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A critical analysis of the factors influencing child labour in onion farming in Garu Tempene District in the Upper East region of Ghana

Ganiyu LATIF, Emmanuel Idemudia ILORI and Feruzah Wuniche SALISU

ABSTRACT

The incidence of child labor in onion farming in Garu-Tempene has received less attention at the local and national levels. The study examined factors influencing child labor in onion production in Garu-Tempene district in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Primary data were collected from the onion farmers, children involved in onion farming, staff of institutions responsible for ensuring the welfare of children and teachers in Garu-Tempene district. In all, thirty-one (31) respondents were interviewed. Secondary data were obtained from the Department of Social Welfare and other sources relevant to the study. Data analysis was done using the thematic analysis method. The researchers familiarized themselves with the data collected through recording and transcription. The transcribed data were grouped into thematic areas based on the research objectives. The findings show that children's quest to have their own farm, poverty, socialization, large family size, low level of awareness, and insufficient water supply are the factors influencing child labor. The study recommended an increased public awareness campaign. The formation of committees at the community level to be responsible for monitoring the work that children are engaged in. It also explored policy options for addressing the issue of child laborers in Ghana and how this can be prevented and improved.

KEY TERMS: child labour, onion farming, Ghana, child work, farmers, children, Garu-Tempene District

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INTRODUCTION

African countries such as Ghana are still not making so much progress in their fight against child labor. Children are still a visible, dominant force in the labor market. This has a negative impact on the health, education, and physical development of these children. The significance of the research problem can be illustrated by the fact that, while there have been studies on child labor in the mining sector and fishing sector, much has not been done into child labor in agriculture, especially in onion farming in Ghana. The study's objective is to unearth the causes of child labor in onion farming in Garu Tempane District in the Upper East Region of Ghana. The study also presents child labor in a national, regional, and global context. It also highlights Ghana's efforts and shortcomings in addressing the issue. This study employed a qualitative methodology to collect and analyze data. The study revealed that children in Garu-Tempane District are involved intensively in onion farming. The activities of children in onion farming are dangerous to their health, development, and education. The overwhelming majority of farmers do not know that these activities have an adverse effect on their health, education, and physical development. Though, majority of onion farmers interviewed placed a high premium on their children's education, a few challenges abound, which must be tackled by the mandated state institutions and civil society. The findings of the study would assist the Civil Society Organisations, governments, ministries, donor organizations, International communities, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with child labor-related interests in understanding the factors causing child labor in onion farming and government of Ghana effort to combat it. The study revealed that there are good prospects for eliminating child labor in Ghana. This is evident in the programs and policies that have been put in place to curb the phenomenon. It is however an undeniable fact that child labor has serious consequences on the children far longer than the years of childhood and the society as a whole.

BACKGROUND

The context of what is known about childhood must be considered when discussing child labor. According to Boyden Ling and Myers, the debate about child labor in both developed and developing countries has long been dominated by western images of childhood. This has created some issues since it is difficult to apply western ideas and definitions of childhood to cultures with different norms (Johansson, 2009). The lives of African children are central to the continent's culture. Children represent continuity across the continent, with rituals and contemporary institutions designed to assure children's survival and prosperity. At the same time, children are seen as essential to livelihood in many African cultures, as they provide low-cost labor in the home, in family agricultural or food-processing activities, or in trade or artisanship (Howard, 2013). Child labor is predominantly a rural occurrence in Africa, but it is also regarded as an urban phenomenon in Asia and Latin America, which are increasingly urbanized. Child labor is concentrated in subsistence farming in Africa, and it is often associated with large, rural families. During the harvest season, children primarily tend to take care of livestock or assist adults (Canagarajah & Nielsen, 2001). Some of the children in rural Africa are involved in domestic and farm work, cooking, cleaning, caring for siblings, carrying, sorting, weeding, watering, picking or spraying, or gathering feed and tending livestock are just some of the activities they might be doing. Many of the children will work on their parents' or relatives' farms, while some would work for money and some older children may farm on their own (James & Rachel, 2020).

