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Child Time Allocation and Child Labour among Groundnut Traders in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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This paper evaluated the socio economic characteristics of child time allocation to marketing of groundnut and schooling in Ebonyi state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 95groundnut traders in the study area. Primary source of data collection was used. Descriptive statistical and simple ratio analysis indicates that groundnut marketing was dominated by females who had little or no education. Also those who are married exceeded those who are single and widowed. Distribution according to child work category revealed that children (mean 13.2 years) who assist parents to sell their wares do so during school over hours and spent well over 30hours a week on the street and market places which exceeds the standard time by UNICEF. Results of the simple time allocation ratio shows that the child is exploited and child abuse is eminent the state if not checked. This study recommends that the government should intensify efforts on revalidating Universal Basic Education (UBE) and enact a law mandating all school-age children not to be found hawking during school hours.

Keywords: child, time, allocation, labour, marketing, groundnut

Introduction

Child labour is a complex issue. To begin with, not all work involving children should be a cause for concern that is, not all work is labour. Developmentally appropriate economic activity can be beneficial to the full development of a child, but at its extreme, work can place a child's life and well being at risk. There are numerous human, environmental and social factors that influence how families and children view the premature participation of children in the labour market. Child labour and its causes vary from country to country, community to community, and even household to household. Therefore, strategies to combat child labour call for context-specific and solution-oriented interventions that take into account the nuances of local environments (UNICEF, 2009).

The World Bank (1998) lacks a universal definition of child labour, as the definitions of "children" and labour are highly dependent on the locality of these elements. However, in Brazil child labour refers to any work, paid or unpaid, for at least one hour per week and that any type of labour is illegal for children under 14 years of age (Gustafsson-Wright & Pyne, 2002). Child labour typically interferes with the schooling of children, obliging them to leave school early, or try to combine school and work which makes for long hours of work without rest, or making it impossible for them to attend at all. It is common that children in rural areas engage in agricultural activities in some form, whether seasonal to coincide with crop cycles and or school holidays or full time. In West Africa, as in many parts of the world, the participation of children in agricultural work alongside adults is a valued tradition. In the cocoa industry, many children work on small family farms of five to six hectares, the products of which are sold to local markets or consumed by the families themselves (ILO-IPEC, 2007). The concept of child labour according to UNICEF (2009) has shown that not all the work performed by a child is described to as child labour. There is a critical work limit for every child in a society. Children between 5 to11 years are expected to carry out 28 hours of non-economic domestic work per week, while children between 12 to 14 years are expected to perform domestic work for about 28 hours per week or 14 hours of economic activities in a week. Grown up children of between 15 to 17 years can perform 43 hours of economic activities per week (UNICEF, 2009). A child is exploited when he performs work either domestic and or economic activities that exceeds his age limit (Osotimehin et al., 2007). Such domestic or economic activities over stretches the child and could be harmful to the child in both short and long run (UNICEF, 2010). Poor households tend to engage in child labour to

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supplement or substitute adult labour. Children's school enrolment is negatively affected by this and health may be compromised, depending on prevailing labour conditions.

Groundnut contains about 11% carbohydrate, 30% protein, 45% oil, 2% ash and 5% water (Awoke, 2003). After oil extraction, the residues are good sources of protein useful in bakeries and in the manufacture of livestock feeds. The most commercial product of groundnut is peanut candy, which is sold at supermarkets or hawked in the streets. Adinya (2009) Opined that participation of married men and women in groundnut marketing is higher than single men and women.

As children carry out unskilled labour they get trapped in those activities, with negative implications in terms of their wage levels and bargaining capacity as adults (FAO-ILO, 2011). This study is set to determine the socio economic characteristics of the household heads and child labour time allocation to agricultural commodity marketing vis a vis schooling.

