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## IMPACT OF AGRIBUSINESS LABOUR ON THE CHILD EDUCATION IN CAMEROON

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### Abstract

This paper aimed to assess the involvement of child labour in agribusinesses as well as the schooling pattern of children involved in these agribusinesses in Cameroon. For this study, some descriptive statistics and cross tabulations were computed using SPSS.20 and stata 13 software packages. The population of this study was made up of 51,190 individuals of both sexes that were concerned by the third Cameroon National Household Survey. The sample drawn from this population was constituted of individuals of age 5-17 years old, making a total of 17,550 children. The main results of this study revealed that agribusiness child labour was present everywhere in Cameroon and by both boys and girls. Children of all ages of the sample were concerned by the phenomenon and their level of education was essentially the primary. The impact of agribusiness child labour on education was positive because it helped the working and schooling children to provide means to finance their education and other needs. On the other hand, it has a negative impact on education because some children went for these jobs and finally stayed there and did not return back to school.

**Keywords:** Agribusiness, Cross Tabulation, Education, Child Labour, Cameroon

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## Introduction

Forty-one per cent of the children from 5-17 years old (nearly 2.5 million of the Cameroon population), are involve in child labour and 85 % of them work in the agricultural sector according to the Cameroon's National Institute of Statistics (NIS, 2015). This situation impacts on their schooling and their health. Majority of them are working in the careers, the mines, fishing, etc. Using children in economic activities tends to interfere with their education, and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (SDEG, 2009), especially the achievement of universal primary education (Goal 2). Although net primary enrolment has increased in all countries and the majority of African countries are likely to achieve this goal by 2015, this achievement has not been matched by a commensurable increase in the primary school completion rate (Berlan, 2009). One reason for dropping out of school is to work for a parent or seek wage employment.

In order to eradicate the exploitation of children in Cameroun, the Prime Minister, and head of the government through a decree of August 27, 2014, created a national committee to fight against child labour. The question of child work constitutes in Cameroun a real and major

concern, because of the various forms of exploitation millions of children in the world are victims of abuses. It consequently becomes necessary, convenient, and even essential to put a term to these drifts to save this generation and prepare a promising future to children. The national committee of fight against child work is given a mission of proposing good strategies to eradicate child work on Cameroon territory by 2017. The results of an investigation on child labour realized in 2010 by the National Institute of Statistics of Cameroon gave a percentage of 27.9% of children from 5-17 years old compelled to work which was to be abolish, 4.4% of them carry out dangerous work and 71% are exploited in agriculture, fishing, hunting, usually in rural zone (NIS, 2010). For this year 2015, the topic chosen for African child day is "No to child work, yes to an education of quality". This day thus stresses the role of education as the main essence to maintain the children away from the labour market. It is also a question of drawing the attention to the urgent need to abolish the worst forms of child labour. In Cameroun, the commemorative activities took place on 16 June 2015, day of celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the day of the African child.

The study will share more light on the situation of child labour considering all the actions that are being taken and the exponential growing population and agribusinesses in Cameroon. The main objective of this study is to examine the schooling pattern of children involve in agribusinesses in Cameroon.

**Materials and Methods**

**Nature and source of data**

The data used for the analysis in this study came from a secondary source, Cameroon National Household Survey (CHS 3) cross-sectional dataset produced by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS, 2007). Survey covered all ten regions of Cameroon and was conducted in strata (both urban and rural residential areas). It is also organized into six agro-ecological zones (Yaoundé, Douala, Other Towns, Rural Forests, Rural Highland Plateaus and Rural

Savannah). The dataset contain variables on child labour, the various sectors of child labour, as well as individual, households and regional-level characteristics. The CHS 3 concerns the household as well as individuals who belong to this household. Child labour phenomenon is analysed here on a sample that has two distinctive features: (i) the sample is exclusively devoted to child labour in agribusinesses, and (ii) all the participants in the survey are exclusively children. No adult (parent, guardian, elder, employer, etc.) was consulted and given a chance to answer on behalf of a child.

**Sampling**

The population of this study is made up of 51,190 individuals of both sexes that were concerned by the CHS 3. From this study, we draw all the individuals of age from 5-17 years old making a sample of 17,550 individuals.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample of different ages of children

Age (years)	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
5	1363	7,8	7,8	7,8
6	1530	8,7	8,7	16,5
7	1629	9,3	9,3	25,8
8	1454	8,3	8,3	34,1
9	1205	6,9	6,9	40,9
10	1469	8,4	8,4	49,3
11	1146	6,5	6,5	55,8
12	1369	7,8	7,8	63,6
13	1251	7,1	7,1	70,7
14	1304	7,4	7,4	78,2
15	1321	7,5	7,5	85,7
16	1218	6,9	6,9	92,6
17	1291	7,4	7,4	100
Total	17550	100	100	

Source: Author's estimates compiled using the 2007 CHS3 dataset and Stata 13.0

The analysis will further divide the variable age into three classes: the first class will be made up of children from 5-9 years; the second will go from 10-13 years and the last class of 14-17 years

old. These classes can be better observed on figure 2 which reveals that the class of children from 5-9 years is the most affected class.