Children engage in a variety of activities that are part of social practice, which is essential for their social integration. These are not forms of child labor. Child labor does not encompass all of a child's economic activities. It refers to children's employment or work that does not meet the requirements of national legislation and international agreements (Awotwe, 2020). International concern for child labor has grown since the International Labor Organisation (ILO) adopted the convention on minimum age in 1919, which contained a proposal for child work. International Labor Organisation and other international conventions, including ILO 138 (1973), ILO Convention 192 (1999), Declaration of 1924 on the Rights of the Child are some of the key conventions or agreements throwing more light on child labor. Most of these global agreements by the ILO and various offices, including ILO 138 (1973), ILO Convention 192 (1999), and the 1924 presentation by the League of Nations on the Privileges of the Child, has influenced our notion of child labor and child work (Clerk, 2012). Such Conventions influenced our understanding of childhood and strengthened the idea that child labor is a problem (Leonard, 2006).

The international community has made it clear that the current state of child labor in the world is appalling, and has reaffirmed its commitment to eliminate all forms of child labor by 2025 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (ILO, 2018). Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals calls for governments to take concrete and meaningful action to end forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking, and to ensure the prohibition and abolition of the worst forms of child labor, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, by 2025 (SGD, 2015pp). Due to unfavorable circumstances, children under the age of eighteen are forced or coerced to work at the cost of enjoying basic rights such as schooling, good health, and protection (Dogbe, 2005). ILO (2010) describes child labor as any job that is physically, psychologically, socially, and morally detrimental

to children and that tends to interfere with the education of children. That is, by depriving children of access to basic education, by forcing them to leave school prematurely, or by forcing them to combine school attendance with disproportion (ILO, 2010). According to the ILO (2010), any work done by children that is not detrimental to their health, wellbeing, growth, or education is advantageous because it helps children to learn skills, gain experience and train them for future roles.

The cultures in which children are born determine the limits of their educational, physical, and social development. For development to take place effectively in a child, certain basic needs must be met, and these include adequate care, good nutrition, shelter, education, health, affection, supervision, attention, and protection. Every child has under the constitution, the right to the same measure of special care, assistance, and maintenance as it is necessary for its development from its natural parents and the community at large. These rights of the child that form the core of the United Nation declaration include the right to affection, love, understanding, adequate nutrition, medical care, free education, special care if handicapped, shelter, and the first to receive relief in times of disaster (ILO, 2010). Every child has the right to enjoy the childhood benefit, it is, therefore, the responsibility of a parent to raise their children and ensure that these rights are protected. Child labor is a continuing phenomenon in Ghana, and the nature of the practice has made it a challenging issue for both Ghana and the West African sub-region. The best way to prevent the occurrence of child labor is to protect the child (Awotwe, 2020).

Child labor has been related to negative developmental outcomes for children in the areas of physical health, psychosocial well-being, and education around the world. In terms of physical health, studies from all over the world have found links between child labor and malnutrition, stunted growth, adolescent mortality, work accidents, toxic exposure, and other issues (Caglayan, Hamzaoglu, Yavuz, & Yüksel, 2010). In the developing world, the agricultural sector has the highest concentration of child labor. Child labor is primarily seen as a rural occurrence in Africa. It is also considered an urban phenomenon in Asia and Latin America, which are more urbanized. Coastal West Africa and the East African plateau have the highest percentages of child labor (Canagarajah & Nielsen, 2001).

ILO estimates show that there are 152 million children; that is 64 million girls and 88 million boys involved in activities and work classified as child labor. Nearly one in 10 of all children worldwide account for this (ILO, 2018). The ILO study reveals that 73 million of these children perform dangerous work that specifically threatens their health, safety, and moral development (ILO, 2018). UNICEF (2011) estimates that around 150 million children aged 5 to 14 are economically active in developing countries, and about 16 percent of all children are involved in this age group. The 2018 report of the International Labor Organization reveals that Africa has the largest number of cases of child labor, with an estimated 72.1 million children engaged in work and activities considered child labor, with 31.5 million employed in dangerous work. In Africa, progress against child labor tends to have stalled (ILO, 2018). Child labor in Africa, the sub-Saharan region, grew in numbers over the period from 2012 to 2016, in comparison to steady progress elsewhere in the world. Given African governments' efforts to end child labor, the deterioration may have been influenced by wider economic and demographic forces working against them. The region of Africa was also among those most affected by circumstances of state instability and predicament, which in turn raises the risk of child labor (ILO, 2018). Child labor continues to exist in countries such as Ghana despite the attempts by the government to stop it (Clerk, 2012).

