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Major Causes of Child Labour Among School Children in the Kete-Krachi District

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Abstract: In Ghana, about 20% of school children are involved in some form of child labor. In the Oti Region of Ghana, the Kete-Krachi district has the highest prevalence rate of about 39% compared to 33.2% for the whole region^[1]. This paper investigates the major causes of child labor among School children in the Kete-Krachi district of the Oti Region. The study examined 145 respondents through questionnaire and interviews. The research design for the study was both quantitative and qualitative. The respondents comprised 60 JHS social studies teachers, 60 Victims of child labor, 15 parents or guardians of the victims of child labor and 10 stakeholders of education. Data analysis showed that 67% of the victims were from large families of five or more. It was found out that some of the victims worked to contribute to their own welfare. Others worked due to poverty. Some victims also work to promote their education. It was also observed that teachers, opinion leaders, NGOs and the Government should help in the eradication of the menace in Kete-Krachi area.

Keywords: child labour, poverty, school children, extreme poverty and by-day

1. Introduction

Child labor has been common practice in the world for a long time. The ILO in 1995 estimated that about 250,000,000 children ages of 10 and 14 in developing countries alone were victims of child labor^[2-3]. It is a focus of attention in the whole world.

The Ghana Child labor Survey^[4] estimates that 20% of school children are involved in work classified as child labor. Of these, over 242,074 are engaged in worst forms of child labor (WFCL) including hazardous work. The fisheries sector is known as one of the areas where these children work. Thus, sea and inland fishing.

First, there is inadequate agreement on what activity constitutes child labor. Second, the explanation given for child labor varies from society to society and culture to culture. This situation arises difficulties to the implementation of UN conventions on the problem. Some individuals and organizations define the term as work children do in order to earn incomes or to the benefit of somebody else^[5-7].

Writers Canagarah & Colombes^[8], Jensen and Neilson^[9] and Jean-Marie and Robinson^[10] said child labor is the work children who are not in school do. Education should be free and compulsory at least at the elementary level. Article 30 of the same declaration required all member nations to ensure that no person was engaged in any activity destructive to his or her rights.

In 1959, the UN General Assembly adopted the rights of the child. This reaffirmed declaration free and compulsory elementary education as well as the protection of children from exploitation.

On 16th December, 1966, the UN General Assembly adopted the Economics Rights of the child which prohibit child labor. Article 10(3) of this Covenant stated that “children should be protected from exploitation. It further indicated that employment of children in work which was harmful to their education, health and development should be punished by law and that the state should provide appropriate age for the employment of young people.” It once again reaffirmed the declaration of free and compulsory primary education. The UN declared 1989 as the International Year of the Child to reaffirm the protection of the child especially against exploitative child labor^[11].

The UN General Assembly ratified the Convention of the protection of the Child on 2nd September 1990. Within the preambles of the convention, special references were made to the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, which sought to protect the child. Article 32 of this convention specifically talked about child labor. Clause one of these Articles stated that the child should be protected from working^[11].

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The large family size in most African communities contributes to the poverty situation aggravating the high prevalence rate. In Ghana, for instance, about 25% of the population is extremely poor, with per capita less than US\$ 280^[12]. Children are therefore compelled to work at a tender age to supplement family income. There are about 80 million child workers across Africa; a number that could reach 100million by 2015 as a result of poverty^[13]. This encourages employment of children to work. There is also lack of political will on the part of most African government to implement policies on child labor. Most of them concentrate only on how they can continue to remain in power forever and this leads to the neglect of problems like child abuse which do not threaten their political future^[14].

A base line study commissioned by the Ghana Government in 2007 revealed that 6.3 million children were victims of child labor, (Daily Graphic, 4, 2007) as against 1.2 million in 2003 which was observed by Global Watch International Secretariat^[15]. Most working children in Ghana (about 82.5%) in 1992 were found in the rural areas, mostly involved in agricultural activities.

The worse form of child labor in Ghana includes mining and stone quarrying, fishing, galamsey operations, and carrying of heavy load, commercial farming and commercial sex work (Children's Act 560-1998, Daily Graphic, Friday, May 4, 2007). It is common in Ghana to see children below age 15 engaged in such activities. The issue is that those children working are of school going age^[16-17]. These children are forced to drop out of school. Child labor therefore has been a major constraint in the development of human capital in Ghana. Governments since independence have tried measures aimed at eliminating it and promoting the development of human capital. Post-independence efforts to eliminate child labor started with the education Act 87 (1961) which made education free and compulsory for all children of school going age^[12]. In 1967, the Ghana's labor decree prohibited employment of children under the age of 15. Other post-independence measures included the free and compulsory basic education in the 1987 education reforms approval of UN children's rights, Article 28 (2) 1992 constitution, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in 1996 and the Children Act^[11]. In addition, in 2001 the Government instituted the capitation grant to reduce burden of parents and enhance children's education. The grant provides three Ghana cedis to cover the essential school fees of school at the basic level such as text book, fees, cultural fees and sport fees. Another program to reduce the burden of parents is the School Feeding Programme (SFP) which is currently in the pilot stage^[18]. Despite the above efforts by the Government of Ghana, child labor is still a common phenomenon in the Oti Region (33.2%), with the Kete-Krachi district being the highest (39.1%). (<http://www.Modem:hana.com/GhanaHome/re:ions.volta.ase?>). As a rural District most of the children are engaged in agricultural activities such as processing of cassava into gari and maintenance of farms. This is affecting the development of the human capital of the district. The district has the highest rate of illiteracy (70.2%) compared to 41.7 for the Volta region and 42.1% for the nation^[19]. This is dragging the development of the district backwards. Child labor among school children might be a contributory factor for the low enrollment and poor academic performance in most of the schools in the district.

