

Child labour, a Hallmark of Urban Poverty: A Case Study of Labouring Children Living in Goroka

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Child Labour is a contentious issue in the country, and clearly poses a development challenge in this period of growth. While Child labour in rural area is customary, it is a phenomenon closely tied to poverty and disparity in urban margin areas. Child labour apparently limits opportunities that may be available to the child, thus constraining the child to the dictates of laboring conditions.

Like Developing Third World cities, Goroka is no different; children in urban settlements in Goroka quite often are coerced by the adult, particularly those that are close to them into laboring. In a more despicable and somewhat unethical instance parents forced their children to labour and provide for the family needs. While children may reluctantly engage in it, it is clear, the enormity of poverty they are confronted with and need to have food on the table cuts across moral and ethical considerations.

The purpose of this working paper is to critically examine and analyze prevailing cultural; social; and economic circumstances; and or condition that nurture and aid child labour in Goroka. Practical approaches and mechanism's in curtailing and addressing the issue will also be considered by drawing from best practices, hence with a hope of generating more scholarly research on the subject.

1. Introduction

Any work or activity in whatever form that children's do that affect their childhood, affects them mentally, emotionally and physically, and deprive their rights to go to school is considered child labour. The context in which the concept of child labour is applied varies significantly among countries, as such whatever considered child labour may not be same in another country. Globally it is estimated that millions of children work daily, mostly in hazardous condition which continue to put their lives at risk.

Child labour is a worldwide phenomenon, particularly more acute in the developing countries that has continued to pose challenges on the governments to amicably deal with. Conventions on child labour have been ratified by countries around the world and PNG also ratified the convention and has made effort towards eliminating child labour in the country. The fact that child labour is inextricably link to poverty makes it difficult in PNG to eliminate child labour.

This paper looks at children from two settlements in Goroka who engage in activities that limit their rights' to school and enjoy their childhood. The two significant activities that children engage in includes buying and selling within the perimeters of the town and those who offer residual services around the shopping precincts for insignificant monetary reward or in kind.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Child Labour, the effects on Child, causes and remedies

Osmant (2014) affirmed that child labour has been one of the biggest obstacles to social development and will continue to pose challenge on the goals of many countries to abolish all forms of child labour. The ability of the nations in developing countries to work on strategies to abolish and eliminate child labour is constrained by many factors of which many are acute. According to the ILO (2013), child labour refers to the children who missed their Childhood and are not able to have basic amenities that a child should have.

Children in excess of 200 million worldwide work in laborious and hazardous conditions that continue to limit their opportunities. According to Osman he argued that sustained labour affects children in different ways. He point out physical, mental and emotional stress that children had to contend with daily. Osman further pointed out that international organizations have made great efforts to eliminate child labour across the world, including countries adopting legislations that prohibit child labour. However the downside is that child labour is widespread phenomenon throughout the world. In the article "Child Labour, the effects on child, causes and remedies", Osmant (ibid) takes a swipe at Child Labour in India and Nigeria to look at how these two countries deal with the issue of child labour. Both India and Nigeria, according to Osmant (2014) have the high prevalence rate, and in fact research into child labour in these two countries

thus would provide the basis for understanding and relating to the phenomenon in PNG. In both India and Nigeria child labour is an old phenomenon, hence practices applied there can be suited to other regions including Papua New Guinea.

While it is a tradition to send children to work in India and Nigeria, Vaknin (cited in Osmant, 2014) affirm that children are continually exposed to harse conditions that affect their physical, mental and emotional aspects of their lives.

It can be clearly admitted that child labour in whatever form is closely tied to poverty. The prevalence of poverty allows children to work to make ends meet. The issue is not about children contributing to the overall welfare of the family; however what counts is that it is clear children continue to involve themselves in activities that will have negative impact not only on their growth but most importantly there right to education.

In this article Osmant make reference to different studies that were carried out at different times in an attempt to develop insight into the phenomenon. In can be inferred from his analysis that most, if not all child labour come from very poor background or underprivileged areas of the society.

Finally, according to Osmant Papua New Guinea is among many of the developing countries that grapple to deal with the phenomenon.

2.2 Eliminating the worst form of Child Labour

Child labour take different forms and varies in different countries, for example age limit considered legal in one country may not be the same in another. In a guide, A Practical Guide to ILO Convention No 182 (2002), the seven key questions posed sets the tone and a road map in which worst form of child labour can be eliminated.