Children engage in a variety of activities that are part of social practice, which is essential for their social integration. These are not forms of child labor. Child labor does not encompass all of a child's economic activities. It refers to children's employment or work that does not meet the requirements of national legislation and international agreements (Awotwe, 2020). According to a 2014 survey by the Ghana Statistical Service, 42.9 percent of children aged 15-17 years were involved in economic activities, while 9.9 percent of children aged 5-7 years engaged. Children who engaged in economic activities while in school amounted to 26.3 percent of the total, while their non-schooling counterparts accounted for 41.6 percent (Ghana Living Standards Survey, 2014). Fishing, stone quarrying, cattle herding, domestic servitude, commercial sex slavery, mining, and commercial agriculture are among the most common activities (Adjei, 2017). In the North (which involves the Upper West, Upper East, Savanna, North East, and Northern regions), 29 percent of children in the top three quintiles are working, compared to 34.1 percent of children in the bottom two quintiles (Krauss, 2016).

The Ghanaian legal framework for child labor and human rights is based on provisions in the 1992 Constitution. The Constitution is Ghana's supreme law, and all other legislation passed in the country must comply with it or risk being declared null by the Supreme Court. The other legislation on child labor includes the Children's Act (1998), Labor Act (2003), and Human Trafficking Act (2005). Ghana has also ratified significant International Human Rights and International Labor Organization (ILO) agreements, such as ILO 182 on Child Labor in the Worst Forms (Crabbe, 2020). The Children's Act of Ghana (1998), for instance, affirms child protection principles and sets minimum age requirements for general employment, light work, and hazardous work in Ghana (Bermudez, Bahar, & Dako-Gyeke, 2018). Hazardous work is defined under the Children's Act (1998) as work that endangers a child's health, safety, or morals, and it includes a list of activities that are classified as hazardous, such as portering or carrying heavy loads. Light work is defined as work that is unlikely to affect a child's health or development and does not interfere with the child's attendance at school or capacity to benefit

from schoolwork. In Ghana, the minimum age to engage a child in light work is 13 years, and the required age to engage a child in regular work is 15 years (Crabbe, 2020). Further affirmations can be found in Article 28(2) of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, which states that every child has the right to be protected from work (Boateng & Korang-Okrah, 2013). Every child has the right to be exempted from taking part in work that negatively affects his or her education, health, or development, as per Article 28, clause 2 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution. Despite Ghana's legislative commitment to eradicating child labor, children remain a visible and dominant presence in the labor market.

Most developing countries, including Ghana, are concerned about child labor in commercial agriculture, fishing, head portage, mining, prostitution, and stone quarrying. Child labor has become more prevalent in rural and isolated areas where children are involved in farm labor. Most Ghanaian children struggle as they grow up as a result of hostile environments. Lack of parental desire and a high opportunity cost of schooling contribute to the worsening of child labor issues (Awotwe, 2020). Several studies have been conducted on child labor in mining, cocoa processing, fishing, quarrying, among others, but much has not been done on child labor in onion production. In Garu, children are involved in the production of onions which tend to affect their health, physical development, and education. The opportunity cost of child labor is to be out of school. As is well recognized, manufacturing is incomplete until the products are produced get to the end-user. Children are seen carrying the onion produced to the market for sale, even during the weekdays when they should be in school. Any form of work performed during the hours of school would certainly disrupt the child's education.

According to a report published by Ghana's Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. Despite government and non-government intervention, child labor continues to thrive in Ghana. Many of these children are regularly subjected to hazards, malnutrition, exhaustion, neglect, verbal and physical abuse by caregivers and employers (Adjei, 2017). Child labor is a very complex developmental problem that affects the entire world of human society. The inadequacy of school education and leisure opportunities for children is a major concern. The research investigated the causes of child labor in onion production in Ghana's Garu-Tempene district. Agriculture is the district's most common occupation, accounting for around 62 percent of all jobs. Long dry season and an inadequate number of irrigable dams compel the district youth to migrate during the lean season to the southern part of the country to work in cocoa farms.