Materials and methods

Multistage sampling technique was employed senatorial zones of each state were selected for this study. This gave a total of three senatorial zones. In the first stage, two local government areas that approximate semi urban area were purposively selected from each zone because of the high rate of economic/commercial activities in them. This gave a total of 6 semi urban local government areas. The list of communities which make up these semi-urban local government areas was collected from the community development office at the local government headquarters. In stage two, two communities were randomly selected from each local government area and this gave a total of 12 communities. A list of the households that engage in child labour use for agricultural commodity marketing was randomly selected in each selected community was compiled with the assistance of the community leaders and women group leaders and this formed the sampling frame for the study. In stage three, from this sampling frame, a random sample of 10 households were selected from each community making a sample size of 120 households. A child from each household who was between the ages of 5-17 was randomly selected. This gave a total of 120 children for the study. However, data from 95 instruments were valid and used in analysis.

Data for this study were collected from primary and secondary sources. Secondary information sources were collected from textbooks, journals, seminars, workshops, published and unpublished works. The primary data source include the use of interview schedule alongside personal observations.This study was achieved using statistical tools such as simple descriptive statistics, simple ratios and a modified Okpukpara et al., (2006) model. According to them, child's total time is divided between time for school, for domestic chores, work and leisure but must be limited to an age class of the child involved for a healthy living. This is expressed as:

$$T_{Ti} = T_{Wi} + T_{Si} + T_{Li} \quad \text{---------- eqn(1)}$$

Where;

T_{Ti} = Total time available to the child per week.

T_{Wi} = Total time for marketing activity per week.

T_{Si} = Total time spent in school per child per week.

T_{Li} = Total Leisure time for an ith child per week

Okpukpara et al.,(2006) model is made compatible with UNICEF (2009) time standard for a specific age class of a child in this study. The proportion of time spent in performing agricultural activities, schooling and probably leisure by children of different age categories in the area is expressed as the percentage of the total time and this is expressed as:

$$T_{W\,ij} = \left[\frac{T_{Ti} - (T_{Si} + T_{Li})}{T_{Ti}}\right]100 \quad \text{---------- eqn(2)}$$

Where,

T_{wij} = Total time for marketing activity for an ith child at jth age category per week.

The standard time of work per week of an ith child of jth age class according to UNICEF (2009) is the theoretical time allocation for labour use of a particular age class of the child and it's denoted as T_{WSij}. Hence, the proportion of excess time spent on work by a child is the difference between the actual time allocated to agricultural commodity trade and the theoretical (standard) time for work and or leisure expressed:

$$T_{Eij} = \left[\frac{T_{Wij} - T_{wsij}}{T_T}\right]100 \quad \text{---------- eqn(3)}$$

Where,

T_{Eij} = Excess labour time or the total time a child is exploited of an ith child in jth age category.

(Adopted from UNICEF, 2009).

Results and Discussion

The household heads that use their children in the marketing of groundnut were mainly married women who had little or no education with very large household size of 8 persons. The respondents had a mean age of 45years. The implication of the result is that most of the respondents were within the economically active age. These findings are synonymous with Asa (2003) that people in age groups of 41-60 are more economically active and independent than those in the age group of less than 21 years and above 60 years.

The income of the household heads got their start up capital from thrift called "Esusu" and make a monthly income of N6,053 which is not enough to cater for the needs of the household members which is a major reason that prompt the use of children to supplement the household head's inadequate income as shown on Table 1.

