SCHOOL DROP-OUTS AND CHILD LABOUR IN FIJI
A Case Study of the Rural Settings in Vanua Levu

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Development Studies

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DECLARATION

I, Maria Talei Musudroka, declare that this thesis is an original piece of work done by me. Where other sources have been used, these have been duly acknowledged. Any omission and error or otherwise is my own and to the best of my knowledge the main content of this thesis has not been previously submitted for any degree in any other University.

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A Statement by the Supervisor

I confirm that this thesis was done under my supervision and it is the work of Ms. Maria Talei Musudroka except where other sources used have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The circumstances of working children in many parts of the world remain critical especially in developing countries. Perhaps the most disturbing cases of all are those children who are compelled to take up any form of inferior work which could hinder their aspirations and restrict them from achieving their natural capacity. Most importantly are the chances of access to education.

Poverty, school drop-outs and child labour are mutually reinforcing. Poverty could mean children having to work and limit their opportunity for education. Lack of education in turn inhibits a child’s chance for better work opportunities. Consequently, children become victims or remain in almost intolerable work conditions for fear of dismissal and punishment. The broad objective of the present study was to bring out the linkages of school drop-outs and child labour with special reference to the rural settings of Vanua Levu in Fiji.

The linkages between school drop-outs and child labour both at the macro and micro level were investigated. At the macro level various concepts and aspects revolving around the status of children were conceptualised, and surveyed at the micro level. The education system and infrastructures available were examined and various challenges were identified especially in the rural settings of Vanua Levu in Fiji. The analysis at the micro level focused on households, covering various issues that emerged as the targeted individuals were studied.

A triangulation approach with both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies was used in the study though the study was largely based on a qualitative methodology. Data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The collection of primary data upon which the whole of this thesis is based involved fieldwork in twelve villages from the three provinces in Vanua Levu, namely Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata. The facts of the finding of this study through household surveys represents results obtained from very detailed enquiries made through the working children, the parents and key informants. The sample size covered 40 working children from the study areas.
The study found that poverty is at the core of the problems of both school drop-outs and child labour. The family and social connections in most of the villages under study play an important part in the obtaining of employment for the working children. This should cause some concern, for in many cases, the study found that the types of work these children obtain are more important than those they could obtain if they are to obtain higher levels of education. The study found that in the short term, the small returns for the type of work they could obtain outweighed the greater long-term benefits of obtaining higher levels of education. In most instances, what little money gained by the working children is considered part of a rural family income. How this is gained and whether this is detrimental to the child’s well-being is not necessarily questioned.

The implication for school drop-outs and child labour obtained from the research in the broader sphere of national policy require first of all recognition by all the stakeholders. Indeed, the complexity of the child labour phenomenon in the rural areas under study reveals that communities as well as the government have limited capacities in addressing the issue. Awareness at all levels especially at the community level in rural areas is needed. The study suggests indirect interventions as effective measures to help alleviate the problems of both school drop-outs and child labour.
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# CONTENTS

Declaration ......................................................................................................................... iii
Abstract ................................................................................................................................. iv
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................... vi
Contents ............................................................................................................................... viii
Photographs .......................................................................................................................... xiv
Figures .................................................................................................................................. xv
Boxes .................................................................................................................................... xvi
Tables ................................................................................................................................... xvii
Maps ...................................................................................................................................... xviii
Abbreviations ....................................................................................................................... xix

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background .................................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Statement of Research Problem .................................................................................... 9
1.3 Rationale ........................................................................................................................ 9
1.4 Research Questions ....................................................................................................... 10
1.5 Objectives of the Study ............................................................................................... 10
1.6 Sources of Data and Methodology ............................................................................. 11
1.7 Organisation of the thesis ............................................................................................ 12

## CHAPTER TWO: SCHOOL DROP-OUTS AND CHILD LABOUR: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
2.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 14
2.2 Conceptual Framework and Literature Review ............................................................ 15
2.2.2 Dimensions of Child Labour ..................................................................................... 16
2.2.3 Child Labour Disparities between Boys and Girls ....................................................... 19
2.3 Nature and Causes of Child Labour ............................................................................ 19
2.4 Theoretical Approaches to Child Labour ................................................................... 21
2.4.1 Theory of Cumulative Causation ............................................................................. 21
2.4.2 Rights of Children Under International Conventions ............................................. 23
2.4.3 Human Rights Approach to Education ................................................................... 25
2.5 Measures in Understanding Child Labour .................................................................... 26
# Chapter Two: Child Labour and Education

