

Perception of Nigerian Cocoa Farmers on Child Labour: Implication for Hazardous Child Labour.

Abstract

This paper investigated perception of Nigerian cocoa farmers on Hazardous Child Labour. More importantly, farmers' practice of hazardous work in agriculture in accordance with International Labour Organisation (ILO), child labour convention such as: Accidents, respiratory infection, psychological and emotional imbalance, bacteria/viral infection, ergonomic inappropriate tools, child molestation, minimum age requirement, exposure to sunlight, awkward posture, and poor academic performance were investigated. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 240 respondents from which information were solicited using a pre-tested interview schedule. The study revealed a mean age of 45.32 ± 8 years and 66.67% of the farmers who employed children between 5-17 years of which 80% of them were attending secondary schools as labourers. Almost half of the respondents (49.58%) attested that they can call upon these children to come and work at any time on their cocoa farms while 60.40% of respondents employed only family labour for their farming activities. Population of 56.67% farmers have low perception on hazardous child labour in which 64.00% of the respondents' were of the opinion that child labour was part of socialization and a way of building children up for future. It was concluded that farmers should change their perception on hazardous child labour as it negatively affects the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of a child. Furthermore awareness should be created in rural areas especially in cocoa producing areas on definition, hazards and why it be eliminated. Therefore elimination of hazardous work of children can yield high social and economic returns because it contributes to households breaking out of the cycle of poverty and helps countries advance human development

Keywords: perception, child labour, hazardous child labour, cocoa farmers and Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Conventions on the right of the child in 1989, defines child as anyone under the age of 18 and affirms the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and any work likely to be hazardous or to interfere, with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (UNCRC, 1989). In the same vein, Hazardous child labour (HCL) can be referred to as work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions, that, could result in child being killed or injured (often permanently), and or made ill (often permanently) as a consequence of poor safety and health standards and working arrangements (ILO, 2001.NCLP,2006)

Safety and health in Agriculture convention makes specific reference to young workers and hazardous work that the minimum of age for assignment to work in Agriculture, which by the nature or to circumstances, in which it is carried out is likely to harm the safety and health of young persons shall not be less than 18 years (Safety and health in Agriculture, 2001) Furthermore, after consultation with the representative organizations of employers and workers concerned, authorize the performance of hazardous work as from 16years of age on condition that appropriate prior training is given and the safety and health of the young workers are fully

protected. However, despite large social reform that had been generated around the issue, more than 200 million children worldwide are still in child labour and a staggering 115 million at least are subject to its worst forms from 5 – 17 years of which 70 percent are working in agriculture (ILO 2008, ILO, 2010).

Child labour is common in the agricultural sector and widespread in countries where cocoa is grown (ILO, 2002, ILO, 2010). Agriculture is the most common child occupation worldwide, and employs more working children than any other sector, ILO 2012 declared that, children as young as six years old work on cocoa farms under extremely hazardous conditions. This activity is consistently ranked among the most hazardous industry for mortality and mobility (Cooper and Rothstein 1995), despite its hazard, agriculture is one of the less-regulated sectors and it is among the sectors where the existent laws are very difficult to enforce (CHSICL, 1998). ILO-IPEC 2013 opined that, Agriculture remains by far the most important sector where child labourers can be found. The extent to which, agriculture work is harmful to children depends on type of work they do, number of hours they work, their age and access to education. Growing cocoa involves long hours in the sun, performing physically demanding work, workers use primitive tools, travel great distances and are exposed to pesticide and chemicals fertilizers, poisonous and disease-carrying insects and reptiles (Save the children Canada, 2003).

However, children are physiologically immature, they have risk-taking behavior with greater willingness to go extra mile without realizing the impact of hazards. Also children learn poor health and safety behavior from adult and in terms of organization and rights, they are virtually powerless. In Nigeria, children are expected to work, to learn trade or help to provide for their families irrespective of the hazards. There is no distinction in the general public perception, between light work and work that would be exploitative or detrimental to a child. The prevailing view among cocoa farmers in Nigeria appears to be that, many aspects of child labour can be described as part of the child's socialization process to equip the child to assume eventual adult roles and to take over properties, including cocoa farms of their parents. The concepts are held not only by the families, but also by the children themselves (SIISE, 2001). One of the reason we do not feel the full brunt of hazardous work of children is because of lack of data and reports on the accident of injuries that result from the work. On like developed countries which have data on injuries and illnesses on children in hazardous work. Young workers are at least, 50% more likely to be hurt at work than older people and more likely to suffer from an occupational illness (MMWR, 2010).