1.1 Purpose of the research

The purpose of the paper is to create awareness about the major causes of Child Labour among School Children in the Kete-Krachi Area.

1.2 The scope of the study

The research area was the Kete-Krachi District of the Oti Region. The Krachi District was selected based on one issue. That is, even though child labor appears to be high, no research seems to have been carried out in the area to provide baseline evidence on its impacts.

The study covered students (JHS) in the area because they are often used as victims of child labor. They constitute the age group (12-15 years) within which child labor is rampant. Their teachers and parents were also involved in the study. Even though, child labor might also be common among the primary school children, such children might not be able to provide relevant information. Hence the JHS children who were more matured were used. The study investigated the major causes of child labor in the area. These activities include domestic work, commercial agriculture, fishing, stone quarrying, hawking, carting of heavy loads and street related activities. The key emphasis of the research was the major causes of child labor among school children in the Kete-Krachi area.

2. Literature review

This chapter reviews related literature on the causes of child labor. The literature includes the most current knowledge about the problem. It also provided guidelines for fieldwork and interjections of the research findings and theoretical framework.

2.1 Causes of child labour

Most children involved in child labor are from broken homes. Most of them are orphans or foster children. Breakdown of marriages, separation among couples, death of parents and poverty are major causes of child labor^[20]. UNICEF^[13] noted that family circumstances contribute immensely to the problem of child labor. It observed that there is increasing evidence that victims of child labor do not stay with either or both parents for reasons such as increased fosterage within families, increased divorce rate and death of one or both parents. In confirmation of this, ILO^[7] observed that most working children are obliged to work because they come from poor homes. They explained dysfunctional family to be one plagued by alcohol or drug abuse. They noted that children who find themselves in such family background tend to work at a tender age. The same source also observed that working children's families tend to be large families. The major reason why children work is poverty^[23-24]. The District Chief Executive for South Tongu traced the reasons behind child labor to the entrenchment of the cycle of poverty in households and families (The Mirror, Saturday, July 19, 2008). When parents were asked, why they allow their children to be taken away to work, the response was to supplement family income. DFID^[23] noted that lack of access to local schools or poor-quality education may support the perception that work is a more attractive option to education or that education would result in insufficient economic reward relative to the cost of sending children to school.

GSS^[20] indicated that 93% of children work in order to contribute to the welfare of households. They further said 58.8% worked to supplement family income while 34.2 percent helped to operate household enterprise.

The Director of Labor of Ghana Statistical Services stated that the main factors pushing children to engage in the hazardous work were poverty, large household sizes, single parenthood, irresponsible parenting, economic as well as loss of both parents^[25]. Brown, Deardoff and Stern^[26] in supporting this assertion stated that the major cause of child labor was large household size which is also very common in the Kete-Krachi area^[7]. It is not surprising to see high prevalence rates of child labor in most parts of Ghana including Kete-Krachi area. Child labor is a byproduct of poverty as noted above^[19]. According to Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS), 39.5 percent Ghanaians were poor and 25 percent were extremely poor in 2000^[12]. The Africa Recovery^[24] revealed that there were about 80 million child workers in Africa.

International Labor Organization^[7] identified low level of education on the part of parents and parental decision as causes of child labor. On parental decision, it observed that, investing in children's education is extremely expensive and the benefits are long term, and mainly affect the child. The cost has to be borne by parents and the cost is due in the short term. This might make parents to withdraw them so that, the children can work for them. When children work, parents benefit in the short run and the children suffer in long run. Child neglect and lack of parental care and love also may force children of school going age into child labor. It is the responsibility of parents to provide the child with his or her needs including educational, health and basic needs. When parents shirk these responsibilities, some of the result includes child labor and child abuse^[27]. Most parents are not sufficiently knowledgeable about the impacts of child labor. Therefore, they confuse child labor with socialization of the child, without looking at the educational impacts^[27].

In rural areas, the victims of child labor are involved in agricultural activities which enhances the level of uneducated workers. Contrary to that in urban areas, the demand for educated labor is increased due to industrialization and uneducated labor gets lesser opportunities in the main work stream. Mahmood, Mann, Tabasam, and Niazi^[28], in their article, "Socioeconomic Determinates of Child Labor in automobile and engineering workshops" stated that the socio-economic status of the family is the main factor behind the child labor. Because children get to work when the family fails to fulfill the basic needs of their child^[29]. So, poverty pushes a child to engage in work. In residential and industrial areas there is number of organizations, factories and homes that gave the opportunity to the child to work there. Ray, R.^[30] conducted a study "Simultaneous analysis of Child Labor and Child Schooling: Comparative evidence from Nepal and Pakistan" in which researchers found out that in an educated society there are less efficient opportunities for child labor. The study concluded that economic factors are very important in finding reasons for child labor. Human rights commission of Pakistan considers poverty, social attitudes, large family size and low literacy rate as basic reasons of child labor in Pakistan. Ahmed^[31] in the report, "Child labor-A time to reflect" stated illiteracy, poverty, large family size and migration as a factor of child labor in Pakistan.

The author also added that inadequate economic resources, high birth rate and lack of enforcement of elementary level education laws as contributing factors. These factors made Pakistani children more vulnerable to labor in comparison to most other countries. Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) reported in 2012 that child labor is an extreme issue of inhumanity and the labor laws fail to cover this inhumanity as one million children in Pakistan are just engaged in domestic services and face physical and sexual assault^[32].

