

## Abstract

Child labour is a global problem and it is one of the obstacles in the achievement of international frameworks such as Sustainable Development Goals as well as national ones like vision 2030 in Kenya. It equally has caused death of about twenty two thousand children in the world annually. The malpractice is widespread and indicates a paradigm shift in the prevalence especially in developing countries whereby it causes negative consequences on sustainable community development. The overall objective of the study was to assess the prevalence of child labour in Vihiga, Kakamega, Busia and Bungoma in Nzoia region of Kenya. This was with specific interest on the dynamics currently caressing the child labour. This study used the descriptive survey design with a sample size of 500 people. The study population included household heads, caretakers, child labourers, entrepreneurs, farmers and Government officers who included teachers, health officers, security officers and chiefs. The samples were obtained using multistage, random, purposive and snowball sampling methods. The instruments used for primary data collection were; questionnaires, observation guides and key informant interviews. Secondary data was obtained from websites, documents from relevant government ministries and departments. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the study revealed that the overall prevalence of child labour in the four Counties was high (87%). The distribution of child labour was almost uniform across the four Counties however there were variations in the frequencies of types of child labour activities. Busia County had higher frequencies of child labour in; fishing, prostitution and entertainment: Kakamega County had higher frequencies in mining and street work: Vihiga County had higher frequencies in brick making and mining while Bungoma County had higher frequencies in entertainment. Although many studies indicate that the agricultural sector is the largest employer of child labourers, results of this study contradict by showing the commercial sector as the largest employer of child labourers in the region. It was also observed that the transport sector had attracted a significant number of child labourers. Factors that influence the high prevalence of child labour in these Counties were economic sectors, community types, peer influence, culture and economic status of families. It is hoped that understanding the ever changing paradigms of child labour will attract joint efforts by all stake holders not only in resolving the impasse but also pave way for achievement of both national and international declarations over the problem.