## 2.6 Child Labour and Education

2.6.1 Education Disparities between Boys and Girls

2.7 Poverty, Education and Child Labour

2.8 Urban Growth and Child Labour

2.8.1 Migration, the Growth of Urban Centres and the Consequences

2.8.2 Urban Economics: The Supply of Labour and Wage determination

2.8.3 Unemployment Challenges in the Urban Areas

2.9 Child Labour in the Pacific

2.9.1 Nature and Scale of Child Labour in the Pacific

2.9.2 Previous Studies in the Pacific and Fiji

2.9.3 Poverty and Child Labour in the Pacific

2.9.4 Regional Progress of MDG in Education

2.9.5 Urban Growth in the Pacific

2.9.6 Unemployed Pacific Youths in Urban Areas

2.9.7 Emerging Issues of Child Labour in the Pacific

2.10 Conclusion

---

# Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Methodological Approaches

3.3 Sources of Data

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1.1 Questionnaire

3.4.1.2 Interview

3.4.1.3 Observation

3.4.1.4 Focus Group Discussion

3.4.1.5 Photographs and Maps

3.4.1.6 Key Informants

3.4.1.7 Secondary Data

3.4.2 Sample Design

3.4.3 Research Analysis

3.5 Study Area

3.6 Limitations
CHAPTER FOUR: BACKGROUND OF FIJI ISLANDS AND VANUA LEVU

4.1 Introduction

4.2 The Fiji Islands Context
  4.2.1 Location and Geography
  4.2.2 Brief History of Fiji
  4.2.3 Population and Household Growth
  4.2.4 Internal Migration, Rural–Urban Composition and Urban Growth
  4.2.5 The Socio-Economic Impacts
  4.2.6 Economy

4.3 Children’s Status in Fiji
  4.3.1 International and National Legislations on Children’s Rights in Fiji
  4.3.2 The Education System in Fiji
  4.3.3 Government Expenditure on Education
  4.3.4 Primary and Secondary Education in Fiji
  4.3.5 Education in the Rural Areas
  4.3.7 Fiji’s Progress Towards Achieving the MDG and EfA
  4.3.8 Challenges in the Education System

4.4 Organisational Development and Welfare for the Children in Fiji
  4.4.1 The Fiji Police Force:
  4.4.2 The Social Welfare Department:
  4.4.3 The Ministry of Education:
  4.4.4 Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC):
  4.4.5 Save the Children Fiji (SC):
  4.4.6 Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECREA):
  4.4.7 Foundation for the Education of Needy Children (FENC) Fiji:

4.5 Poverty in Fiji
  4.5.1 Rural Poverty
  4.5.2 Poverty, School Drop-outs and Child labour

4.6 Background of Study Area: Vanua Levu, Fiji
  4.6.1 The Physical Setting
  4.6.2 Historical Evolution of Vanua Levu
4.6.3 Population .................................................................................................................... 79
4.6.4 Internal Migration ........................................................................................................ 80
4.6.5 Economic Characteristics ......................................................................................... 81
4.6.6 Educational Status in Vanua Levu .......................................................................... 82
4.6.7 Schools in the Rural Area of Northern Provinces, Fiji ............................................. 83
4.7 Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 83

