

Social and cultural practices (factors) that engender child labour in the fisheries sector in Tanzania

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This study investigated the social and cultural factors that engender child labour in the fisheries sector in Bugogwa ward, Ilemela district, Mwanza region. It was presumed that, child labour in the sardine fisheries sector is also exacerbated by other factors that are social and cultural in nature apart from poverty as the main impetus among the agrofishing communities. The study used qualitative research methodology and data were collected using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, field observations as well as documentary review. Political Economy as well as the Social Construction Theory guided the study. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively and the study findings revealed that, the responsible forces exacerbating child labour in the sardine fisheries sector include: the breakdown of the extended family network, the employers' preference for child labourers in sardine sorting activities, family related forces/problems, existence of the custom of the moral economy of affection around the shores, peer influence, mobility of parents and/or guardians, lack of conducive school learning environment in some of the schools in the ward as well as traditional beliefs, gender roles and gender discrimination. The study concluded that, the agro-fishers hold mixed perception or views regarding child labour in the sector. While some of the members are opposed to it, others see it as their normal way of life that is rather inevitable. This is however based on individuals' social position, level of education, type of occupation as well as social orientation. This means that, the persisting problem of child labour in the sector is embedded on how the agro-fishing communities organize their socio-economic life around the lake. Hence eradicating the problem requires setting up the community based strategies that will build the capacity of the agro-fishing communities so that they can play a central role in bringing this situation under control. The implementation of the strategies should be by both the community members as well as beach based anti-child labour committees.