The first question attempts to demarcate between what is acceptable and what is unacceptable practice in terms of child labour. According to the guide a work that does not affect the children's health, and personal development or interfere with schooling is generally regarded as positive. Activities in that category would include helping family, care for family and home, assisting in family business, or doing part time work during vacations for pocket money. On contrary, child labour refers to work that is physically; mentally, socially, morally dangerous and harmful to children and interfere with their schooling.

It is also noted that worst form of child labour do exist around the world, enslaving children, separating them from their families exposing them to hazards all amounts to the extreme form of labour.

The second question takes a step forward by trying to look at what really is the worst form of labour. According to ILO convention 182 refers to all forms of slavery or practice similar to slavery, the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution and or for the production of pornography, and the use of children for illicit activities. The

goal of the Convention 182 is clear and that is to eliminate worst forms of Child labour. In fact it is a major priority for national and international action.

Regardless of its condemnation in the international community, child labour continues to exist in massive scale. According to ILO Convention 182 (2002), child labour is primarily rooted in poverty created by social and economic inequality as well as insufficient educational facilities. Such is the case in many of the developing countries of which Papua New Guinea is one.

In whatever form, it would be only proper that countries commit to eliminate worst form of child labour. The reason is that children are human beings just like adults and by the virtues of being human, they are entitled to certain rights.

Another study conducted in Papua New Guinea showed the efforts the government took to eliminate the worst form of child labour. The free education policy that was introduced by the government in the long run would have contributed significantly towards achieving the goals of eliminating worst forms of child labour. Overall, it is clear from the studies that Papua New Guinea in spite of its commitment only made minimal advancement in eliminating all forms of child labour.

It is also affirmed that lack of compulsory primary education may also increase the risk of children's involvement in worst form of child labour.

2.3 Lukautim Pikinini Module Child Protection Laws and Policies

Children have equal rights just as another person, regardless of status and background of the child, according to Lukautim Pikinini Act (2009), the purpose of the act passed in parliament is to protect and promote the rights and well beings of all children regardless of gender. The act clearly articulates that children should be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. The act is based on the principle and provision of the Convention of the Rights of Child. Thus, Lukautim Pikinini Act clearly draws from internationally accepted conventions make it more practical.

What is important about the act is in fact, its emphasis on placing the right of child as paramount and that protective intervention priority areas should be worked on as a way forward in ensuring child rights are protected and upheld.

More so, the act was critical of parent's responsibility to meet the basic rights of children, including equal access to school. While the act is explicit, for many parents it is far from reality, there is more to be done on the part of the parents to ensure they meet their children's rights. Stronger rights base legislation now demands that the rights of children are protected at all tiers of political and institutional levels.

2.4 Child Labour in Developing Countries: Challenge to Millennium Development Goals

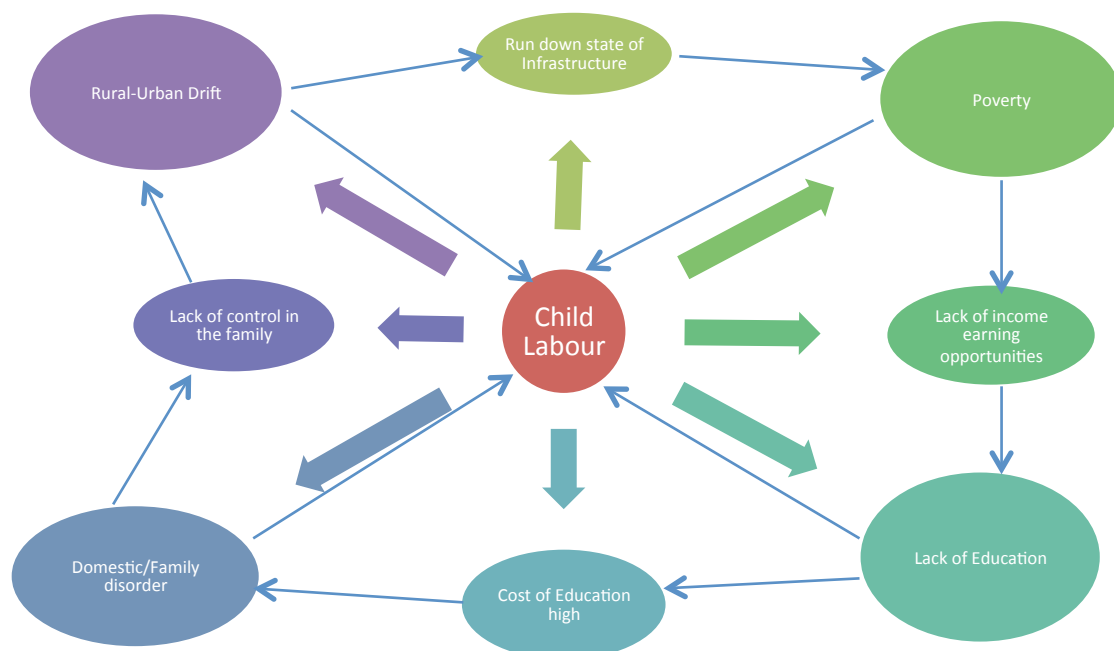
Child labour is a phenomenon that is prevalent in many countries in the world, particularly in the developing countries. According to Ravena (n.d) child labour is inherited one generation to another and would continue to be a challenge on Millennium Development Goal

