

CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE AMONG POOR RURAL HOUSEHOLDS: SOME ISSUES AND FACTS

Glory E. Edet & Nsikak-Abasi A. Etim*

Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension
University of Uyo, Uyo, P. M. B. 1017, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author's E-mail: etimbobo@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Child labour is one of the faces of poverty and is a great concern in many developing countries Nigeria inclusive. There is a paucity of information on child labour among the rural poor in Southern Nigeria. This study attempts to fill this lacuna by examining some issues and facts on child labour. This paper reviews the supply factors that influence the use of child labour in agriculture and some of the policy implications. Among the important factors that push children into the work force highlighted in this paper are family poverty, larger household size, lack of accessible and quality education, culture or family traditions and HIV/AIDS pandemic. The major factor influencing the supply of child labour in agriculture is poverty. Families with larger number of children are more susceptible to give their children to work in order to augment family income. Although there is free and compulsory education policy in most countries including Nigeria, and the enrolment rate in public schools has increased. The cost of a child's education is not equal to zero for the poorest of poor rural households when there is free education. Parents are unable to send their children to school when direct costs of uniform, transportation to and from school, books, and writing materials need to be supplied from meagre to household income. Children's social and cultural background also play an important role in their participation in work and educational opportunities. This study underscores the need for government at all levels and development stakeholders to mainstream child labour considerations in relevant development and management policies, strategies, programmes and plans and to effectively tackle child labour, and create a pathway for the elimination of child labour.

Keywords: Child, labour, poverty, households.