Poverty creates many problems such as child labor, prostitution, corruption, robbery, increased unemployment, poor

living conditions, malnutrition etc^[33]. Child poverty refers to children who are born to poor parents. Child poverty differs from adult poverty because it has different reasons and effects, for example it robs a child of his / her childhood. It may affect or bear a long lasting or psychological makeup in their mind and the impact of poverty during childhood leaves permanent effects on children. Poverty influences children in many social ways, for instance that malnutrition can affect health and education which in turn may impact a child's long term development^[34]. According to UNICEF child poverty is based on child rights, these children lack adequate nutrition, lack decent water and sanitation facilities, health services, education and information^[34].

Practically, poor people face inadequate basic needs such as food, clothing, health facilities etc. People who live below poverty line, live in severe housing conditions and poor sanitary and hygienic conditions. Many of them live in slums or poor residential areas and some of them lack housing, health care and nutrition sufficiency. Although illiteracy is far more prevalent among poor people, many of them lack education or they drop out of school because of high cost of schooling. In general, poor people earn little and in such cases parents are not able to take care of all the responsibilities of their children and they oblige their children to work to increase household income^[35]. Hosen^[36] showed that in Bangladesh poor rural parents can barely afford food let alone pay for school fees for their children. Several empirical studies show the link between living standards and child labor. Krueger^[37] showed evident trend from cross-country sample, that low income households are more likely to send their children to labor market which is uncommon in richer households. Duryea, Lam, and Levison found in urban Brazil that the father's unemployment compels their children to work in order to increase families' income^[38].

Aqil^[39] assumes that when parents have worked in their childhood their children will work as well, passing it from generation to a generation. As a result, once they are grown, they become uneducated and low-skilled. Therefore, parents education plays a vital role in children education as it can increase the possibility for their children to have a good education^[39-40].

Studies have demonstrated that the most notable reason being poverty^[41]. Decisions about child labor and schooling are generally made by parents. If the family live below the poverty line, parents see children as part of contributor in their family income^[41]. Basu^[42] used a theoretical model of child labor, where he showed the only reason parents send children to labor is because of their low income.

Consequently, poor parents cannot afford schooling for their children. Thus, mainly poor households are to force their children to labor instead of sending them to school. Rena^[43] shows that poverty and underdevelopment drives child labor. She found that the high prevalence of poverty amongst countries, including India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Malawi, Sudan, and Chad increases the child labor. Therefore, child labor is widespread throughout Africa, and Asia^[30]. According to the studies of Edmonds and Pavcnik^[44], O'Donnell et al.^[45] and Akarro and Mtweve^[46] they assume that tackling poverty can be a perfect solution to reduce child labor. Beside poverty, many factors influence the incidence of child labor^[44].

2.2 Theoretical framework

There is a growing body of knowledge concerning the causes and consequences of child labor. A classical work by Brown, Deardorff & Stern^[26], provides theories on child labor which may serve as a model for this study. Stated that poverty is a by-product of child labor. If this was true then efforts to reduce child labor in developing countries would not gain grounds because the process of economic development has been very slow in the last decade. Therefore, more efforts should be made on other major causes distinct from poverty. That is, policies of government in the developing countries should be focusing more on creating job opportunities for the people to eliminate child labor. When the people are employed, they would be able to earn regular income which would enable parents send and keep their children in school. This would go a long way to help check child labor and its related problems that affect child education in the country. Brown et al.^[26] took a departure from the poverty syndrome. Parents firstly choose the number of children they want to have. Children from large families in both developed and developing countries don't benefit much from school and tend to forfeit formal education. Large family size therefore account for child labor in most societies. This is relevant to this study because in Ghana, and for that matter Kete-Krachi area, apart from poverty, child labor can be caused by large families. Polygamous marriage which is commonly practiced in the area may result in large family size which in turn could result in child labor. Child labor was only chosen if the return was not high enough to compensate families for the loss of income of children.

The low return to education for the poor children would occur if schools were far away, inadequately staffed, and lacked educational supplies or materials. The return to education could also simply be unappreciated if parents themselves were not educated. Parents could also make a decision to borrow against the household future wealth to increase current

consumption while lowering future consumption. This would occur when the household survival was threatened. Thus, the only option parents have for increasing current household consumption at the expense of the future was to put him or her to work. Therefore, when children work today, they are denied better living standard in the future since the future income had already been used by the family.

Rajang^[47] also provided theory on market forces as a cause of child labor. Rajang looked at the dynamic implications of market failures as the cause of child at work. Market failure according to Rajang is where there is a failure in the sources of income of parents. According to Rajang, very few poor parents would choose education for their children. The central policy lesson of the Rajang's model is that government should help stop the menace now and the future generation will be free. For once, an educated child's income is raised above a threshold level; the newly created parent would be able to choose education rather than child labor for the next generation. This is relevant to the study because in Kete Krachi area unemployment is high which may be the results of poverty in the area and child labor. In addition, the market for agricultural activities is uncertain. Market failures may result in the use of children to raise income.

Although the reduction in poverty can reduce child labor, the reduction in family size, unemployment may help to eliminate child labor. Globalization has intensified diseases such as HIV / AIDS and Coronavirus which claims human lives especially adults who double as parents leaving their children as orphans. This prevents these unfortunate children from proper parental care leading to the various ways by which these children resort to, to be able to make a living. Some of this anti-social behavior includes prostitution and child labor. Governance in the country may also compel parents to resort to child labor. If the policies of the government of the day do not favor the creation of jobs to enable the people to be employed, it will lead to high rates of unemployment with its antisocial activities such as child labor and the related problems. The people will be jobless and cannot meet their needs because they are not working. Therefore, this called for pragmatic economic policies that will focus on job creation so that, the people will be employed and earned income to be able to educate and feed their children.

