Potential Threats and Effects, Facing Children Living Within Fishing Communities in Coastal Villages of Zanzibar, Tanzania

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Children makes an important segment of societies, legally they are not supposed to be involved in any socio-economic activity within or outside their societies. The situation is however different in many parts of the world including Zanzibar islands. Children living in coastal fishing villages are involved in socio-economic activities such as fish scaling, boat cleaning and other jobs related fishing. These activities have put them off from attending schools, getting health related problem and injuring their bodies. This study was therefore aimed to assess potential effects, addressing causes of children dropping out of school, establishing basic health problems and roles of various organisations in combating child labour. Individual interviews, participant observations, focus group discussions and key informant interviews were used to collect data for the study. A total of 90 children were interviewed. It was found that children living in these coastal villages were facing many health related challenges such as fatigue (93%), body injuries (58.6%), burns (58.6%), chest pain (48.3%) skin infections (17.2%) and drowning (13.7%). Multi response test revealed that 68.9%, 65.5%, 27.6% and 6.9% had failed exams, missed school periods, drop out of school and repeated classes respectively. Fishermen and fish vendors were the main groups of people employing children into most fish related activities. Schools as one of the organisation existing in these communities ranked higher in fighting child labour while legal institutions (courts) were ranked the least. Existence of weak laws and regulations was another cause. The study concludes that poverty, norms and weak enforcement of laws were the major factors influencing children to get employed into fisheries and marine related activities.