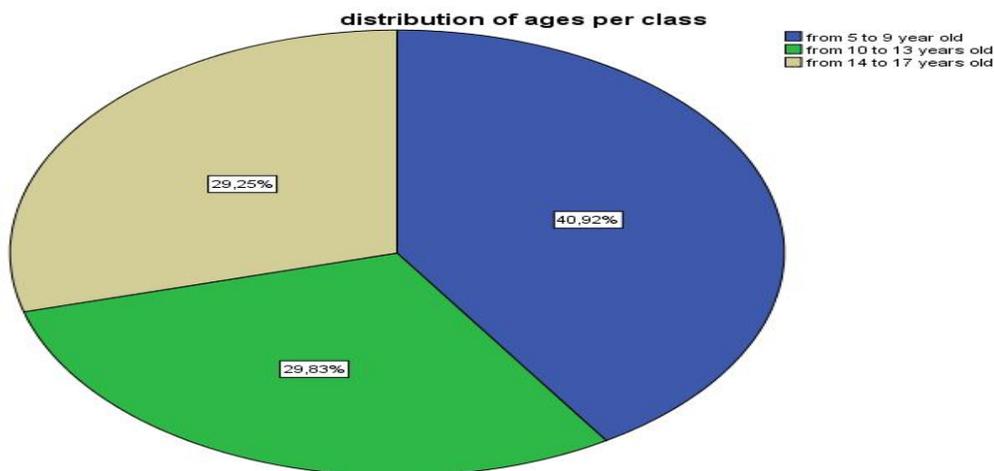


Fig. 1. Distribution of the sample in three categories of age groups

## Results

The number of children with no level of education is still very high irrespective of the fact that the children are involved in labour or not. According to Anti-Slavery International (2004), this is partly due to the failure of governments to provide schools and teachers in remote rural communities. But from 5-9 years, most of the 'no levels' are not working maybe due to the fact that they are still small and weak physically but from 10 to 17 years old, the number of children involve in labour with no level is almost double of the number of children not working. These results may bring out the point that the "no level" of education may be due to lack of means to send the children to school. Almost 6000 of these children with primary education are not working and not schooling. Comparing this figure to the more than 3000 children with the same primary level who are involve in child labour, one may

argue that these children are in this situation because they have not been able to have something doing or they are oblige to do so because there is no other alternative.

There are also almost 2000 children of age between 14 and 17 years who are not working and not schooling but who have had the change of being up to the first cycle of secondary school. Almost 2500 children who are between 5 and 13 years old and who have a primary level of education are also involved in child labour. From this facts, the involvement to labour may be independent of the education because 1140 children who have done the first cycle of the secondary and who are between 14 and 17 years old are also involve in child labour in agribusinesses.

Table 2. Comparative involvement of children's level of education per classes of ages

Class ages	Child not working					Child working				
	No level	Primary	Post primary	Secondary 1	Secondary2	No level	Primary	Post primary	Secondary1	Secondary2
[5-9]	2,357	3,362	1	12		524	876		1	
[10-13]	148	2,028	11	894		305	1,479	3	351	
[14-17]	117	525	15	1,971	7	289	1,035	25	1,140	2
total	2622	5915	27	2877	7	1118	3390	28	1492	2

Source: Author's estimates compiled using the 2007 CHS3 dataset and Stata 13.0

Table 2 shows that the number of children, between 5 and 17 years, not involve in child labour and who are going to school is interesting, about 9400 against less than 1000 children not working but not enrolled in school. The analysis is similar for children who are involved in child labour: about 4500 children between 5 and 17 years who are currently schooling are involve in

child labour against less than 1,000 children between 5 and 17 years who are working but not schooling. We may also highlight the 1,003 children who are between 5 and 9 years or these 2,796 children of between 5 and 13 years, who are going to school but involve in agribusiness child labour.

Table 3. gender analysis of the working students

Class ages	Child not working		Child working	total	
	Male				
Children from 5 to 17 years old	Female	Schooling	4,611	3,373	7984
		Not schooling	375	446	821
	Total	Schooling	4,187	3,302	7489
		Not schooling	627	553	1180
			9600	7674	17274

Source: Author's estimates compiled using the 2007 CHS3 dataset and Stata 13.0

The issue is present among boys and girls event though it is more severe for girls.