3. Scope of Study

This study was carried out in the CBD area of Goroka town mainly focusing on children under the age of twelve from two settlements (Genoka and Piswara) situated on the town margins. Most, if not all of the children that engage in whatever form of labour comes from these settlements because of their proximity to the town. While there are various forms of child labour, the focus of this research was limited to children particularly in the informal sector and those that provide residual services in and around town and within the shopping precincts.

Goroka at this juncture may be experiencing major infrastructural development and an increase in economic activities, however the stark contrast was the presence of the laboring children in the heart of the town which continue to paint a negative picture in what would be otherwise a projected period of growth (ADB Report).

4. Conceptual Framework



5. Methodology

A qualitative research method was used in this research as it was an appropriate methodological approach. The qualitative research method is fitting for this research

because it seeks infer into social, cultural, political and economic conditions that propagate child labour.

In this research in-depth individual interview was used with the research participants to collect the data. This interview approach was used because...

The data was generated using the interview guide, and the questions used were mainly open ended questions. Probing was also used at different stage of the interview to allow participant the flexibility to explore at length and offer responses openly...

The sample frame from which the sample population was drawn was from Genoka and Piswara, the two large settlements in Goroka. A total of fifty research participants were identified from which, twenty five from each settlements. Twenty percent of the total sample population was then selected as research participant. Although there are other settlements within the urban perimeter, this research was limited to the CBD area. One other important point that was also considered before making that decision was that the responses from participants was likely to be similar, regardless of the make-up and location of the settlement...

Research involving under age children presents considerable challenges, particularly in the data collection stages. This includes getting the consent of the participant and the actual data collection. The real challenge encountered in the initial research firstly had to be done with getting the consent of the research participant. Since all participants are under age children and as such a due diligence were involved their participation in the research differs markedly. Those involved in buying and selling on road side markets seem reluctant and uptight and to some extent scared. The reason for this is they are busy and simply have no time for this, scared because they were either with the parents or guardians and that consent have to be provided by them and not the children and also because of the their naivety. Many understand the purpose of the research for few, particularly adult parents and guardians they insist they should be compensated in order to engage their children in the research. Since time was telling I had to resort to paying cash in amount varying from K10.00 to K20.00.

The approach of those children who offer residual or insignificant services in town is quite different, they are easy to approach, more interactive and appear willing to participate. However, it is clear their perception was shaped and directed by their activities. Even they appeared genuine and express more willingly to participate, reward of some sort tend to be entrenched in them. While it is unethical to reward in kind or in monetary terms to the children, I had to pay them reasonable amount of money taking into consideration their time and willingness to participate and also because of the fact that opportunity cannot be missed because of the tight schedule I have.

The data collected from the interview were analyzed thematically, because structured questions were used in the in-depth one to one interview, themes clearly emerged.

These themes were analyzed within the context of poverty perspective framework and development perspective.

6. Findings and Discussion

In the in-depth interview with the research participants, it was interesting to note that the participants provided varied responses. From the response gathered the following themes emerged as prime factors responsible for Child Labour in Goroka. While shoplifting and other petty crimes that occurs daily is also attributed to this, the discussions basically focuses on the child labour, particularly with the children in informal sector and those that offer residual services in and around town and within in the shopping areas

6.1 Lack of Education

Lack of education amongst the parents and the inability on their part to inculcate in the minds of their children the importance of education allow children to engage in activities that deprived them of their childhood. When asked about why they are not in school only, 5% responded having attended schools in town but left because parent and guardians do not simply care. From the response, I deduced that investing in the children's education is not a priority, particularly for settlers in the bottom tier in the settlement. There are other pressing matters to them demand attention and is priority. The involvement of children without restrain from parents and guardians who should be in position of care is an obvious indication that education is secondary.