Child labor is of great concern because of its implications for the health and future development of children. Understanding the dynamics of child labor in onion farming is important to the researcher. Child labor in Garu has affected children in one way or the other, and there is the need for the issue to be thoroughly studied to come out with recommendations to help improve the welfare of the children involved in onion farming. It is based on this that the researcher decides to investigate factors leading to the use of children in onion farming at Garu-Tempene.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is hinged on the African model or theory of child work. Children are found working in domestic and farm-related work in rural Africa. Cooking, washing, caring for siblings, carrying, sorting, weeding, planting, picking or spraying, or gathering feed and tending to livestock are just some of the activities they may be doing. Many of the children work on their parents' or relatives' farms; some work for wages, and some older children farm on their own land (Sumberg & Sabates-Wheeler, 2020). The persistence of child labor is facilitated by traditional African values. Child work is seen by parents as a means of preparing their children for future jobs. Having more children has traditionally meant having more hands to work on the farm. People often do not have the financial means to pay anyone to support them. Farmers agree that boys should begin their training before they reach adulthood. Traditional family perceptions often promote child labor. Children are not allowed to farm until they are 18 years (Bruscino, 2001). While the Ghanaian extended family system serves as a social safety net for many economically disadvantaged people and children in need of care, the role of the extended family has dwindled in recent years, partially due to a change in social institutions from community-oriented to individualistic (Kumado & Gockel, 2003).

The physical, cognitive, social, and emotional components of human development are all intertwined. The socio-cultural context has a major impact on one's development. When it comes to thoroughly understand one's development, it's impossible to separate one's culture (Mucherah & Mbogori, 2019). A child in Africa is not only a family member but also of society. As a result, everyone, from young to old, does have something to say about child-rearing (Wanjohi, 2013).

The model is beneficial in this study because it provides insight into traditional African values and how children are socialized under the African culture. These cultures play a role in the growth and development of the child. The most useful aspect of this model is that there is a difference in how societies socialize and raise children. Children are supposed to help their parents with domestic and farm work in Africa, so most African people see child labor as a western concept. Child labor is on the rise in Africa because many parents see nothing wrong with

children helping them at home and on their farms. The existence of child labor in society is due to the failure of systems put in place to curb the menace.

Study area

The Garu-Tempene District is located in Ghana's Upper East Region. It is bordered by Bawku Municipal, Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo District; to the east, the Republic of Togo; and to the west, Bawku West District. The population of Garu-Tempene District is 130,003, representing 1.2% of the region's total population. Males make up 47.9% of the population, while females make up 52.3%. The district's average household size is 7.3 people per household. Children make up the greatest percentage of household members, accounting for 58.4%. Majority of households in the district are engaged in agriculture. As high as 95.4% of households in the district are engaged in agriculture. The majority of agricultural households (98.8%) are involved in crop farming (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopted an in-depth interview approach and employed a qualitative data collection method. Thirty-one respondents were interviewed. Purposive sampling was employed by the researcher to identify those who can provide relevant information related to the research question the researcher proposes to answer. The research considered the views of ten onion farmers, ten children who are involved in the onion farming, five basic school teachers in the area, one staff each from World vision, Agriculture station, Community Based Rehabilitation, Garu Farmers Association, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Social welfare department in Garu-Tempene district. These are people who have in one way or the other observed the activities of children involved in onion farming or are involved in onion production and perhaps have a reasonable knowledge that can help achieve the research objectives.

Garu-Tempene is a traditional community with almost a hundred percent indigenous people, with a homogenous culture. The chief of the community was contacted to inform him of our intention and the purpose of the study. The chief granted us the permission to conduct our study. We booked appointments with the respondents for the interviews after the chief gave us the go-ahead. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed with the participants' permission.

With regards to the demographic information of participants. The children were aged from ten (10) to seventeen (17). Out of this number of children five (5) were males and five (5) females. Five of the children were in primary school, while the rest were in Junior High School. The other respondents were adults with ages ranged from thirty-five (35) to fifty-two (52). The researcher's question is, what are the causes of child labor in onion farming? Unplanned questions were also asked based on the responses from the respondents. This study used both primary and secondary data sources. Based on the research objectives, tape recordings of interviews were transcribed and grouped into related research themes. As part of the data collection process, structured observations were also conducted. Structured observations were conducted to further validate some of the questions posed during the interviews. It is important to remember that while interviews are critical for data collection, they are not always sufficient to verify what people are doing with what they claim they are doing.

Children's interviews took place in their homes, with the consent of their parents or legal guardians, at a time that was suitable for both the children and their parents/guardians. Despite the fact that the interviews took place in the children's homes, their parents were not present. This allowed the children to share their unique perspectives on their experiences. The interview with the onion farmers took place in their farms and that of the institutions responsible for ensuring children's welfare took place in their offices.