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS ................................................. 84
5.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 84
5.2 School Drop-outs and Child Labour in Fiji ................................................................. 84
  5.2.1 School Drop-outs .................................................................................................... 84
  5.2.2 Survival Rate .......................................................................................................... 86
  5.2.3 Child Labour in Fiji .............................................................................................. 87
5.3 Survey Analysis of School Drop-outs and Child Labour .............................................. 88
  5.3.1 Education Status of Working Children ................................................................. 89
     5.3.1.1 Number of Working Children who had Attended School ......................... 89
     5.3.1.2 School Attendance by Gender and Province ................................................. 89
     5.3.1.3 Level of Schooling ......................................................................................... 90
     5.3.1.4 School Drop-outs Response on Parental Support ...................................... 92
     5.3.1.5 Modes of Travelling to School in Rural Vanua Levu ................................. 92
     5.3.1.6 Number of School Days Attended ................................................................. 94
     5.3.1.7 Time Spent on School Work on a Daily Basis .............................................. 95
     5.3.1.8 School Performance of the Working Children .............................................. 95
  5.3.2 School Environment ............................................................................................... 96
     5.3.2.1 Attitudes of Teachers in School ................................................................. 96
  5.3.3 Children’s Reasons for Leaving School ................................................................. 98
  5.3.4 Children’s Views on Education ............................................................................. 99
     5.3.4.1 Reasons Given for Importance of Education .............................................. 99
  5.3.5 Children’s Awareness of their Rights .................................................................... 100
  5.3.6 Preference to Return to School .............................................................................. 102
5.4 Types of Work and Working Conditions of Child Labour ......................................... 103
  5.4.1 Nature of Work ...................................................................................................... 103
     5.4.1.1 Support from Parents to Work ................................................................. 104
     5.4.1.2 Response if Enjoying Work ...................................................................... 104
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.4.2 Types of Child Labour Activity</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.3 Domestic Duties for Girls</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.4 Working Children’s Siblings</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.5 Treatment from Employers</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Working Hours and Wages</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.1 Working Children’s Daily Hour of Work</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.2 Weekly Wages of Child Labour</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.2.1 Gender inequity in wages of child labour</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.3 Other Mode of Payment</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.4 Problems of Working Children and the Impacts on their Lives</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Survey Analysis of Working Children’s Parents’ Responses</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.1 Household Demography</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.1.1 Child Labors’ Parental Status</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.1.2 Parents’ Level of Schooling</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.2 Household Economy</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.2.1 Parents Occupation</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.2.2 Household Weekly Earnings</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.2.3 Government’s Social Welfare Assistance</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.3 Parents’ Reasons for Sending Children to Work</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.4 Parents’ Awareness of Physical Hazards to Child Labour</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.5 Parents’ Response on Whether Work Affected Children’s Schooling</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.5.1 School Environment in Rural Vanua Levu</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.5.2 Parents’ Views Regarding the School Environment</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.5.3 Parents’ Perceptions on Facilities of Rural Schools in Vanua Levu</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.5.4 Parents’ Views on Education</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.5.5 Parents’ Response on why Education is Important</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.5.6 Parents’ Suggestions Regarding School Dropouts</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Linkages between Poverty, School Drop-outs and Child Labour in the Rural Settings in Vanua Levu</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8 Conclusion</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Conclusions</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1 Linkages of Theoretical Approaches to Findings</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.2 Summary of Broad Findings</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2 Recommendations ............................................................................................................. 138
6.3 Future Research ................................................................................................................ 142

BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................................................................... 143

APPENDICES ............................................................................................................................ 159
  Appendix 1a: Children’s Questionnaire ........................................................................... 160
  Appendix 1b: Parents’ Questionnaire – Family Background ............................................ 162
  Appendix 1c: Provincial Boundaries of The Fiji Islands ................................................... 164
## PHOTOGRAPHS