Models of production can also be a motivating factor that can lead to child labor. Parents rely so much on factors of production to be able to produce to meet their demands. Lack or inadequacy of any of these factors can lead to poverty that can result to child labor. Taking Kete-Krachi area into consideration, labor and capital are lacking.

Farmers and fishermen at this district find it very difficult to source the needed capital to enable them expand and produce on large scale to be able to feed their families and get some to sell to acquire their basic needs. They also do not have asses to labor to enable them produce on large scale. Because of these factors, they turn to produce only what their strength could do to feed their families. They therefore resort to child labor to be able to meet their needs. Most of the writers see child labor as a byproduct of poverty but, poverty is not an independent variable. Child labor may also be caused by socio-cultural and political forces such as unemployment, extended family systems and believes. This work would in addition to poverty, looked at other forces such as socio-cultural and political forces. The practice of polygamous marriage with its high number of children to a family coupled with the acceptance and the practice of the extended family system in the study area allows children to be giving out to other family members for up bring.

These children on most occasions are made to work for the up-keep of the home. The activities of these children on most occasions are not taken to be child labor because; they are working to supplement the little income of the home. The researcher decided to research into the causes of child labor so as to eradicate and eliminate child labor from the study area to pave way for better academic performance. The researcher believed that, if child labor is eradicated from the area, it would pave way for better child education leading to the development of the Kete-Krachi area.

3. Methods

The research design for the study was both a descriptive with quantitative and qualitative elements. This is referred to as methodological dualism or triangulation^[48]. The quantitative design helped to produce information that was generalizable^[48], while the qualitative design helped to produce in-depth information about the subject^[49]. Both quantitative and qualitative designs also produced descriptive and analytical data. The quantitative and qualitative findings complemented one another to add breadth and scope to the results^[50]. The strengths of each model are also enriched by the weakness of the other. Descriptive quantitative design was used in the collection of data. It determines and report's findings the way they are. The total sample size for the study was the 145 respondents. These break down to 60 victims of child labor, 60 teachers, 15 parents of the victims and 10 stakeholders of education.

Table 1. Target population, sample and sampling procedures

Target Population	Total	Sample Sizes	Sample Method
Victims	5581	60	Tracer
Teachers	257	60	Simple Random
Stakeholders of education	80	25	Convenience
TOTAL	5661	145	

The sixty (60) JHS teachers were selected to meet the requirements of a sample survey. Sample survey requires large sample sizes equal to or greater than 40 respondents^[51]. A large sample size could yield data for prediction or generalization. The involvement of large number of teachers was also necessary because their contribution was very vital to the solution of the child labor problem^[51].

The simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of the 60 social studies teachers. A list of social studies teachers was obtained from the district education service through the circuit supervisors and the selection was done using random sampling. The simple random sampling helped to obtain sample units across the entire teacher's population. Therefore, the simple random sampling method gave all the teachers' equal chance to be selected. With the table of random numbers, the list of all the teachers in the district was obtained. Three digits were used since they were more than 100 but less than 1000. Number which fell below 258 was put into parentheses since the total numbers of teachers in the district 257. Teachers with those numbers selected were included in the sampling unit. The proposed number of victims of child labor were 60 subjects (see table 1) the selection of this number was difficult due of lack of reliable data on the menace in the area.

However, because of the widespread nature of the problem in the area, the researcher was able to reach 60 of such victims. The victims were also considered because they constituted the target group.

Their responses were very vital in revealing the very causes and impacts of the problem. The researcher used the "tracer" method to identify the JHS students who were victims. Tansey^[52] stated that, the tracer method was suitable for gathering qualitative information when there was no sample frame. With this method, the researcher went from school to school to interview headmasters, guidance and counseling coordinators, teachers and students who had identified the victims of child labor. Names which were revealed were traced and questionnaires were distributed to them. Fifteen schools were visited based on the advice of the Assistance Director in charge of supervision in the area. At least one school in the eight circuits in the area was visited and four of the victims were interviewed in each school visited. The schools visited were Osramani JHS, Monkra JHS, Kwakuae JHS, Janjan JHS, Janikrom JHS, Abujuro JHS, Jaisayor JHS, Borae JHS, Bajemese JHS, Banda JHS, Chinderi JHS, Yaborae JHS, Okuma JHS, Wiayi JHS and Okanta JHS. Ten stakeholders were also included in the sample unit. The convenience sampling method was adopted in their selection. That is, the sample units were selected for interviews based on their availability and willingness to take part in the interview the stakeholders of education selected for the study were mainly circuit supervisors and JHS Headmasters^[52]. Table 1 shows the target population, sample size chosen from each group and sampling method used to identify the target groups. 15 parents were included in the sample. The involvement of the parents was intended to gather data on the causes of child labour in the area. Interviews could only require a smaller number in order to produce detailed information. This explains why only 15 parents were interviewed.

3.1 Research instruments

The questionnaire was the main data collection instrument under survey. Two sets of questionnaires were used. One set was for the teachers and the other for the students. Apart from their suitability for wider coverage, the questionnaire produced reliable information, helped to interview more respondents, and reduced bias and influence of the researcher. Questions of close-ended where respondents were only given the chance to select either yes or no or open-ended types that is where respondents were given the chance to express their opinion on the issues at stake were used. However, most of the questions were close-ended that is where respondents were given only yes or no options. This was meant to obtain comparable responses and avoid scattering of ideas which could make analysis difficult. The face to face interviews were guided by an interviewer's guide. One set was for the parents and another one for the stakeholders.