The researcher adhered strictly to all ethical issues surrounding the conduct of every research. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and also informed consent. Participation was voluntary; this was made known to the respondents and the dangers associated with research were made clear to respondents. Respondents were informed that they can quit when they are not more interested in the research.

FINDINGS

This chapter gives meaning to the raw data gathered from the field by the researcher. The study found that the activities of children in onion farming are likely to generate dangers. Poverty, socialization, large family size, Low level of awareness, Insufficient water supply and children quest to have their own farm as the causes of child labor in onion farming. The study revealed that there are good prospects for eliminating child labour in Ghana. This is evident in the programmes and policies that have been put in place to curb the phenomenon. It is however an undeniable fact that child labour has serious consequences on the children far longer than the years of childhood and the society as a whole. From the findings, children are made to scare away animals in the onion farms this can inflict injuries on their bodies. Most of the children go to the gardens early in the morning and are involved

in work that has the tendency to compromise their education. The environment at the farms is very dangerous and dangerous for children, there are wells in the gardens where the farmers get their water from.

Underlying causes of child labour in onion farming in Garu Tempene District

Poverty

One of the most frequent theories about the causes of child labor is that it is driven by poverty. The majority of studies in developing countries show that poor families are more likely than families in better economic situations to put their children in child labor. Poverty has been identified as one of the main underlying causes of child labor in onion farming in Garu-Tempene. Parents' inability to engage the services of casual laborers makes them fall on their children as an alternative and cheaper source of labor. This finding is in line with the findings of (Ahmed, 1991), he identified that poverty of the masses is considered the principal cause of child labor in Pakistani society, as in other nations. Poverty has been identified as a determinant of child labor supply in most studies, as it increases family income and their chances of survival (Chatterjee and Ray, 2019). The analysis of interviews and observations of working children and their parents in their home and workplace shows that poverty is an important determinant of child labour in the onion farming. Findings revealed that, contrary to the importance usually placed on the family for children well-being, some home environment may indeed be unfavorable for learning and development of children. The respondents assert that:

Because onion has become an important cash crop in the region, farmers want to produce more and because they are poor and are unable to afford the machines, they use their children as a source of labor for their onion farms” (Respondent Staff 1).

I work because my parents don't have money, and when I support them they can raise money to pay my expenses, besides one can't be at home while the parents want to raise money for the children. (Respondent Child 1).

Socialization

The study also found that socialization plays a major role in the involvement of children in onion farming. Many parents in rural communities in Garu-Tempene District are deeply rooted in culture. They think that children should pursue their parents' trade. This confirms Prah's (2000) finding that the use of children as a source of household labor is a widespread practice in Ghana. He states that the use of children as domestic task performers is seen as a necessary part of the cycle of socialization. Bruscano (2001) also noted that many child labor practices are rooted in tradition which makes it more difficult to eliminate them. This is true of Garu's onion farmers, the study revealed that most farmers want to raise their children the way they were brought up, rendering eliminating child labor a mere hope. Garu is a farming community where majority of the populace are farmers. jobs in the service sector are limited. Another respondent avers that:

It's not that we always involve children in onion farming; it's only when they come from the school that they come to the farm to help. It is also a form of training because not everyone can succeed at school, and if any of them fail at school, he/she can take up the job (Respondent Farmer 1).

Large family size

The number of people in the family was also found to be one of the factors that account for the use of children in onion farming in Garu-Tempene district. The culture of the people of Garu-Tempene permits men to marry more than one wife. The large nature of most of the families demands more hands to produce to cater for the family. In an effort to produce more food to feed the family onion farmers end up using these children in onions farming. Even though children are supposed to help their parents, it should not be work that would affect children negatively. Njenja and Madihi findings (2006), indicate that there is a link between the large size of the household and poverty, and that many children who work for wages typically come from large family groups. Some respondents reveals that:

...If there is money there won't be the need to involve children in onion farming, children often come to the farm to help parents raise money to cater for the large size of the family we have (Respondent Farmer 2).

Family size is also another factor; father and mother alone cannot produce enough to feed the whole family and therefore involve their children in producing enough onions to sell and raise income (Respondent Staff 2).