| Photograph 3.1 | The Research Translator | 48 |
| Photograph 3.2 | The Track Guide | 48 |
| Photograph 3.3 | The Sevusevu Presenter | 48 |
| Photograph 5.1 | Modes and Ways of Reaching School | 94 |
| Photograph 5.2 | A Group of School Drop-out Boys (Bua) | 101 |
| Photograph 5.3 | Copra Production (Cakaudrove) | 107 |
| Photograph 5.4 | Wounded Finger covered in medicine leaves and wrapped in cloth | 108 |
| Photograph 5.5 | Children Carrying Shacks of Breadfruit (Macuata) | 109 |
| Photograph 5.6 | Domestic Duties for Rural Girls | 110 |
| Photograph 5.7 | School Drop-outs and Parents (Cakaudrove and Bua) | 125 |
**FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Child Labour World Wide in Million</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>Global Trends in Child Labour by Age Group</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.2</td>
<td>Children in Employment (5-14 years) by Region in Million</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.3</td>
<td>Child Labour Status in Employment by Sex (5-17 years) (%)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.4</td>
<td>Estimated and Projected Urban and Rural Population of the More and Less Developed Regions, 1950 – 2030</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.5</td>
<td>The Marginal Physical Product of Labour</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.6</td>
<td>Youth Unemployment Rates, 1995 and 2005</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.7</td>
<td>Urban Population and Population Growth Rate in the Pacific</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Education Status of Children by Location in Fiji, 2009</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>School Drop-outs by Division in Fiji, 2009</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.2</td>
<td>Distribution Patterns of School Drop-outs in Fiji by Division, 2009</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.3</td>
<td>School Attendance of Working Children</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.4</td>
<td>School Drop-outs by Gender in Rural Vanua Levu</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.5</td>
<td>Level of Schooling for Each Province by Gender</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.6</td>
<td>Mode of Travel to School by Province</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.7</td>
<td>School Drop-outs Response About Teachers Attitudes While Schooling (%)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.8</td>
<td>Children’s Reasons for Dropping out and Never Attended School</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.9</td>
<td>Working Children’s Response about the Importance of Education</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.10</td>
<td>Working Children’s Willingness to Return to School</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.11</td>
<td>Distribution Patterns of Child Labour Samples by Province</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.12</td>
<td>Response of Child Labour if Enjoying Work</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.13</td>
<td>Types of Child Labour by Gender and by Activity</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.14</td>
<td>Response of Good Treatment of Employers by Province</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.15</td>
<td>Daily Hours of Work by Gender and Province</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.16</td>
<td>Weekly Wages (FJDS) by Gender and Province</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.17 Payment in Kind to Working Children by Gender……………………..114
Figure 5.18 Parents Level of Education………………………………………………..116
Figure 5.19 Occupations of Parents of Working Children in Rural Vanua Levu…..117
Figure 5.20 Occupation of Parents of Child Labour by Province…………………….....118
Figure 5.21 Social Welfare Assistance Recipients of Working Children’s
Parents in Rural Vanua Levu..................................................................................119
Figure 5.22 Parents Reasons for Sending Children to Work………………………..120
Figure 5.23 Parents’ Response on Importance of Education in Vanua Levu............124
Figure 5.24 The Cycle of Poverty, School Drop-out and Child Labour
in Rural Vanua Levu........................................................................................126

**BOXES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 5.1</td>
<td>The Experience of a 16-year-old Boy from Bua</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5.2</td>
<td>The Experience of a 17-year-old Boy from Cakaudrove</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5.3</td>
<td>The Experience of a 16-year-old girl from Macuata</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.1</td>
<td>Population and Educational Status of Children in Selected PICs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.1</td>
<td>Levels of Causality for Child Labour</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.2</td>
<td>Youth Unemployment in Selected PICs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Village Samples</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1</td>
<td>Total Population and Population Growth 1891 – 2007</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2</td>
<td>Fiji’s Rural Urban Population between 1966 and 2007 and Projected Population between 2007 and 2030</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3</td>
<td>Education Budgets In Fiji 2005-2009</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4</td>
<td>Primary and Secondary School Enrollments from 2007-2009</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.5</td>
<td>Percentage of the Poor in Rural and Urban Fiji (2004-2005)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.6</td>
<td>Growth of the Main Ethnic Components of the Population Provinces in the Northern Division between 1996-2007</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.1</td>
<td>Percentage of Survival Rate for Fiji Students from 1994 to 2006</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.2</td>
<td>Level of Schooling Attained Among the Working Children by Gender and Province</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.3</td>
<td>Working Children’s Response about their Parental Support for Schooling</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.4</td>
<td>Time Devoted to Studies in a Day While Schooling by Province</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.5</td>
<td>Working Children’s Performance While Schooling</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.6</td>
<td>Working Children’s Response Regarding School Environment</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.7</td>
<td>School Drop-outs Response on Teacher’s Attitude by Province</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.8</td>
<td>Working Children’s Reasons on the Importance of Education</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.9</td>
<td>Working Children’s Response on Willingness to Return to School</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.10</td>
<td>Gender of Working Children by Province in Vanua Levu</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.11</td>
<td>Working Children’s Response if Enjoying their Work by Province</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.12</td>
<td>Status of Parents of Working Children in Rural Vanua Levu</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.13</td>
<td>Weekly Wages for the Family of Working Children in Rural Vanua Levu by Province</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.14  Social Welfare Assistance of Recipient Parents by Province………..120
Table 5.15  Parents’ Perceptions about the Rural School Environment
in Rural Vanua Levu……………………………………………………122