3.2 Validity and reliability of instruments

The questionnaire and the interviewer's guide were vetted by lecturers, child labor coordinators and social welfare officers before going to the field. They read through the questions to determine whether their contents were adequate. They also helped to identify any ambiguities. The instruments were later pilot tested at Apedwa using two JHS headmasters,

two parents, ten JHS social studies teachers and twenty JHS children. Two schools which were involved in the pilot study were Apedwa R / C JHS and Apedwa Presby JHS Apedwa was used because it has similar physical, social and economic characteristics as the Kete-Krachi area according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census. For example, most of the people in both areas are foodstuff farmers. Suggestions and corrections from the pilot test were used to review the instruments. Responses from the questionnaires and interviews also were cross-checked and compared in order to achieve trust-worthy and valid instruments.

4. Data analysis and interpretation of findings

The analysis was done under the personal data, background characteristics of victims of child labor, causes of child labor, which constituted the major research questions on the questionnaires used to gather data from the respondents. The respondents were' students, teachers, parents, stakeholders of JHS education (headmasters and circuit supervisors). Cross-checking of responses from the victims, the teachers, parents and stakeholders of JHS education were done to see similarities and differences in their responses.

4.1 Personal data of the victims

Table 2 shows the age of victim respondents. Eighty percent of the victims were within 12-15 age-group. The corresponding male and female ratios were 80.6 percent and 79.2 percent respectively.

Table 2. Age of respondents (victims)

Age	Male		female		Both	
	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%
Less than 12	1	2.8	1	4.2	2	3.3
12-15	29	80.5	19	79.1	48	80
16 and above	6	16.7	4	16.7	10	1.7
Total	36	100	24	100	60	100

Only 3.3 percent of them were less than 12 years and 16.7 percent were 16 years and above. The age distribution of the students' reflects atypical JHS age group which is usually 12-15 years old. All students interviewed were victims of child labor.

4.2 Background of the teachers

The personal data of the teachers indicated that 68 percent of them were males while 32 percent were females, which shows that majority of them were males. Seventy six percent of teachers were 40 years old or younger with only 24 percent being above 40 years. Most of the teachers in the area (80%) were on ranks below Principal Superintendent with only 12 percent who were on the rank of Principal Superintendent and above.

4.3 Background of stake holders

Seventy percent of the stakeholders were headmasters while 30 percent were circuit directors. Eighty percent of the stakeholders had been on their position for ten years or below with 20 percent who had been on their position for more than ten years.

4.4 Background of parents / guardian of child laborers

Responses from the parents indicated that 87 percent of them were illiterates while only 13 percent were literate. Illiteracy on the part of parents might influence them to engage their children in child labor as observed by GSS^[4]. Brown, Deardorff and Stern^[26] also observed that, illiterate parents do not appreciate the value of education and as such engage their children in child labor. On marital status, about 67 percent of the parents were married together while 20 percent divorced. Thirteen percent of them were however separated. This implies that 33 percent of the children were under single parenting. On the number of children, 73 percent of the parents or guardians of the children had 5 or more children while 27 percent of them had less than 5 children. Most of the parents or guardians (87%) were farmers while only 13 percent of them were engaged in other occupations such as trading and artisan works. In sum, the background of the children and their parents shows that most of the children were from polygamous families of 5 or more members. Most of the parents / guardians of the children were illiterate farmers. It was therefore not surprising that children of these parents were mostly engaged in one form of child labor or the other. This is because as observed by Brown, Deardorff and Stern^[26] in their studies elsewhere, children of illiterate parentage and those from polygamous families usually engage in child labor as

a result of economic hardship faced by their parents. Illiteracy and polygamous relationships are therefore predisposing factors of child labors^[13].

4.5 Background of victims / respondents

Eighty percent of children involved in child labor in the research area fell within 12-15 years with 60 percent of them being males while females accounted for 40 percent. The reason for the male and female difference might be that, much of the work of girls is not often considered as child labor. Domestic services, for example, is a major sector girl-child employment which is not often considered as child labor activities. ILO-IPEC^[53] continued this when it said that child domestic work was largely “invisible” and mostly ignored. Fifty five percent of the victims of child labor in the area were in JHS 2 class that was preparing for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Most of them (85%) started work when they were less than 13 years which is against the 1998 Children’s Act of Ghana. Responses from the children indicated that 68 of their parents lived together while 20 percent of their parents had divorced. Sixty eight percent of the fathers of the children had two or more wives and about a third or 32 percent of the fathers had only one wife. This shows that most of the children were from polygamous homes. This agrees with Brown, Deardorff and Stem’s observation that polygamous marriage encourages child labor. Responses from the children also indicated that 92 percent of fathers and 80 percent of mothers were engaged in farming activities^[26].

Table 3. Class / forms of the victims

Jhs class/form	Boys		Girls		Total	
	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%
1	16	44.4	11	45.8	27	45.0
2	20	56.6	13	54.2	33	55.0
Total	36	100	24	100	60	100

4.6 Teachers’ personal data

Figure 1. shows the gender of teachers. In all 68.4% were male while 31.6% were female. Majority of the teachers were males because they form the bulk of teacher’s population in public schools in the Krachi area. The age distribution of the teachers is shown in table 4.3. About 56 percent fell within 21-30 age groups with none of them below 20 years.