Low level of awareness

The study also revealed that low awareness level was one of the factors that played a role in the involvement of children in onion farming. Some of the children don't eat before going to the farm. Due to the time they leave to the farm, these children leave very early in the morning at the time where breakfast is not ready. They end up eating raw fruits in the garden, especially mangoes. Indigestion, abdominal pain, dysentery, and throat irritation can occur if these children eat too many raw mangoes. This has a negative effect on the health of the children. This is in line with the findings of Njenja et al (2006) in their write up titled "Emerging Good Practices on Actions to Combat Child Domestic Labour" argued among other that ignorance plays a role in child labour. A respondent said:

I think that most farmers are unaware of the consequences of involving children in onion farming, the goal of the farmers is to meet the needs of the family and therefore do not pay attention to the dangers of the work (Respondent Staff 3).

Insufficient water supply

It was discovered that insufficient water supply, as a cause of child labor is limited to onion farmers, as they rely on water for their dry season onion farming where water availability is not guaranteed. Many of the farmers dig wells in the middle of their farms to serve as a source of water for their onion farms. Some of the respondents revealed that they are weak and hence cannot work as they use to do when they were young. Most of the able-bodied young men always migrate to the southern part of Ghana to seek jobs in the cocoa farms leaving behind only children. The able bodied young men migrate to the south in quest to seek for better opportunities. Ghana is one of the major cocoa producing country, hence working in the cocoa farms is more lucrative than working in the onion farms. Some respondents noted that:

The reason we involve children is because of inadequate water supply, which is why our children come to help us compete for the small amount of water available (Respondent farmer 3)

I involve my children in onion farming because I don't have enough strength, because I'm mostly employing manpower. Considering the large nature of the onion farms, I can't work on it alone without involving children because I'm getting older (Respondent farmer 4).

Children quest to have their own farm

It was also identified that most of the children compete with each other on the size of onion farm they owned, which further complicates the whole phenomenon of child labor, as children work long hours, and sometimes forgo school to the farm just to make sure they produce more than their colleagues do. This finding is in line with that of Johansson (2009), who argues that, in his study of child labor in Babati town, the children explain that they work because they have to get money for food and other basic needs. Children owning farms is not against the law, but it should not interfere with the health, education and physical development of the child. Leaving school to work on an onion farm is against the laws of Ghana, precisely Article 87 (1) of the children Act of Ghana which reads "no person shall engage a child in exploitative labour" and 87(2) reads "Labour is exploitative of a child if it deprives the child of its health, education or development". Hence the activities that these children engage in is against the law as it deprives them of their education.

We children have our part of the garden to produce the onions to sell and use the money to buy what we want, as our parents are unable to meet all our needs (Respondent Child 2).

DISCUSSION

Many social issues appear to be identified as problems by small groups of people such as government representatives, the mass media representative, the clergy, presidents, and representatives of opinion. These people are considered more important than others because they are wealthy, experts, politicians and have more power and influence than the poor. It is generally agreed by the ILO that not all work performed by the child is regarded as child labour, because child participation in work that does not adversely affect their wellbeing and personal

development or interfere with their schooling is considered appropriate or beneficial (ILO,2018). Unless the job is exploitative, it interferes with the schooling of the child, has an effect on the child 's health and general development, before it can be term as child labour. While many Ghanaian children participate in economic practices that are not harmful to their growth and education, others are compelled to engage in work that harms them.

It was observed during the study that some of the influential people in Garu-Tempene helped their parents in onion farming of when they were young and therefore do not consider it a problem. The study found that children involved in the production of onions are engaged in activities such as digging wells in the farms, raising seedbeds, planting onion seeds, transplanting onions seedlings, watering the onions, scaring away animals, harvesting the onions, carting the onion produced on trucks to the market. While most farmers have argued that the activities carried out by these children have no negative effects on them. The study shows that, the activities that these children involved in affect their development, education, and health. The activities that these children involved in cannot be classified as child work. Article 90 (1) of the Children Act of Ghana defined minimum age for the engagement of a child in light work to be thirteen years. 90 (2) Light work constitutes work which is not likely to be harmful to the health or development of the child and does not affect the child's attendance at school or the capacity of the child to benefit from school work.

Child labor has serious implications that live with children and with society for far longer than infancy years. Not only do young people face unsafe working environments, but they also face physical, mental, and emotional stress over the long term. Children who participate in onion farming are at risk of these stresses. Although no study has been carried out on the performance of these children academically, one can infer that it is through studies that one can pass his / her test if these children do not have enough time for their books their performance would below.

