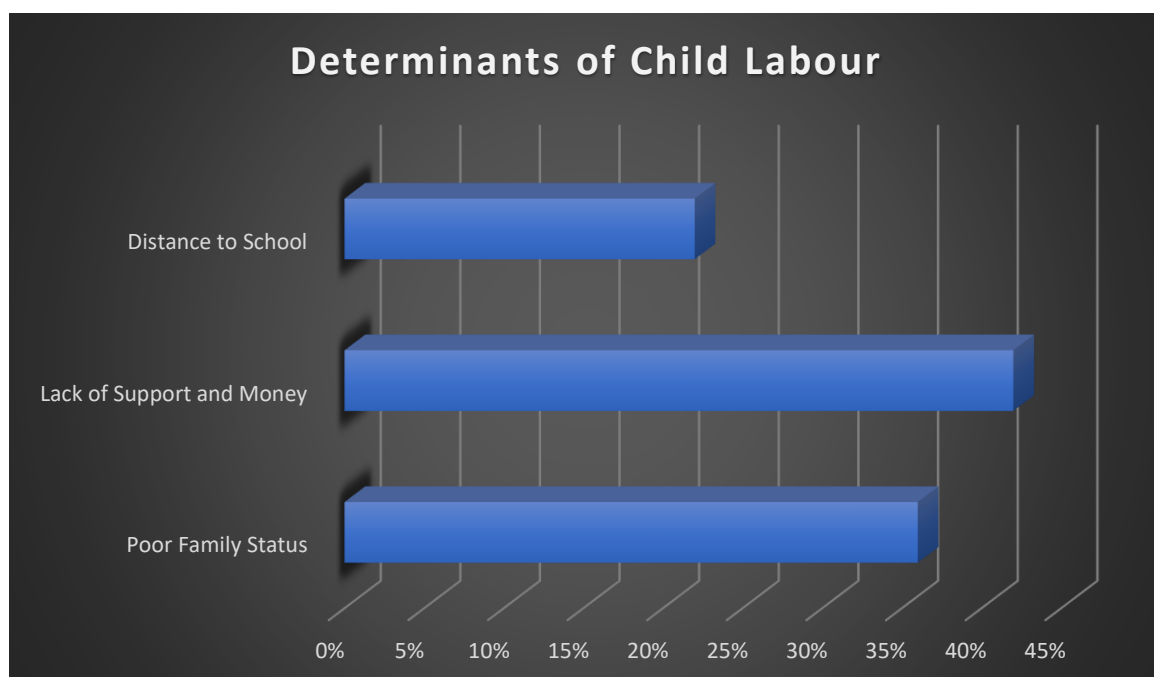
3.2. Determinants of Child Labour

Table 2 and the figure 1 below represented the respondents' responses on the determinants of child labour activities. 36% of the respondents stated poor family status as the leading effect of child labour. 42% of the respondents pointed out that lack of support and money is another effect of child labour. 22% of the respondents cited distance to school as another effect of child labour for most children.

Table 2: Determinants of Child Labour

| Respondents | Predominant Child Labour Activities | Percentage |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Head teachers | Poor Family Status | 36% |
| Teachers | Lack of Support and Money | 42% |
| Pupils | Distance to School | 22% |
| Total | | 100% |

Figure 1: Determinants of Child Labour



Research findings indicated that poverty have affected human development negatively. Most of the Chawama dwellers live in absolute poverty, which makes them to engage their children in child labour activities. Thus, according to Chakravarthi (2016), child-labour activities such as cultivation, planting and harvesting causes educational interruptions. That is, school attendance of pupils is affected. This poor attendance explains poor academic performance in examinations among pupils, particularly those from poor families. The findings agreed with Jay (2009) who states that the is good academic performance of pupils not involved in child-labour related activities such as domestic work, farming and informal business which causes educational interruptions. Therefore, school attendance of pupils is affected. From the findings, the researcher noted that pupils venture in child labour activities because they come from poor families, while others lacked of support and leads them into child labour as they need to fend for themselves and provide all necessities for school. Additionally, distance going to school makes them miss school and start doing child labour activities, while lack of money is another reason they do piece works in order to support themselves.