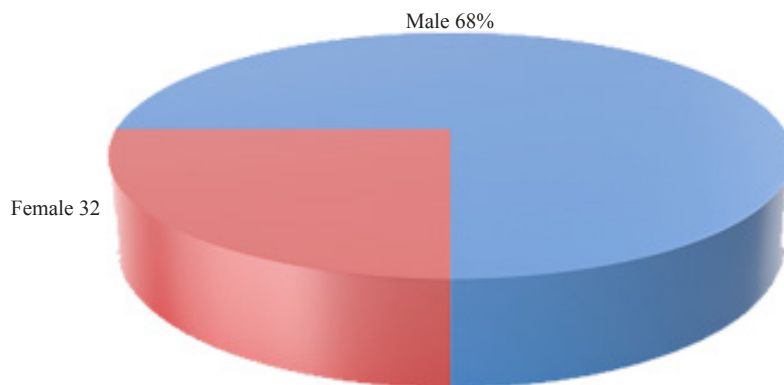


Figure 1. Gender of teachers

The majority of the teachers were males because they form the bulk of teachers’ population in public schools in the Kete-Krachi area.

The age distribution of the teachers is shown in Table 4. About 56 percent fell within 21-30 age groups with none of them below 20 years.

Table 4. Age of teachers

AGE	ABS	%
Less than 20	0	0
21-30	32	56.2
31-40	16	29.8
41-50	9	10.5
51-60	3	3.5
Total	60	100

Three and half percent of the teachers were within the 51-60 age groups. This shows that, the majority of the teachers were relatively young. The rank or position of the social studies teachers is displayed in table 5. Twenty one percent of the teachers were within the lower ranks, that is, the rank of superintendent 1 or below.

Table 5. Rank or position of the teachers

Rank / Position	ABS	%
Pupil teacher	8	14.0
Superintendent II	13	22.8
Superintendent I	8	14.0
Senior Superintendent II	11	21.0
Senior Superintendent I	9	15.8
Principal Superintendent	5	8.8
Assistant Director II	2	1.8
Assistant Director I	2	1.8
Total	60	100

About 3.8 percent were with the higher ranks of Assistant Director 1 while 45.6 percent were in between the lowest ranks (Superintendent 1 and below) and the highest ranks (Assistant Directors grade).

4.7 Characteristics of stakeholders of JHS education

All the stakeholders interviewed were males with 70 percent of them being headmasters and 30 percent of them being circuit supervisors.

Figure 2. shows the number of years that stakeholders of JHS education have been on their position.

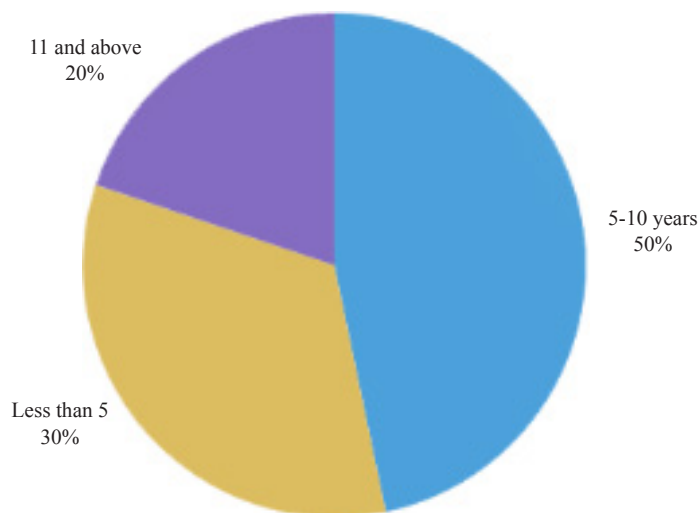


Figure 2. Number of years stakeholders had been on their position

Half of them (50%) have been on their position for 5-10 years and few of them (20%) have been on their position for more than 11 years.

4.8 Reason why children work

The study also inquired on the reasons why the children work and the responses from the victims as to why they worked are shown in Figure 3. The Figure indicates that most of the children work to contribute to their own welfare and that of the family.

Mem a JHS two student of Methodist JHS said;

I have to work in other to get money to buy my educational needs since my parents are unable to provide them. We are 8 in number and my parents said they cannot provide all our needs. That is why am working. (Field interview, April, 2010)

Ako a form one student of LA J HS also remarked;

I work to get money to add to what my mother has so that she will be able to take care of me and my siblings. I am the elderly child and my mother said it is my duty to work to supplement the income of the family since my father is no more. (Field interview, April, 2010)

Owa a form two student of Presby J HS indicated;

No one is taking care of me as both of my parents have passed away. I have to work to cater for both my house needs as well as educational needs. If I should stop these works, then it means I would drop out of school which I don't want to. I would have to continue working to be able to attend the school. (Field interview, April, 2010)