The research findings can be correlated with those of Njenja and Madihi (2006), where they identified poverty, large family size, cheap source of labor, socialization, and ignorance as some of the factors that cause child labor in Tanzania, just like many other developing countries. However, some findings are common to the production of onions, that as the inadequate supply of water because onion farming is done in the dry season. Many of these farmers lack water pumping machines and therefore require their children's services to water the onion farms. It was however, discovered that the inadequate supply of water as a cause of child labour is limited to onion farmers, since they depends on water for their onion in the season that water availability is not guaranteed. The Africa theory of child work provides a powerful tool to understand the the role of the African child and how these children are being socialized.

Bruscino (2001) noted that many child labour practices are rooted in tradition making their elimination more difficult. This is true with the onion farmers in Garu-Tempene, the study revealed that most of the farmers want to socialise their children the way they were socialised, and hence this is making the elimination of child labour a mere dream.

Child labour has serious consequences that stay with an individual and with society for far longer than years of childhood. children do not only face dangerous working conditions, they face long term physical, intellectual and emotional stress. Children who are involved in onion farming are at the risk of facing these stresses. Though no investigation has been conducted on the performance of these children academically, but one can conclude that it is through studies that one can pass his/her examination, if these children do not have enough time for their books their performance will be poor.

Poverty was found to be the primary underlying cause of child labor in Garu-Tempene, the result revealed that poverty was insufficient to explain the prevalence of child labor on its own. The causes of child labor are just too multifaceted to be described by a single causal factor, especially when considering the social context.

The International Labour Organization is the most important global stakeholder in debates and efforts to address and abolish child labor in its worst forms. It acknowledges that not all work done by children should be categorized as child labor that should be eliminated, and that children's participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling is generally regarded as being something positive (James & Rachel , 2020). Some of the activities that the children involve in does not constitute child labour. Assisting parents with light work after school, such as transplanting seedlings does not constitute child labor.

CONCLUSIONS

The study's goal was to dig into the factors that influence child labor in onion farming. Poverty, large family sizes, ignorance, inadequate supply of water, socialization, children's quest to get rich fast are among the causes of child labor in onion farming. The majority of farmers do not know that child labor has an adverse effect on their health, education, and physical development. Child labor has far-reaching effects for children that last far beyond their childhood.

In Garu-Tempene, poverty was discovered to be the primary underlying cause of child labor; however, this finding showed that poverty alone was insufficient to explain the prevalence of child labor. The causes of child labor are far too complex to be characterized by a single causal factor, especially when the social context is considered.

The research would contribute to a better knowledge of child labor in farming, as well as its causes and effects. The research would contribute to what appears to be a paucity of information on child labor in onion farming. The study would also provide guidance to social workers and policymakers, as well as leaders of community organizations, schools, and other stakeholders, on how to address the problem of child labor in farming.

The novelty of the research is anchored on the authors' interest to access the factors influencing child labor in onion farming while comparing the findings to causes of child labor in other sectors. The findings made the study unique for no such study has been carried out in Ghana, especially in the Garu Tempene District.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that a child protection committee should be formed to undertake a periodic visit to the onion growing areas to assess the extent of prevalence of child labor. This committee can work hand in hand with the child panel that is required to be established in each District under the Children Act, 1998, article twenty-seven. Also, School Management Committees (SMC) and Social Workers should include in their functions community sensitization, identification, and documentation of child labor issues. The SMCs can sensitize parents during Parent Teacher's Association (PTA) meetings. Additionally, Government should appoint those who are well versed in the issue rather than by political affiliation. Onion farmers should be targeted by the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), Micro-credit Scheme and Small Loan Center (MASLOC), and the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP). To prevent the youth of Garu from migrating to urban centers in search of jobs, the government should commercialize and industrialize the production of onion in Garu. This would create a value chain that creates jobs for the youth. When the youth is involved in farming, children will not need to help their parents on their farms. Finally, the Ghana education system should implore a more creative and recreational way of teaching to get children to develop an interest in school.

CONCLUSION

Child labor, according to children's rights organizations, is a violation of children's rights and eliminating it will raise awareness regarding the significance of protecting these rights, which is a concern for any nation's development. Child labor can be avoided by assisting and supporting the family's needs and concerns. Furthermore, when a family is facing financial difficulties, it pushes children into labor. It is however clear that not all work that is performed by the children in onion farming constitutes child labor since some does not impact negatively on their health, education, and physical development, but some activities they perform do impact negatively on their health, education, and physical development, and hence constitute child labor.

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