Currently there are no clear criteria or guidelines, in place for determining which specific task or activities qualify as hazardous work for children in cocoa and agriculture generally. This is partly because the perceived hazards and risks are considered normal or 'order of the day'.

The ILO declaration on fundamental principle and rights at work shows that child labour continues to decline worldwide, but, at a much slower pace than before. There are clear signs of progress but also disconcerting gaps in the global response (ILO 2010). ILO governing body set 2016 as the target for when its 183 members state in which Nigeria is among should have freed themselves from the worst forms of child's labor (ILO 2010b). Almost two years towards the date, if current trends continue the 2016 target may not be reached.

In view of the foregoing, therefore there is need for a concise perception study among the farmers in cocoa growing areas, on what is term as hazardous child labour and their perceptual orientation towards the issue, as stated by the International Labour Organization (ILO). This will now give a poser to solving the problem associated with non-conformers of the ILO regulations. Children are physically and mentally different from adults, regardless of cultural perceptions or social construct. Their developments to adulthood extend from puberty to their late teens years. Often than not, health problems caused by working as child labourer, may not show up until they become adults.

The research findings would answer the following Research Questions:

- What is the definition of hazardous child labour?
- What are the various types of hazards on farm?
- What are the perceptions of Nigerian cocoa farmers on hazardous child labour?
- To what extent does hazardous child labour influence the psyche of children?
- What is the level of knowledge, attitude and practice of cocoa farmers towards hazardous child labour?

Objectives

- To identify socio-economic characteristics of cocoa farmers in the study areas.
- To assess the perception of cocoa farmers towards hazardous child labour
- To identify the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of farmers towards hazardous child labour

2. METHODOLOGY

Multistage random sampling methods was used in selecting respondents.

Stage 1: The study was purposely carried out in the two highest cocoa producing states in Nigeria namely Ondo and Cross-River. The classification is based on CRIN cocoa survey (CRIN, 2007).

Stage 2: In each state, 3 highest cocoa producing Local Government Areas were purposively selected. In Ondo state, Idanre, Irele and Odigbo local government areas were selected and in Cross- River state, Boki, Ikom and Etung local government areas were selected.

Stage 3: In each local government area, one highest cocoa producing community was randomly selected Idanre (Owena), Irele (Ajue) and Odigbo (odigbo); Etung (Effraya), Boki (Orimekpang) and Ikom (Grass Field).

Stage 4: In each community, **numbers of 40 respondents were interviewed.** Thus, giving rise to the total number of 240 cocoa farmers. Descriptive statistics such as frequency table, mean, standard deviation, pie chat and bar chart were used for the analysis.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS: 3.1.

Socio-economic characteristics

Table 1 showed that majority (71.25%) of the farmers were between the ages 31-50 with mean age of ($\bar{x}=45.32 \pm 8.04$) This implies that most farmers are in the middle age group, active on the farms and can still perform farming activities effectively, expected to be knowledgeable on hazardous child labor. However majority (62.20%) were male while female were (30.80%), Cocoa is a crash crop and as dominated by men, but women are involved as wives of cocoa growers, cocoa farm owners, daily labour and cooperative workers (Adeola and Olawoye, 2014) Over 90% were married and more than half of the respondents (51.67%) were into polygamy. Men often show off their wealth and have more hands in farm labour by number of wives and children they have (Omoyibo, 2010). Consequently, 66.67% of the farmers employed children between 5-17 years as labourers. This is in line with the International Labour Organization which estimated that 215 million children between the ages of 5-17 out of which 65million (30%) live in sub-Sahara Africa; currently work under condition that are considered illegal, hazardous, or extremely exploitative (ILO, 2010). A large percentage of these children (80%) were in secondary schools and almost half of the respondents (49.58%) attested that they can call upon these children to come and work at any time on their cocoa farms. This could be linked to the quality of educational services, for example, types of school, accessibility, number of students in class (which should serve as an encouragement), skill level of the teachers, teachers' absenteeism, and cost to attend school as well as potent outcomes of education and the 'educated' in their communities. The National Child Labour Policy (2006) acknowledged that, education is one of the key strategies for combating child labour and increased access to relevant quality education opportunities, that would enable children to develop their capacities and sustainably provide for their families when they become adults and break the cycle of poverty, unemployment, indecent work and child labour More than half of these children (57.50%) employed as labourers needed money to assist their families. Under age children work all sorts of jobs around the world, usually because they and their parents are extremely poor (UNESCO, 2010). Cooper and Rothstein, (1995) opined that Agriculture is the most common child occupation worldwide, where more children were employed and the activity is consistently ranked among the most hazardous industry for mortality and morbidity. Despite its hazards,