Table 4. Poverty analysis of the level of enrolment of working children by class age

Class age	State of poverty	Child not working		Child working		Total
		Not enrolled	Enrolled	Not enrolled	Enrolled	
[5-9 years]	Poor's	281	1,158	97	511	2047
	Non poor's	291	3,068	39	492	3890
[10-13 years]	Poor's	22	797	59	966	1844
	Non poor's	31	2,115	24	827	2997
[14-17 years]	Poor's	45	511	246	741	1543
	Non poor's	153	1,817	318	909	3197

Source: Author's estimates compiled using the 2007 CHS3 dataset and Stata 13.0

Table 4 illustrates the poverty analysis of the level of enrolment of working children by class ages. From Table 4, the total number of children not involved in child labour and who are not poor is almost 7,000 children against about 2,500 of poor children of the same situation. In addition, for the three classes of ages considered, the number of non-poor children who are not working but schooling is very far higher than that

of the poor of the same category. Surprisingly, the number of non-poor children of 14-17 years who are involve in child labour and schooling is 909 against the 741 poor children of the same situation. From table 5, the number of children not involve in child labour and who are schooling is best in urban area, better in rural areas and good in semi-urban area

Table 5. Area of residence analysis of the enrolment of working children according to age

Class age	Area	Child not working		Child working		Total
		Not enrolled	Enrolled	Not enrolled	Enrolled	
[5-9 years]	Urban	217	2,675	11	294	3197
	Semi-Urban	71	543	18	127	759
	Rural	284	1,008	107	582	1981
[10-13 years]	Urban	35	1,941	19	541	2536
	Semi-Urban	3	387	7	261	658
	Rural	15	351	57	991	1414
[14-17 years]	Urban	151	1,659	286	604	2700
	Semi-Urban	17	318	80	292	3197
	Rural	30	351	198	754	1367

Source: Author's estimates compiled using the 2007 CHS3 dataset and Stata 13.0

It is also amazing to see that with the greater population of the urban area, the number of children of 5-9 years not working and not schooling in the rural area is higher than that of the urban areas. This result suggests that children in the rural area start schooling late if at all they engage themselves to it. Still for children from 5-9 years, the number of schooling children who are involve in child labour is highest in the rural area no matter how low the demography. The number of children in rural area not working and schooling of 5-17 years is 1943 against 2,327 children who are working and schooling with almost 600 of them between 5-9 years old. This situation correspond to what Hashim (2007) studied concerning households' decision mechanism of whether to send child to work or to school.

## Discussion

Education is a very important variable that helps to understand child labour in agribusiness beside

the fact that teachers from both general and technical schools make demands on children's labour, to produce food or cash crops or to hire out farm-hands during school time (Berlan, 2009; ILO, 2007; MMYE, 2008; Odonkor, 2007; Şaul, 1984). From the study, the number of children not working who are enrolled is very on one hand. This is an ideal situation where parents send their children to school. In this same category of children not working, there is also a large proportion of them that do not go to school. The problem in this category is that they are neither going to school nor working. This category is very dangerous and event less preferable than those working. This work is a manner of imparting social and economic skills to children by gradually incorporating them in the female and male economic spheres and encouraging them to take responsibilities that are appropriate to their age (Hashim, 2005; Hashim and Thorsen, 2011; Thorsen, 2006; Whitehead *et al.*, 2007).

On the other hand, we have a very good number of students who are working and schooling but we cannot yet show the impact of this work on their academic performances. Anyidoho and Ainsworth (2009); Hashim *et al.* (2011) and Whitehead *et al.* (2007) confirm this idea as they declare that behind poor parents' motives for permitting older children to work away from the family farm is thus an acknowledgement of their inability to provide everything for their children. But the truth is that this proportion of children is going to school because they can pay their school fee from the small means that they obtain from the work. but this does not imply automatically that they become independent but the demonstration of their ability to endure hard work and save money that accords them a different position within the family (Thorsen, 2006). Some of them use the money obtain from work to pay transport from the house to school. Children who work are often not fully taken care off in their education. For those who work in cash crops on the family farm or who migrate to work as farm hands, work appropriate to the child's age and stature is important in order for children to learn practical skills and to acquiring the social status associated with life course transitions (Anyidoho, 2009; Baah, 2010; Hashim, 2005; Hashim and Thorsen, 2011). But the previous arguments do not mean that this labour is not diminishing the learning capacity of the child even though the majority of children on Ghanaian cocoa farms are given acceptable workloads that do not interfere with their schooling, they worked less than 16 hours per week (Baah, 2010; MMYE, 2008).

A student who need to work after school or during resting days will always be tired in class in the case where he is not always suffering from an injury or any other problem develop on the work site. Above all, there is this last category of children who are no longer going to school but who are working. This is also one of the consequences of child work to education. These children, who were previously enrolled but having difficulty to finance their education, went for a temporal job but took pleasure in the small money they were making out of it and decided to abandon school.

## Conclusion

Children's work, is explained as an outcome of poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, high fertility rates, broken families, HIV/AIDS, the death of parents and, what is often labelled as, "harmful cultural practices". These results show that there is an inverse relationship between the age of the children and their engagement in labour. Children of both sexes are engage in labour and

most of them have the primary level of education. There are some variables that affect significantly the involvement of children in labour. The impact of labour on the education may vary considering different categories. A certain participation of the children in non-dangerous activities can be positive since it supports the transfer of competences from generation to generation and the food safety of the children, in particular in the family farms, artisanal fishing and the breeding of cattle.

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