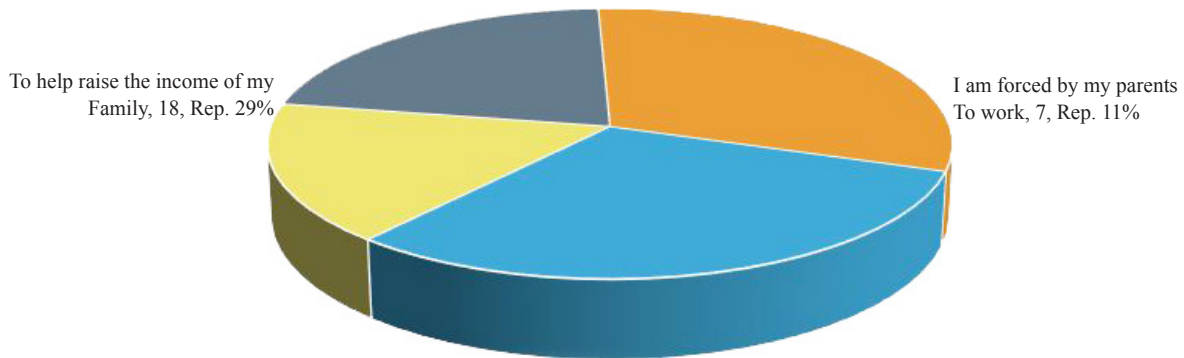


Figure 3. Parent's responses on why their children work

Eighty percent of the parents said the children worked in order to get money for their educational needs while 20 percent said the children worked for the welfare of the family. The responses from the children and their parents indicated that, the main reason why the children work is to get money to provide their educational needs. This means to the parents and the children, child labor is necessary to promote education. It was however, observed that majority of the children (58.8%) work to supplement family income.

Kwa a parent and a farmer said;

I am alone who takes care of five children, I have nobody to help me. If I don't ask the children to work, how can I look after these five children since my husband died some years ago? (Field interview, April, 2010)

Ambo a parent and a farmer said:

The first and the second children are old enough to work in order to buy their educational needs such as books, pens and the school uniform, so that I and my wife will work and look after the rest of the children. (Field interview, April, 2010).

Alo a parent and a fisherman remarked;

The education of my children is very important to me, but I don't have the means to pay for their fees. I have given them out to work so that I can be able to educate them. (Field interview, April, 2010)

Sog a parent and a fish monger indicated;

My two children in the JHS are matured enough to work to also contribute to the house whole. They are not to be there and be eating. (Field interview, April, 2010)

Figure 4. shows the responses from the stakeholders of JHS education on reasons they gave as to why children work in the area.

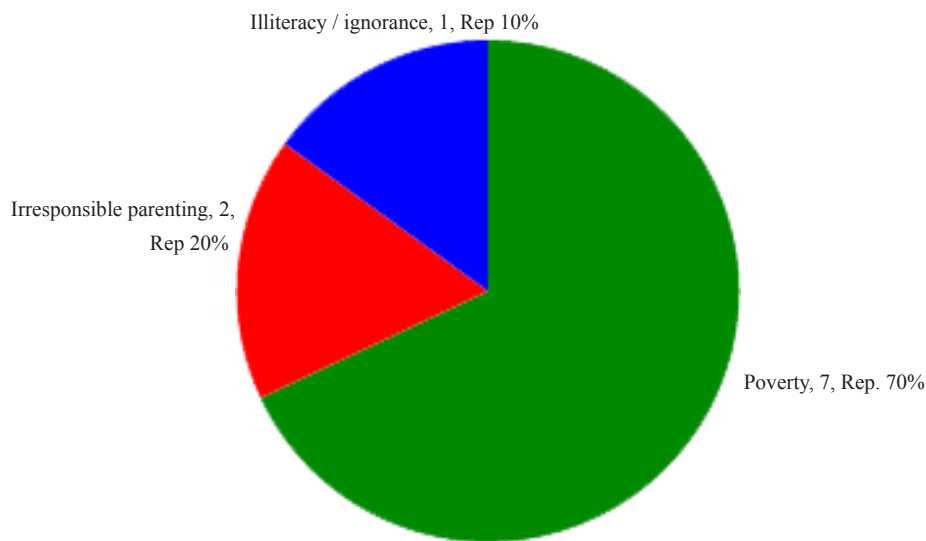


Figure 4. Stakeholders responses on causes of child labor

Their responses differed from those reasons given by the victims and their parents. In all, 70.9 percent of the stakeholders of education said the children worked because of poverty while 20 percent said the children worked because of irresponsible parenting. Only 10 percent of them saw illiteracy / ignorance as the reason pushing the children to work.

Amo a Circuit supervisor said;

Most of the parents here are self-employed. There are no jobs that can earn them high income. The place is a deprive area with little job opportunities. The people here are poor people who can only produce what the family can eat. Meeting their basic needs becomes a problem resulting in child labor to supplement their little income. (Field interview, April, 2010)

Table 6. Shows the responses of the teachers on the causes of child labor which have been scaled as follows; (strongly agreed) (agree) (uncertain) (disagree) and (strongly disagree)

Causes	1 (SA)		2 (A)		3 (U)		4 (D)		5 (SD)		TOTAL	
	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%
Poverty of parents	49	86.0	6	10.5	0	0	2	3.5	0	0	60	100
Large family size	26	45.6	22	38.6	3	5.3	4	7.0	2	3.5	60	100
Illiteracy of parents	35	61.4	12	21	6	10.5	4	7.0	0	0	60	99.9
Ignorance of parents	30	52.6	17	29.8	4	7.0	4	7.0	2	3.5	60	99.9
Marriage breakdown	41	71.9	14	24.6	2	3.5	0	0	0	0	60	100
Lack of parental care	17	29.8	26	55.6	10	17.5	2	5	2	3.5	60	99.9
Irresponsible parenting	42	73.7	11	19.3	2	3.5	0	0	2	3.5	60	100

The result indicated that in all, most of the teachers strongly agreed to the various items as causes of child labor apart from lack of parental love and care where most of them just agreed. The items on which most of them strongly agreed included “poverty on the part of parents.” (80%), “large family size” (45.6%) “illiteracy” (61.4%), “ignorance” (52.0%), “breakdown of marriage” (71.9%) and “irresponsible parenting” (73.7%). Even though, apart from lack of parental love and care, majority of the respondents strongly agreed to all the items as causes of child labor, poverty on the parts of parents was the highest (80%). This agreed with the responses from the stakeholders of the JHS education where most of them (70%) indicated that poverty was the major cause of child labor in the area.