151 Agriculture is one of the less regulated sectors where the existent laws are very difficult to
152 enforce (Committee on the Health and Safety Implication of child labour, 1998).

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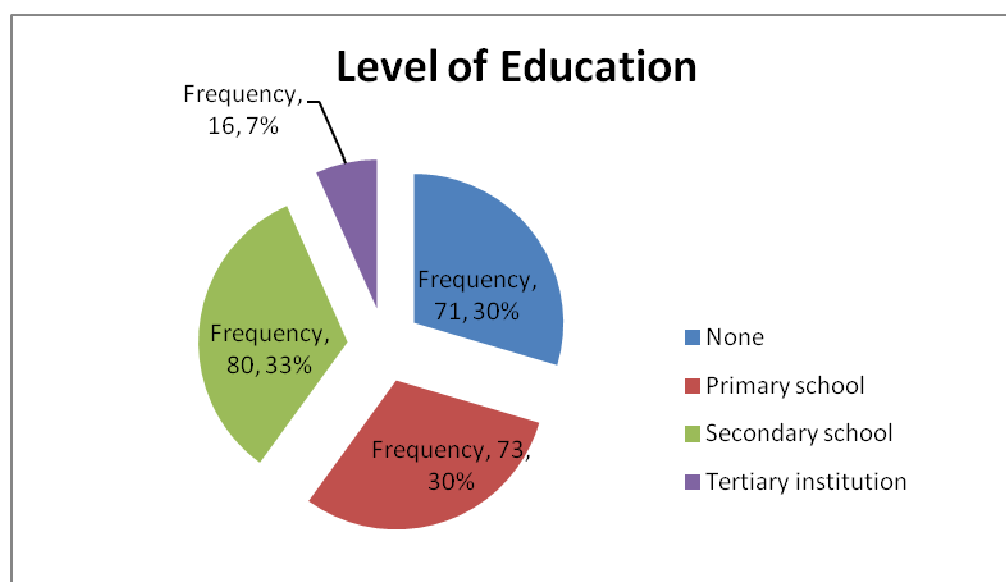
154 **Table 1:** Respondents socio-economic characteristics

S/ N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Dev
1.	Age				
	21-30	10	4.17	42.32	8.04
	31-40	79	32.92		
	41-50	92	38.33		
	51-60	59	24.58		
2.	Sex				
	Male	74	30.80		
	Female	166	69.20		
3.	Ethnic Group				
	Yoruba	94	39.20		
	Ibo	7	2.90		
	Efik	72	30.00		
	Ibibio	38	15.80		
	Other	29	12.10		
4.	Marital Status				
	Married	218	90.80		
	Divorced	8	3.30		
	Widowed	14	5.80		
5.	Family system				
	Monogamy	116	48.33		
	Polygamy	124	51.67		
6.	Farm size (Hectare)				
	1 – 10	204	85	7.26	3.47
	11 – 20	36	15		
7.	Labourers' age				
	5-17	160	66.67		
	18 & above	80	33.33		
8.	Level in school				
	Primary	30	12.50		
	Secondary	192	80.00		
	Tertiary	18	4.17		
9.	Time of work				
	Before school	20	8.34		
	After school	101	42.08		
	Anytime	119	49.58		

10.	Reason for work				
	They are labourers	102	42.50		
	They need money	138	57.50		

Source: Field survey, 2014

Figure 1 revealed that educational level of cocoa farmers in this survey, majority of the respondents (63%) have completed both primary and secondary school education. Only 30% of the farmers had no formal education and 7% further their education to complete tertiary school. This indicates that the level of education among cocoa farmers was fair, education plays a key role in the economic development and with this level of their education, and they were expected to be knowledgeable and educate others on the consequences of hazardous child labour.