The parents of these children lack education themselves and are quiet often placed in awkward situation when it comes to providing guidance and advice. It is clear from the study that, going to school for all is something that is not within their reach, they only rarely would think of schooling but it's not something that they dwell on for most part of their lives. What matters to them is what they are good at doing on daily basis. In such cases not a word is uttered from the parents that would try to demean their activities but instead words like "how do you go". Such categorical questions clearly points to the fact that the need for survival far outweighs the need for education.

Apparently the prospect is already grim for these children who may have opportunity for better future but are continually constrained by the dictates of popular trends or cultures in the settlements. Other children, particularly females that sell goods in informal sector have delight in what they do. They find such undertakings as good so long as it not discouraged by parents and guardians.

6.2 Poverty

Poverty is a major cause of child labour and Goroka is not different. All of the children in interviewed come from very poor or underprivileged families. Many said their parents; relatives etc. do odd jobs for living while others are engaged in the informal sector. The enormity of poverty that is always present and the need to have food on the table cuts

across ethical and moral considerations. People in position of care and responsibility may appear to be forcing the children to engage in activities that deny their childhood rights but the state of poverty is such that everyone including children in the family develops heightened sense of awareness.

All children both in the residual service sector and the informal sector had to work because it is a need. A ten year old male research participant (name withheld) affirms that the benefits from the service provided, whether in cash or kind is always shared among the group. In most cases descent family meal is rare and there is no guarantee that there will be food available but this is a normal practice, they have learnt to live with it.

6.3 Rural-Urban

All of the children in the informal sector and those that offer residual service around town either have their parents as first generation migrants or their grandparents as first generation migrants from rural areas. Lack of income earning opportunities, rundown state of infrastructure, and absence of government services and the attraction of the city life are prime factors that force and attract people to move into towns.

Most of the children interviewed are from the remote districts of Eastern Highlands and the neighbouring Chimbu Province. The parents have been either first or second generation migrants from the rural areas. Like all migrants they hope for better life, but find themselves in bottom tier in the urban social stratum. The fact that they lack education and skills required in the urban setting the way out quite often is rare.

6.4 Discriminatory Customs

There are number of cultural factors that play part in child labour, while it is customary for children to assist with work, most of these customary obligations infringe on the right of the children to enjoy their childhood. In somewhat contemptible cases children are forced to labour by adults or people who are very close to them thus, denying their right to education. Some of this include ...

The believe that females needs to be nurtured and trained for motherhood not only denies female children the right to their childhood and subsequent education but also discriminatory in its entirety. A 13 year old female participant from Lufa (name withheld) who sell betel nut and cigarette said this seem natural to her. It's not a formal training but for her and many others is informal learning by observing, emulating, practicing and by being around the activities.

6.5 Settlement Cultured Trend

From the information gathered it clear, the activities that children engaged in and their behaviors and attitudes surrounding these activities to some extent is shaped by the settlement culture. For example children who assist shoppers with their bags or check

for taxis for the shoppers simply had to do it because it has been a culture in the settlements. Children graduate through various stages. Children who offer residual services for insignificant rewards perhaps can be classed as the foundational stage; it is in this stage that the art and ploy of making a living in the sector is developed. This explains why grown up children are not quite often associated with the residual services offered by children under the age of 13.

Such cultured trends in the settlements are obstacle and continue to hinder the opportunity the children may have to go to school. The fact that these children are born into the existing culture, they are nurtured to think, act and behave in unison with the rest.

7. Conclusion

Child labour is a worldwide phenomenon that impinges on the institutional capacity and the political will of the countries to deal with the cause of child labour in a holistic manner. Any programs that countries device that focused on eliminating child labour should include mechanisms' that attempts to deal with the root cause of the child labour. Without it countries would continue to make minimal progress and or no real progress for some.

Papua New Guinea has ratified ILO Convention No 182 on the elimination of worst form of child labour and the United Nations Convention on the rights of child (Article 32). On the same note Papua New Guinea made legislative changes to beef up the institutional capacity of the country to eliminate child labour. One such program was the Tuition Fee Free (TFF) policy which would have seen all school aged children going through primary basic education.

Despite the policy many children out in the streets and village engaged in activities that continue to limit opportunities that may available to them.

In Goroka, children that engaged in street selling and those that involve in providing residual services had to do to put food on the table. Many parents who should be providing for their child's opportunities are either negligent or are deliberately forcing their children into such the trade.

Increase income earning opportunity, particularly for the under privilege population and the awareness on the importance of education to the under privileged population will significantly limit the child labour in the urban areas.

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