MAPS

Page

Map 1.1  Map of Pacific Island Countries…………………………………………3
Map 3.1  Map of Study Area…………………………………………………….55
Map 4.1  Map showing the Location of Fiji Islands and Divisional Boundaries…..58
Map 4.2  Map showing the Classification of Education Structure
by Divisions and Districts in Fiji……………………………………..66
Map 4.3  Map showing Fiji’s Second Largest Island – Vanua Levu……………78
Map 4.4  Map showing the Provincial Boundaries of the Fiji Islands..........163
## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBM</td>
<td>Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBR</td>
<td>Crude Birth Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDR</td>
<td>Crude Death Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLS</td>
<td>Child Labour Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECREA</td>
<td>Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBoS</td>
<td>Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>FECA</td>
<td>Fiji Early Childhood Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FENC</td>
<td>Foundation for the Education of Needy Children Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FESP</td>
<td>Fiji Education Sector Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNU</td>
<td>Fiji National University</td>
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<tr>
<td>FWCC</td>
<td>Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRE</td>
<td>Human Rights Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICLS</td>
<td>International Classification of Labour Force Statisticians</td>
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<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Educational Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>IPEC</td>
<td>International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour</td>
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<td>JICA</td>
<td>Japan International Cooperation Agency</td>
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<td>LCS</td>
<td>Labouring Children Survey</td>
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<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord Resistance Army</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCCC</td>
<td>National Coordinating Committee of Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSAAC</td>
<td>National Substance Abuse Advisory Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDMC</td>
<td>Pacific Developing Member Country</td>
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<tr>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Primary Education Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>PICs</td>
<td>Pacific Island Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPA</td>
<td>Partnership Protocol Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRIDE</td>
<td>Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRRRT</td>
<td>Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Save the Children Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>South Pacific Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Secondary Education Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIMPOC</td>
<td>Statistical information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour</td>
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<tr>
<td>TACKLE</td>
<td>Tackling Child Labour through Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCRC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSD</td>
<td>United Nations Statistics Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>University of the South Pacific</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The situation of children in many parts of the world remains critical as a result of inadequate social conditions, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation, illiteracy, hunger and disability. Child labour is one of the growing challenges globally especially in the less developed countries.\textsuperscript{1} Child labour has several social and economic ramifications. It is a potential obstacle to poverty alleviation and access to basic education.

Child labour has been taking place in various shapes and forms for centuries. Defined by ILO, child labour includes full-time work done by children under 15 years of age which prevents a child from going to school (getting an education), or that is dangerous to their health (Wikipedia, 2011a). The complex issues arising from child labour have been addressed in several of the most significant ways yielding the most important lessons particularly in Asia and the Pacific region.

Studies have revealed that children are very often ill-treated at their work place by the employers. As a result, child labourers face physical, physiological and social exploitation. The practice of child labour and the struggle to eradicate it is far from comprehensive. The concept of child labour in itself has resulted in the execution of international Conventions on the Rights of Children and the adoption in various countries. In addition, numerous coalitions and networks of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) provide organisational focus for social movements that mobilize people around children issues.

\textsuperscript{1} Child labour as defined by ILO is some types of work done by children under the age of 18 (Wikipedia, 2011a). The ILO minimum age convention, 1973 (No.183) states that the age of completion for compulsory schooling is not less than 15 yrs of age (14 for developing countries). This varies by ratifying member countries according to their level of development and type of work. “Child Labour” is a narrower concept than that of “working children”. It includes all working children 5–11yrs, excludes those in 12–14 yrs engaged in light work and includes 15–17yrs, those engaged in hazardous work (ILO, 2006).
Figure 1.1 shows that the involvement of children in economic activities is experienced in both developed and developing countries. The highest number of child labour is found in Asia and the Pacific region with 127 million, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa with 48 million, Latin America and the Caribbean 17 million and the Middle East and North Africa with 13 million. On the contrary, child labour in the developed economies is around 3 million and 2 million for transition economies.

![Figure 1.1 Child Labour Worldwide in Million](image)


Not all developing countries\(^2\) have ratified the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). An important reason as stated by Elliman and Challis (1979: 148) is the difficulty developing countries would undoubtedly encounter in implementing the CRC proposals. “For not only does the CRC set higher standards; it extends standards to the whole range of employment”.