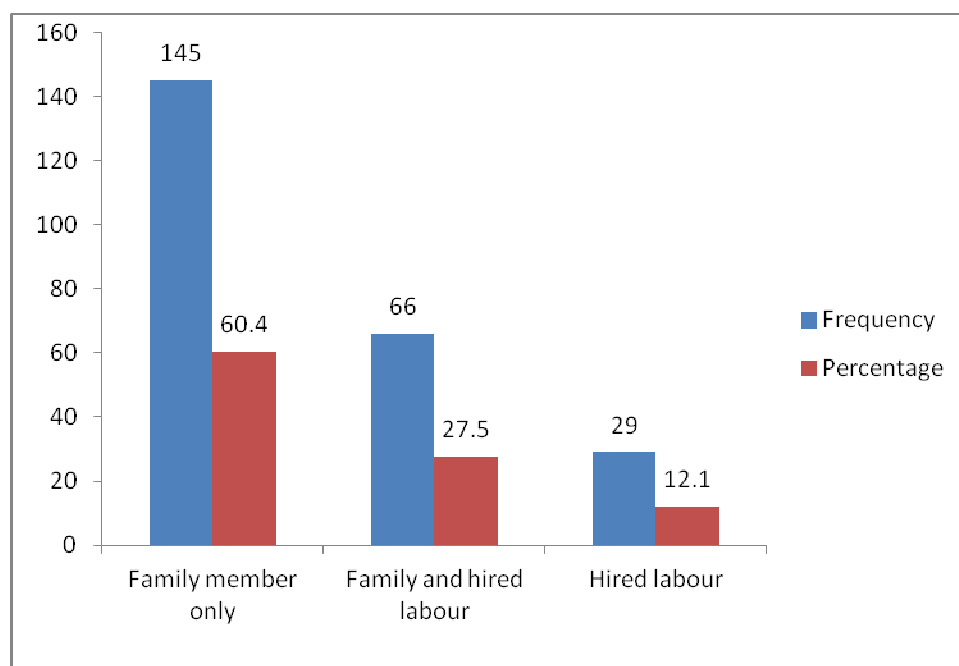
Source: Field survey, 2014

Figure 1: Showing educational levels of respondents

Figure 2 showed that majority of the respondents (60.40%) in the study areas employed only family labour for their farming activities; farmers of (27.50%) use both family and hired labour while only 12.10% employed only hired labour. In this study 85% of the cocoa farmers' farm sizes were of the range between 1-10 hectares. Adeola and Olawoye, (2014) affirmed that cocoa is produced by some 400,000 small holder farmers in South-West and South-South region of the Nigeria. Most cocoa is grown on small farms, cocoa bean production is labour intensive and overwhelming a family enterprise (ILO, 2001), average farms have five workers, and four or five are the farmer's family members (IITA 2002, UNICEF 2010). The regular practice of children working on cocoa farms is often a natural way of life for cocoa farmers who, for a variety of

176 reasons, want to train their children and at the same time use them in order to reduce labour costs
177 on the family's farm (ICI, 2014) also children will be eager to work at the detriment of their
178 health/school in order to be adjudged competent and hardworking by their parents.

179 This can, in turn, deprive their children of the chance to develop and advance themselves, and so
180 entrenches the household's impoverishment for subsequent generations. This study showed that
181 most of the respondents employed labourers within their family structure. However, this does not
182 mean that the children involved were not exposed to hazards, and, beyond these situations,
183 illegal and exploitative practices do also exist. Specifically, when children, even with their
184 consent, are taken from their families to be exploited in cocoa farming, this constitutes human
185 trafficking as well. IITA, 2002 opined that average farms have five workers and four or five are
186 the farmer's family members. Most of the children who engage in child labour are unpaid family
187 member, these children work on small plantations, quite numbers of them are missing out on
188 school and are regularly exposed to hazards and exploitation. Children who are in school full-
189 time assist parents on their cocoa farms, usually outside school hours; but they sometimes skip
190 classes to accompany their parents to the farm especially during the peak farming season or
191 during harvesting periods. Child laborers are less likely to attend school. They are kept out of
192 school because families need their help on the farms (Hawksley, 2007) and 12-hour workdays
193 (ILO, 2005) make it difficult to attend school. United States Department of States estimates that
194 there are over 109,000 child labours working in hazardous conditions on cocoa farms, some of
195 whom are forced or indentured workers, but most on family farms or with their parents (USDOS,
196 2003).