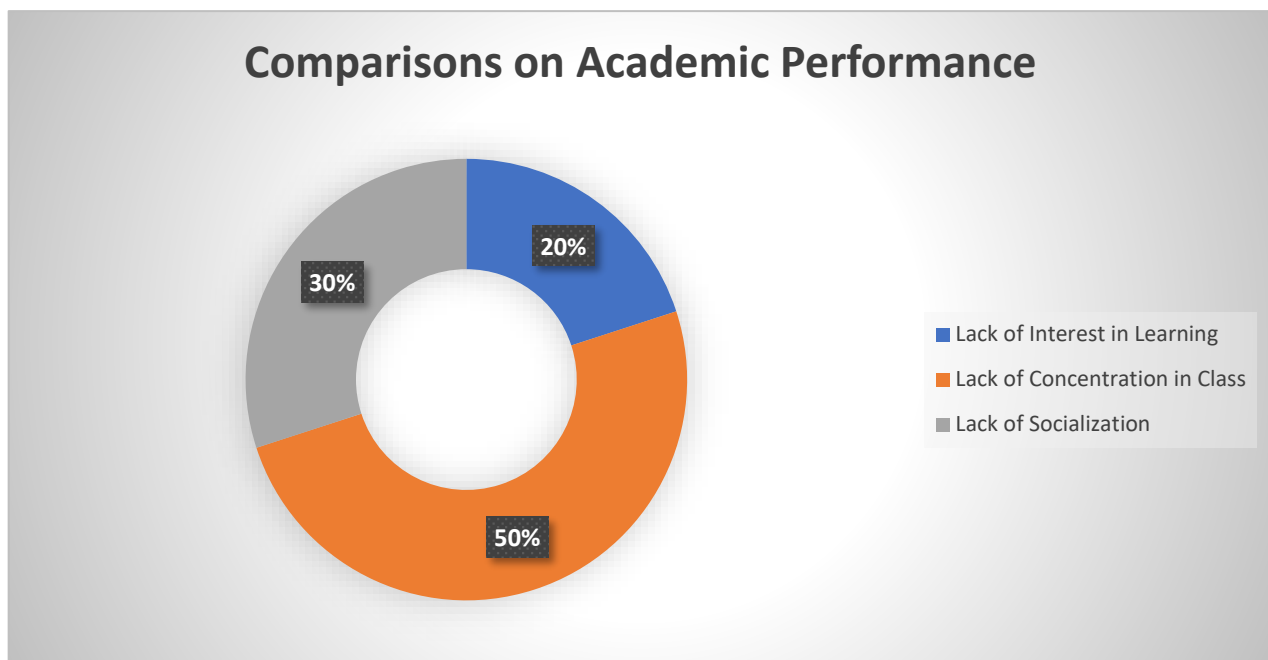
3.3. Comparisons on Academic Performance

Table 3 and the figure 2 below represented the respondents' responses when it comes to comparing the academic performance of those children engaged in child labour activities to those who are not. 36% of the respondents stated poor family status as the leading effect of child labour. 42% of the respondents pointed out that lack of support and money is another effect of child labour. 22% of the respondents cited distance to school as another effect of child labour for most children.

Table 3: Comparisons on Academic Performance

| Respondents | Predominant Child Labour Activities | Percentage |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Head teachers | Lack of Interest in Learning | 20% |
| Teachers | Lack of Concentration in Class | 50% |
| Pupils | Lack of Socialization | 30% |
| Total | | 100% |

Chart 2: Comparisons on Academic Performance



According to the findings, it was confirmed that children engaging in domestic work as a child labour activity were negatively and significantly had effects in their academic performance as pupils. The findings concur with that which stated that pupils who do not engage in child labour activities have higher chances of obtaining good grades compared to those who engage in child labour activities. This finding concurs with that of UNICEF (2019) which stated that pupils who do not engage in child labour activities have higher chances of obtaining good grades compared to those who engage in child labour activities. In some places, school attendance rates of working children are only about half of those of non-working children. However, children who were engaged in child labour activities are more disadvantaged than those who not involved in child labour activities. Therefore, most of the children that are involved in child labour activities have little time to study because they spent most of their time work in order to provide for their family unlike those who are not involved in child labour activities for they have enough time to study and concentrate on their studies. In as much as the society is involved, it is difficult to handle children engaged in child labour activities in the sense that, they are physically, emotionally and mentally abused, these children are deprived of the right to enjoy their childhood. It was reviewed that the most disadvantage in the education and academic performance of girls is endangered from a very early age when girls are socialized through the home and a variety of other agencies into appropriate roles within their own attributes which are defined almost as much by the contrast with the other sex as by their own properties. Elis (2011), says that this division is reflected and at times exacerbated in participation in child-labour related activities. This appears to be more prominent in primary schools due to cheap labour.

4. CONCLUSION

The study discovered that child - labour adversely affects the academic performance of pupils who engage in the activities with majority of the children engaging in domestic work among other forms of child labour. The girl child has also been shown as the most affected with many being denied their right to education due to retrogressive cultures and poverty. The findings also showed that when compared, the academic performance of pupils who engage in child labour activities was almost 2 and half times less than that of children who do not engage in child labour activities. The findings revealed that although school going pupils are in danger of poor academic performance due to their engagement in child labour, the girl child is the most endangered because they participate more in child labour related activities than male pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are actions that should be taken on the basis of the findings of this study:

- The government should provide activities and programs geared to improve accessibility of girls and boys to quality relevant education.
- The government should enforce the existing child labour laws while improving on them to help protect children more especially a girl child.
- The ward councilors through government should target income cash transfers to poor households thereby reducing child labor.
- The school administrators to educate parents during the PTA meetings on the issues of child labour activities and its dangers.

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