Table 1. Socio economic characteristics of groundnut traders

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Age(years) Mean= 44years		
31-40	34	35.79
41-50	41	43.16
51-60	20	21.05
Marital status		
Married	62	65.27
Single	1	1.05
Widowed	32	33.68
Gender		
Male	15	15.79
Female	80	84.21
Occupational level		
Farming	20	21.05
Trading	62	65.27
Artisan	8	8.42
Civil servant	5	5.26
Educational level (Mean= 6.7yrs)		
0	48	50.53
1-6	27	28.42
7-12	19	20.00
13-18	1	1.05
Household size (Mean=8persons)		
4-6	19	20.00
7-9	50	52.63
10-12	21	22.11
13-15	5	5.26
Employment status		
Gainfully employed	24	25.26
Not gainfully employed	71	74.74
Mkting experience (Mean=7.9yrs)		
1-5	28	29.47
6-10	45	47.37
11-15	17	17.90
16-20	5	5.26
Income (Mean = N6,053)		
1-10 000	85	89.47
10001-20 000	10	10.53
Source of start-up capital		
Personal savings	20	21.05
Friends & relatives	10	10.53
Bank loan	5	5.26
Money lender	14	14.74
Esusu	45	47.37
Cooperative societies	1	1.05
Total	95	100

More boys than girls are likely to be engaged only in work as well as to combine marketing and school but boys work longer than girls (Pitriyan, 2006). The result in Table 2 shows that, 14.74% of boys and girls work exclusively while 57.89% of boys compared to that of girls (12.63%) combine marketing and school. This conforms to the study of Gustafson – Wright and Payne (2002) who opined that 12% of boys compared to 5 % of girls are working exclusively, and 36 % of boys compared to 18% of girls are both working and attending school.

Table 2. Activity options for children at work only or school and work by gender.

Activity	Girls No.	Percentage	Boys No	Percentage
Work only	14	14.74	14	14.74
School and work	12	12.63	55	57.89

Intensity of work

The intensity of work (marketing activities) is indicated by hours worked per week or per day. Although the study found no child working over 7 hours a day, about 64.30 percent of boys and 35.7 percent of the girls worked exceedingly long hours, between 31 to 40 hours per week as shown in Table 3. These participation rates are high for a rural economy where self- employment still dominates wage employment.

Table 3. Proportion of children in marketing only in hours/week by gender.

Hours of work / week	Girls No.	Percentage	Boys No.	Percentage
11-20	-	-	-	-
21-30	4	28.6	1	7.10
31-40	5	35.7	4	28.60
41-50	5	35.7	9	64.30
Total	14	100	14	100
Mean	36.2		41.2	

Considering the proportion of children that worked only, it is pertinent to ascertain the number of hours they worked per week. Table 2 shows that the differences between the intensity of work carried out by boys and girls were not alarming. It is surprising to find, however, that a greater number and higher proportion of boys worked for an average of 41.2 hours a week while the girls worked for 36.2 hours per week for an average of six days. According to Gustafson – Wright and Payne (2002), Children in Indonesia worked 27 hours/ week and an average of 5 days per week. This implies that children work an average of 7 hours a day which give them little time for leisure that enhances their overall growth and development.

For children who performed marketing activities combined with schooling, the number of hours spent in marketing was less however their time was shared between marketing activities and schooling. Table 4 shows the number of hours children who went to school spent on marketing activities per week on an average of six days per week. The table shows that girls who combined school and marketing activities spent an average of 38 hours a week and an average of 6 hours a day while the boys spent 39.5 hours a week and an average of 6hours 30mins a day. This finding implies that the children who combined school and marketing activities did so before or after school hours and this can cause lateness to school, child not having enough rest or school home works not attended to. This invariably could lead to poor academic performance of these children. This finding contradicts with the finding of Bhalotra (2003) who opined that girls exhibit higher work participation rates as well as higher rates of idleness (possibly domestic work) and an alarming differential in school attendance with only 31% of girls in school as compared with 73% of boys. But consistent with the finding on number of work hours as the mean hours of wage work are 45hrs a week for boys and 31hrs a week for girls.

Table 4- Proportion of children in school and marketing in hours /week by gender.

Hours / week	Girls No.	Frequency	Boys No.	Percentage
11-20	-	-	-	-
21-30	2	16.60	12	21.80
31-40	5	41.70	9	16.40
41-50	5	41.70	34	61.80
Total	12	100	55	100
Mean (Hrs/week)	38		39.5	

Child labour time allocation

Child time is allocated among marketing, education, leisure and home production (Anvig et al., 2001). **C**hild labour time in the study area was divided into time for school only, school and marketing, marketing only and idle/ leisure. The time for home production was merged with leisure and defined as idle in this work.