Moreover, in the developing countries the connections between compulsory education and child labour legislation barely exists (Elliman and Challis, 1979). The challenge lies in the implementation of compulsory education laws and legislation which upholds a minimum age for full-time employment.

\(^2\) Countries in the Asia - Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean are referred to as developing countries.
Although the Pacific countries witness relatively low proportions of child labour compared to the Afro–Asian nations it is a growing phenomenon. The problem of child labour is growing rapidly in Pacific Island countries (PICs) (Map 1.1) including Fiji. It is also in the Asia-Pacific region, that the greatest numbers of child labourers live.

Map 1.1 Map of Pacific Island Countries


On a positive note, new strategies have been developed for understanding children’s work and its impact. Household survey instruments have been devised and used by agencies such as ILO, UNICEF and World Bank for the purpose of collecting information on child labour and education. The usefulness of input from these household surveys and qualitative instruments such as rapid assessment tools sheds light on the nature and context of child labour.  

There is, however, limited in depth study in the Pacific to examine the nature of a phenomenon that has many dimensions. In Fiji, there are few official statistics on the scale and nature of child labour. There has been no methodical study to find the linkages between school dropouts and child labour in the rural areas.
There is also little systematic evidence regarding the economic value of child labour. Income from children is assumed to account for some small percentage of household income, which might be critical when household income is so low that it is spent mostly on food. While child labour may increase household-income and contribute to its survival in the short run, it tends to have the opposite effect for future generations, because the interruption of the children’s education interferes with the possibility of more remunerative employment in the long term.

In this regard, education is not only a means of learning but a vital and valuable tool that is used in every aspect of life. The education levels of parents are critical in the context of school drop-outs and child labour. Studies by Emerson and Souza (2003) have found that the lower the educational level of the parents, the higher is the chance of their wards to be out of school. A mother’s education is more critical. When a mother of a child is educated, it is more likely that the child will continue in school.

Education and economic growth are closely intertwined. Educational attainment has played an important role in the rapid economic growth of countries in East Asia such as Korea (Sharma and Herath, 2007). Further, the universal completion of free education of good quality has been identified as the key to economic growth. There is evidence to support the theory that the elimination of child labour and its replacement with education will in a way contribute to the economic growth of the country.

Education plays a key role in economic development, and that investment in education, in particular primary education and education for girls gives a high return (UNESCO, 2009). Similarly there is a need to be aware of and the adoption of international labour standards to set minimum ages for different types of work by children and to regulate the nature and duration of children’s work.

The UN Declaration of ‘Education for All’ is a global agenda. Tackling child labour and promoting ‘Education for All’ are closely related. Universal education is a fundamental issue in the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The education related MDGs cannot be achieved without tackling the problem of child labour (ILO, 2009).
Consciousness about education and awareness of government educational programs are important. This was noted by UNESCO (1954) in stating that:

> while it is true that more and more parents are clamoring for places in schools for their children, a fairly large proportion of the general population is not conscious enough of the need for education, and very few are aware of the full implications of a scheme of universal compulsory education” (cited in UNESCO, 2000).

The challenge posed by school drop-outs and child labour in the Pacific is the lack of consciousness that children need to be educated to become productive adults and that child labour jeopardises their development.

Even with strategies such as compulsory education, which includes the provision of grants and remission of fees to both primary and secondary schools, there is an underlying assumption that children still leave school early to work. Other contributing factors such as dysfunctional families and personal and customary laws existing in some communities, needs to be studied.

According to Hagemann and co-authors (2006), rural working children tend to be among the most disadvantaged as enrolment and attendance figures in rural areas present lower values than in urban areas. This divide, they argue, is further exacerbated by child labour. Similarly, school attendance figures in rural areas tend to differ considerably by work status. Further, in one quarter of sample countries under their study, child workers in rural areas face a school attendance gap of 20 per cent or more.

The presence of child workers and the proliferation of their earning activities have been witnessed and acknowledged around the world. As stated by UNESCO (2010a: 1):

> There were 72 million children out of school in 2007. Business as usual would leave 56 million children out of school in 2015. With poverty growing, unemployment rising and remittances diminishing, many poor and vulnerable households are having to cut back on education spending or withdraw their children from schools.
Education and child labour are closely linked. When poor families cannot afford any longer the costs of education they are often compelled to send children to work. An estimated 158 million children aged five to fourteen are engaged in child labour (ILO, 2006). By the year 2020, 730 million new child workers will have joined the workforce, an estimated 90 per cent from developing countries, where child labour is most common (Wikipedia, 2011a).