Source: Field survey, 2014

Figure 2: Showing types of labour employed by respondents

The perception level was categorized into high ($\bar{x} \geq 19.96$) and low ($\bar{x} < 19.96$). More than half of the farmers have (56.67%) have low perception on hazardous child labour while (43.33%) have high perception. In agricultural sector, most especially cocoa farming industry, child labour is often perceived as a way by which children are being trained to assume responsibility (not only in a financial sense) and moulding personal identity. This notion has been inculcated into children as well as a way to equip them to assume adult role towards future preparation (SIISE, 2001). Although, 51.00% agreed that these children need to go to school but majority (64.00%) of the respondents' were of the opinion that child labour was part of socialization and a way of building them up for future, In a survey conducted in Pakistan, it was documented that parents pushed their children to work at an early age so that they could avoid the dangers of vagrancy. (Department of Labour, 1999). It is believed that child employment teaches children of the poor the ability to acquire moral and ethical attitudes and work habits at an early age. (Celek, 2004) in the same vein 61.00% perceived employing children as labourers as source of cheap labour. Parents believed that, early exposure of children to farming activities can be positive, as it contributes to the intergenerational transfer of technical and social skills. Children's food security and skills are attributes often detected in young people. Poverty is the main cause of child labour in agriculture, together with limited access to quality education inadequate agricultural technology and access to adult labour, traditional attitudes towards children, particularly, in agricultural activities. It is important to distinguish between light work that do not harm children and labour which interferes with schooling and damaging health and personal development based on hours and condition of work, Child's age, activities performed and hazards involved. There is no distinction in the general public's perception between light work and work that would be exploitative or detrimental to a child. Our culture and attitude often contribute to having low perception, due to the fact that children must contribute to the family income by engaging in menial jobs. Children are subjects to all forms of hazardous work this is

partly because the perceived hazards and risks are considered as normal while there are many reasons to suggest that children are more vulnerable to farm hazards than adults (UNESCO, 2010).

Table 2: Level of Perception among respondents on hazardous child labour

S/N	Level of perception	Mean	Frequency	Percentage
1.	High perception	>19.96	104	43.33
2.	Low perception	<19.96	136	56.67

Source: Field study 2014

Mean =19.96

Std Dev =5.41

Maximum =30

Minimum =12

Respondents Knowledge, Attitude and Practice towards hazardous child labour

The KAP were categorized into high and low level. In this study (60.00%) of respondents have high knowledge of hazardous child labour at mean ($\bar{x} \geq 11.18$) while 40.00% have low knowledge. The issue surrounding child labour as an important global issue associated with poverty, inadequate educational opportunities, gender inequality and a range of health risks (Parker, 1994). On the level of their attitude, equal percentage of the population have both high and low level of attitude (50%) at ($\bar{x} = 6.68$) it can be deduce that majority of the farmers have high knowledge and half of the population of the respondents were equally aware of the hazards associated with child labour. Notwithstanding, in practice, majority (60.00%, $\bar{x} < 11.18$) were not putting their high level of knowledge and attitude into practice only 40.00% did; the definition of child labour as a work when carried out harms, abuses and exploits the child or deprives of an education while hazardous child labour is a work when a child is being subjected to can kill or injure (often permanently) as consequence of poor safety and health standards and working arrangements (ILO, 2001). This implies that the definitions are well understood by cocoa farmers in Nigeria, but it is difficult to draw a dividing line on the farmers' field when no one is looking. This stemmed from low perception of cocoa farmers on child labour due to socio-cultural pattern of our of livelihood, and our attitude towards children, even when national consultants on defining hazardous work for children result in the drawing up of lists of banned activities and the enactment of appropriate policies and laws. Large discrepancies may persist between what happen at the national level and what gets changed on the farm due to perception of farmers towards hazardous work children performed on cocoa farms.