Table 5 presents the result of labour time allocation and exploitation at different age categories of children across the three states. The result shows that time allocation to economic activities actually increases with the age of the child. As the mean age of the child increases from 10.8years to 13.2 years, there is a downward shift in the meantime allocation to marketing of agricultural commodities from 55.4 hours per week to 50.7 hours per week. This increase in time allocation may probably be due to the involvement of the child in marketing activities or other economic activities other than schooling activities as the child is gradually learning the trade of the family to the detriment of the child's future earnings.

The result based on the excess work load and percentage work load to total time expended by the child shows that there is a reduction in excess work load as mean age of child increases. The reduction is high in Ebonyi state and low in Imo state. Thus the percentage of excess work load to the total time used by the child is very high in the state. Children between the ages of 5to11 years spent about 27.6% of the total time performing excess economic activities while those of them between 12 and 14 years can only spend 8.7%. This implies that children between 5-11 years have more time to spend in economic activities or agricultural marketing activities than the older children. The reason varies from economic implication to health problems of using such children for agricultural commodity marketing as they grow into adolescence. Parents tend to withdraw their children from such activities to other economic activities such as education, marriage or any other activity that can increase household income.

This is consistent with the findings of Anvig et al., (2001) they opined that the negative impact on household income may create an incentive to withdraw older children from school and send them to work. The level of exploitation is high in the state with 97.8% of the standard time to economic activities exceeded by children between 5 and11 years. This is followed by children between 12 and14 years with above 20.7% of their time exceeded the standard recommended time for their age limit (UNICEF, 2009). It can be deduced from this study that due to high labour time allocation by children between 5 and11 years in Ebonyi, child abuse is eminent in this state and needs to be checked.

Table 5 Estimated child labour time allocation (hours/week).

		Ebonyi state		
	Unit	5-11	12-14	15-17
Number of children	Frequency	59	20	16
Mean age of the child (std)	Years	10.8	13.2	15.7
		(0.4)	(0.8)	(0.8)
Total time available to the child	Hours	99.4	99.9	82.2
(Std deviation)		(44.7)	(30.2)	(31.6)
Time allocation to school (Std deviation)	Hours	30.8	29.6	27.6
		(1.7)	(6.0)	(5.9)
Time allocation to leisure and domestic work (Std deviation)	Hours	13.2	19.6	16.1
		(7.8)	(9.5)	(4.6)
Time allocation to economic activities/marketing (Std deviation)	Hours	55.4	50.7	38.5
		(10.8)	(23.9)	(31.1)
Standard time for economic activities/marketing	Hours	28.0	42.0	43.0
Excess work load on the child	Hours	27.4	8.7	-4.5
Percentage exploitation to total time use	Percentage	27.6	8.4	-5.5
Child exploitation		97.8	20.7	-10.5

Conclusion

This study found children working long hours above the standard time specified by United Children Fund (UNICEF) and this crept into school hours which is not healthy for the child's development. The child being the leader of tomorrow needs to be protected from economic exploitation at the tender and formative age when the child should be developing mentally and physically in order to increase the child's future earnings and reduce poverty.

Recommendation

This study recommends that the government should intensify efforts on revalidating Universal Basic Education(UBE) in a manner that will enable children of low income parents have access to formal education at a critical formative stage of education delivery. This should come with full tuition-free both at the primary and secondary school levels. The economic situation of the country also needs to be revamped so as to enhance the standard of living of the citizenry and a law should be enacted mandating all school-age children not to be found hawking during school hours. Also the Federal Government should, as a matter of urgency, ensure that the child right act (CRA) is made operational and effective in the State, while attempts should be made to redistribute the national wealth such that a greater percentage is directed at taking care of citizen's welfare.

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