The fact that only few of the teachers disagreed strongly or disagreed with the various items as causes of child labor implies that to them, the various items (namely poverty, large family size, illiteracy, ignorance, breakdown of marriage, lack of parental love and care and irresponsible parenting) could be major causes of child labor in the area. Child labor is therefore caused by many factors. This has been noted by many writers. Poverty for instance is noted by Mergos^[54],

DFID^[23], African Recovery^[24], UNICEF^[55], and ILO^[7] as a major cause to child labor^[22]. GNCC^[56], Donnellan^[3], Brown, Deardorff and Stern^[26] and GSS^[4] enumerated the major causes of child trafficking to include large household size, single parenting, illiteracy and ignorance^[4]. On illiteracy, Brown, Deardorff and Stern^[26] stated that illiterate parents did not appreciate the value of education and tend to engage their children in child labor. They therefore require formal education especially in the Kete-Krachi area.

5. Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

The paper sought to investigate the major causes of child labor in the Kete-Krachi area of the Oti Region. To achieve these objectives, data were collected from 145 respondents comprising 60 teachers, 60 victims, 15 parents and 10 stakeholders of education. The survey method and questionnaire instrument were used to collect data from victims and the teachers while personal interviews were used to gather data from the parents and stakeholders. The data were analyzed and interpreted using frequency tables, graphs and charts. The major findings of the study are summarized and conclusions are drawn under each subheading.

5.1 Causes of child labour

The findings indicated that, most of the children worked to get money to supplement the little resources of their poor parents, it was concluded that factors that push children to work include poverty, large family size, illiteracy, ignorance, breakdown of marriages and irresponsible parenting. Most of the children were victims involve in child labor activities based on some reasons. Most of them worked to contribute to their families' income. The responses from the children indicated that 48 percent of them worked to raise money for their educational needs while 30 percent worked to raise the income of their families. However, 80 percent of the parents said the children work to get money to pay school fees. Only 20 percent of them said the reason why the children worked was for the welfare of the families. From what the parents and their wards said, shows that the victims were working due to the fact that most of the parents were not employed to be able to end income to cater for themselves and the children. Ignorance on the part of the parents is another reason for which the victims were working. Some parents indicated that their wards were of age to contribute to the home. To them, a child of 15 years is grown enough to work to earn money to supplement the little income of their parents. They have little or no knowledge about the effect of the work on the child's education and health. It is generally said that education helps to reduce ignorance. With the above its undeniable fact that illiteracy on the part of the parents led to the reasons for which the children work. Most of the social studies teachers strongly agreed that the major causes of child labor in the area included poverty on the part of parents, large family size, illiteracy, breakdown of marriage and irresponsible parenting. On the causes of child labor in the area, about 71 percent of the stakeholders said parental poverty was the main reason why the children work. While 20 percent and 10 percent respectively said the children worked because of irresponsible parenting and illiteracy / ignorance. It can therefore be concluded that, most of the children worked in other supplement the little income of their parents to pay for their educational needs. The underlying factors pushing the children to work as observed by the social studies teachers and stakeholders included poverty, large family size, illiteracy, ignorance, breakdown of marriage and irresponsible parenting. This confirms studies done by GNCC^[56], Brown, Deardorff and Stern^[26], Donnellan^[3] and GSS^[4] when they enumerated the major causes of child labor to include poverty, large household size, single parenting, illiteracy and ignorance^[45]. Most of the parents / guardians are engaged in subsistence farming. They are therefore not able to cater for the basic needs of their children and so the children have to work to supplement their efforts. Child labor has serious negative implications on the health and education of the future leaders. Stakeholders should act now to save the lives of the innocent children in the area.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Causes of child labor

The findings indicated that, most of the children worked to promote their education, it was concluded that factors that push children to work include poverty, large family size, illiteracy, ignorance, breakdown of marriages and irresponsible parenting, it is recommended that the government should be committed to provide access to basic education by making basic education totally free. For example, capitation grant should be further reviewed to cater for the necessary cost of children's education. Ten cedis (GH10) which is currently paid per term per student by government as capitation grant is woefully inadequate and must be reviewed upwards since the amount might not be able to provide for one or two items that the grant is supposed to provide. In addition, the government should supply other essential educational needs of children such as school uniform, school bags, mathematical sets and other teaching and learning materials. All fees including

examination fees, PTA dues and development levies should be abolished at the basic education level. The School Feeding Program (SFP) should also be expanded to cover all schools in the country. Without these, poor children would be forced to work to support their education. The district assemblies, NGOs should provide micro credit to poor people to expand their businesses. Credit facilities and loans should be given to the people to expand their businesses in order to increase productivity and incomes. As earlier noted, if parents are wealthy, they would be able to provide the necessary educational needs of the children thereby preventing them from being used as victims of child labor. In addition, as recommended earlier, family planning and adult fictional literacy programs should be encouraged to address the problems of large family size and illiteracy / ignorance among parents / guardians. When these are done, family size would be reduced and parents would be able to adequately cater for their children. This would reduce the need for children to work to support their education. Laws and programs that would ensure stable marriages should also be made to prevent break down of marriages. The government, NGOs and philanthropist should create job opportunities for parents and those capable of working could get employment to increase the income of parents so that children would not be asked to work. The children are the future leaders of our dear country. They should be protected from any activities that would destroy their future, including child labor. Any effort needed to stop the menace must be done to protect the children in the area.

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