Table 3: Respondents' Knowledge on hazardous child labour

s/n	Level of knowledge	Scores	Frequency	Percentage
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1.	High knowledge	>11.18	144	40.00
2.	Low knowledge	<11.18	96	60.00

Source: field study 2014

Mean=11.18

Std. Dev=5.16

Maximum=22

Minimum=00

Table 4: Respondents' attitude towards hazardous child labour

s/n	Level of awareness	Scores	Frequency	Percentage
1.	High awareness	>6.68	120	50.00
2	Low awareness	<6.68	120	50.00

Source: field study 2014

Mean=6.68

Std.Dev=3.51

Maximum=16

Minimum=0

Table 5: Respondents' Practices on hazardous child labour

s/n	Practice Level	Scores	Frequency	Percentage
1.	High practice	>11.18.	96	40.00
2.	Low practice	<11.18	144	60.00

Source: field study 2014

Mean=11.18

Std.dev=5.16

Maximum=22

Minimum=00

Conclusion

This study revealed that as hazardous child labour reduces among the respondents, there would be decrease in practice, fairly there is a high level of literacy and farmers had high knowledge of hazardous child labour but a low score in the practice. The low scores observed in the practice of the hazardous child labour practices was due to low level of perception among the farmers in the

study areas. It was revealed that, 43.33% of farmers have low perception on hazardous child labour and this explains their low level of practice, despite high knowledge and awareness. The ILO also reveals that 15% of all children in Sub-Saharan Africa are involved in some form of hazardous work. Hazardous work cannot be acceptable for children because of basic biology, children are not simply smaller adults they are physically and mentally different and regardless of cultural perception or social construct, and the transition to biological adulthood extends past puberty well into the late teen years. In addition child labourers grow up to become weak and hapless individual completely trapped in the vicious circle of illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and physical ailments. Particularly, concerning growth and development, orthopaedic and musculo-skeletal disorders, poisoning intoxication and premature deaths, infection and molestation. Child labourers are susceptible to all dangers faced by adult workers, when placed in the same situation. It can result in more fatal and non-fatal accidents, permanent disabilities/ill-health and psychological and emotional damage. These complex problems can be effectively tackled through the collective, coordinated and consistent efforts of all parties involved, directly or indirectly, in the cocoa supply-chain. This is foundation for the argument against hazardous work of children and the basis for rationale for why it is classed the worst form of child labour that require immediate and comprehensive action, more especially, as ILO (International Labour Organization) governing body set 2016 as the target for when its 183 members state in which Nigeria is among should have freed themselves from the worst forms of child's labor.

Recommendation

To regulate child labour, the ILO has adopted the Minimum Age Convention 138 of 1973 (hereinafter referred to as Convention 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 182 of 1999 (hereinafter referred to as Convention 182). The United Nations has adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as the CRC). In an African context, the African Union has adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (referred to as the African Children's Charter). These conventions aim at the reduction and eventual elimination of child labour. After the ratification of such conventions, many countries have adopted domestic laws prohibiting child labour. Despite such regulation, statistics proved that children still participate in harmful labour practices.

The following were recommended:

- The minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work which is by nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons shall not be less than 18 years especially in Nigerian culture where children of all ages are required to participate in some form of work
- This minimum age should not be limited to children within a specific industry or sector, such as in agriculture, but to all children in any form of work or employment. The use of the words "employment" or "work" means that all labour performed by children, whether or not it is performed under a contract of employment or while a child is self-employed, is subject to the terms of the Convention.
- Agricultural sector should have a legalized regulating body named "War Against Hazardous Child Labour" (WAHCL) under the auspices of Federal Ministry of

Agriculture of Nigeria, in which frequent visiting and proper monitoring by extension officers in collaboration with law enforcement agents, to provide information for farmers on hazards in child labour in order to eliminate it.

- The needs of the children, the socio-economic conditions and also the views and opinions of all concerned groups need to be determined before the drafting and then adoption of the proposed legislation (WAHCL).
- Adequate attention should be paid by government on the needs of children at special risk who do not have families, or who do not live with their own families or migrant children.
- Social protection instruments should be put in place to preventing vulnerable households from having to resort to child labour.
- Economic development, reduction of poverty, compulsory universal basic education should remain be a priority in the system, this will enable children to be able to read, write and also know their rights and the type of work they should do.
- Information should be collected on the strength and weakness of education and schooling in evaluation of rural schools.
- The government should include child labour hazards within National school curriculums, also school teachers should therefore be given some kind of training to equip them to disseminate information about hazardous child labour effectively to their students.
- Awareness campaign should be put in place especially in rural areas where illiteracy is on high side, on definition, harmfulness and why hazardous child labour should be eliminated, what regulating body is meant to do and possible penalties for breaches of such legislation.
- Religious organization should also help in educating their members oh hazards of child labour

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