

## ANALYSIS OF CHILD LABOR IN MAIDUGURI, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR MEETING THE MDGs TARGET

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper examines child labor composition to determine its implication on school enrolment in Maiduguri. The study employed field survey to collect data from 100 households. The results of the main findings suggest that 54 percent of the children in labor market are between the ages of 11 and 13 years. The survey also indicates that the larger percentage of the income generated in child labor are utilized within the household. The study observes that most of the children in the child labor are orphans or children without parental care. The study concludes that child labor exploitation operates as a last resort for the vulnerable poor families and greater percentage of the children in the labor market are of primary school aged, their inability to attend schools would greatly undermine their future education opportunities. Therefore, for effective elimination of child labor there is a need to support the vulnerable families with safety nets and also educate the parents on the consequences of force child labor.*

Key words: Child labor, child labor proceeds, poverty.

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### Introduction

The child labor rates have been on the increase in Nigeria and Maiduguri is not an exception to this problem. A larger number of children below the ages of 15 years are actively involved in wide range of activities due to severe economic and social problems facing the household heads. The majority of the household heads in the metropolis are increasingly finding it difficult to provide food and basic needs for the household due to low income and generally poverty as a result they engage younger members of the household within the ages of child dependency ratio into active labor. The growth of child labor market came with it positive and negative implications for the ability of the state to meet a variety of social and economic targets including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), goal (2) with explicit objective to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete at least a full course of primary schooling. The rising child labor rate in the Metropolis in spite the call for the ban of child labor is seriously disturbing as it has adverse effect on primary school enrolment. Empirical evidence suggests that low school enrolment rate is associated with low income and growing insecurity and rising crime rates. These challenge the capacity of the state government to realize social and economic development. However, less attention has been paid to investigate child labor and its implication for the rate school enrolment in the Metropolis.

Maiduguri is the state capital of Borno state. It is located at the innermost part of the Northeast region of Nigeria. The city has a population of 540,016 based on 2006 census. The town is a cosmopolitan one, as it is largely inhabited by various tribes with different cultural affiliations. Borno state is one of the poverty-ridden states in the country with about 62 percent of the population live on less than a dollar per day based on the Harmonized Nigerian Living Standard Survey 2009/2010. The city faces serious security challenges and level of wellbeing deteriorated and this might have caused the increase in the child labor rate. This paper examines the composition of child labor and how the earnings from exploitative child labor are utilized. This enables us to identify the causes of child labor. The paper is structured as follows: the following section describes the material and methods used in analyzing the data. Section three discusses the results from the analysis while section three gives the conclusion of the study.

### Material and Method

The theory of demand as it applies to the individual's choice of good and services can be extended to the demand for children at the household levels. The microeconomic theory of fertility thus, assumes that, children are regarded both as investment and consumption goods. This means that the demand for children can be for their sake, and for the sake of what material benefit they could generate. Consequently, the demand for children at the household level can be seen to be influence by family preferences (Todaro, 1992). Schultz (1974) and Todaro (1902) argue that any form of child labor is seen as exploitation. To determine child labor exploitation in Maiduguri, the explanatory study employed field survey to collect data from 100 households from four major wards in Maiduguri. The wards considered are Gwange, Bulumkutu, Shehuri North and Umarari. Twenty households in

each of the selected wards were randomly interviewed. Descriptive statistics test was used to determine the composition and structure of child labor and a t-test and One-way ANOVA was used to analyze the data.

## Results and Discussion

The result of the survey conducted in the selected wards, revealed the following response as contained in the following tables.

Table 1: Child Labor and Age Distribution

Age Distribution Years	Frequency	Percentage
7-10	17	17
11-13	43	43
14-15	40	40
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table1 shows that 43% of the children participating in the labor force are between the ages of eleven (11) and thirteen (13) and 40% of the child labor are between 14 and 15 years. While the children between the ages of seven (7) and ten (10) represents 17% of the child labor.

Table 2: Utilization of income generated through child labor

Utilization of income	Frequency	t-value	2-tail sig
Self-Benefit	20 (20%)	2.998	0.003
Supplement Family Income	55 (55%)	3.46	0.003
Other	15 (15%)	1.395	0.164

Source field survey 2014

Table 2 above presents the results of the utilization of income generated through child labor. The findings of the results of the utilization of the proceeds revealed that the utilization of the proceeds from child labor differs between households in the selected wards. Twenty (20) of the respondents representing 20% believed that income generated through child labor are utilized by the children themselves. The children save such income for their personal use as most of them are from poor families. While the results show that 55% of the respondents indicate that, the amount is used to supplement household income. That is the income generated through child labor is utilized by the whole family.

The results suggest that various forms of child labor exploitation exist in the Metropolitan depending on socioeconomic and demographic conditions facing the households. The field survey revealed the following forms of child labor utilization. First, one of the forms of child labor exploitation identified in the survey is that, the child works and keeps the financial gains for his use. That is, the fruit of his labor goes directly to himself without any provision to other members of the family. The child, in most cases uses the proceeds from his/her labor to prepare for his future engagements like clothing for himself during festivities and so on. This is common amongst the *Almajiris*, where a child is sent to a traditional Quranic school from other town and is left to cater for himself.

The household survey also revealed that the breadwinner's income in a household is not adequate enough to sustain the family hence the child or children is/are encouraged to engage in gainful labor activity to complement the breadwinner's income. In this case, the income earnings from the exploitative child labor are utilized for the benefit of the household members. In addition, there are situations where a family has sufficient income and other resources, but still the child/children are forced to work. What the child/children brings home is shared among the family or the child keeps the returns of his labor to himself. While, a situation in which children are sent to traditional Quranic schools from other towns and such children are allowed to live with the tutor, for the period of their studies with the condition that the children shall be allowed to provide for themselves. In most cases the parents provide little to them and as a result the children strive hard to sustain themselves and thereby exposed to work that harms children or keeps them from attending school.

## Conclusion

The paper examined the composition of child population in forced labor and the forms of child labor proceeds utilization in Maiduguri Metropolitan, Borno state, Nigeria. The explanatory study employed field survey to collect data from 80 households for the analysis. The results of the main findings indicate that about 54 percent of the child labor force is made up of children between the ages of 11 and 13 years. This implies that substantial amount of school aged children are out of school as result of the child labor. Similarly, the larger proportion of the income generated through child labor are utilized within households, that is, are spend for the benefit of the whole family. This suggests that the children are forced to engage in the economic activities to augment family income as the household heads earnings capacity is low. The study collaborates with other studies that found a significant relationship between poverty and forced child labor in the less developed countries. This study provides an insight into the utilization of child labor proceeds but the study has its limitation in term of proceeds use. This study only classified utilization into three main types, which are self-benefit, supplement family income and others. The study concludes that the child labor operates as a last resort for people that suffer under the heavy burden of poverty.

Based on the findings the following important implications are provided: To improve the school enrolment rate and reduce forced child labor in poverty-ridden communities, there is a need to provide support for the vulnerable families by improving the capacity of the core poverty alleviation structures at the local government levels. In addition, it is necessary to pay special attention to the less privileged children in designing the education and poverty policies. The study suggests that future study on child labor should investigate the socioeconomic and demographic factors influencing child labor in Borno state.

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