Poverty and child labour go hand in hand. As Tzannators and Fallon (1998) said, one of the most devastating consequences of persistent poverty is child labour. In this regard, the root cause of child labour is poverty and lack of equitable access to education. The phenomenon of dropping out of school is closely linked to poverty. Poverty, school drop-outs and child labour are mutually reinforcing. If parents are poor it is likely that they will encourage their children to remain out of school and work. Significantly, widespread poverty means child labour continues to remain common in many countries for quite some time.

Another factor in the context of school drop-outs is rural–urban migration and urbanisation. The children move to urban areas and a growing number of children work in urban areas. The rural–urban migration pulls young people to towns and cities by the ‘bright lights syndrome’.\(^3\) Others move to cities for better education, health services and for economic reasons. When the economically active people move for better opportunities in urban areas, the elderly people are left behind in rural areas and depend largely upon the traditional social support systems. At times, they are left in the care of dutiful children.

Further, is the linkage between maternal health and education. “Empowerment through education is one of the strongest antidotes to maternal risk” (UNESCO, 2010a: 47). The strength of the association in most cases points to the importance of the two-way link between investment in health and investment in education.

Clearly, ‘Education for All’ is less likely to be achieved if the needs of children are unmet. Child labour hinders the full development of children. Both school drop-outs and child labour have

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\(^3\) The bright lights syndrome refers to the perceived advantages of living in urban places which attracts people especially the young to move into urban areas (Binns et al., 2004).
social, economic and developmental implications. These affect adversely the human resource development. Child labour also denies the children’s rights to education.

The denial of a child’s rights and fundamental freedoms is not only an individual and personal tragedy, but it also hinders the full development of human capital. A less skilled workforce could be the result which in turn creates low productivity for a country and retards development. Children's rights require special protection and call for continuous improvement of the situation of children for their development.

Given the above scenario, the United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child with particular reference to Convention 182, which aims at the worst forms of child labour, and 138, which aims at all forms of child labour under Article 19, affirms that:

*States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has the care of the child* (cited in the Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2005).

The convention is essential in guiding nations with approaches to conceptualise education regarding its value for children in their development.

Most communities in developing countries, especially in the Pacific, face hardship and poverty (Abbott and Pollard, 2004). Moreover, higher birth and growth rates pose a challenge. In this connection, the rate of natural increase in less developed countries is usually larger than in developed countries. Incidentally, the rapidly growing youthful population of the less developed regions need expanded educational services. The challenge in development planning is to take into account the need to generate employment opportunities for the growing labour force.

Pacific Island countries rate only a medium human development. Life expectancy at birth for most PICs is well below 80 years. Life expectancy and infant mortality are important indicators of the quality of life and levels of development. Life expectancy at birth reflects general living
standards, nutrition and health care. It reveals tremendous inequalities between developed and developing countries.

The population and education status of children in selected Pacific Island countries illustrated in Table 1.1. highlights that despite some progress in school enrolments, many of the poorest countries will still struggle to meet the goal of universal primary education. The decrease in the number of students at secondary level also reveals that thousands of children do not make it to secondary education. The proportion of children enrolled in primary school in itself is below 50 per cent in many countries (Elliman and Challis, 1979).

The phenomenon of child labour in the Pacific needs to be viewed in a different perspective. The slow rate of economic growth, the culturally conceived obligations of children towards their families, inadequate employment opportunities and economic hardships are some aspects that need careful consideration. With little critical analysis and understanding on the economic roles of children in the region, child labour should raise the question on the socioeconomic development of a country.

Table 1.1  Population and Educational Status of Children in Selected PICs

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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Primary (000’s) (2007)</td>
<td>Secondary (000’s) (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>243,121</td>
<td>6-15</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>6-15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Is</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>6-15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>2303.6</td>
<td>6-14</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>5-14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Is</td>
<td>196.2</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>6-14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>38</td>
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</table>

Sources: Booth et al., 2006; Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2008; UNESCO, 2007a; UNESCO, 2010b
With the significant number of school drop-outs in various PICs and Fiji in particular, it is clear that there needs to be greater awareness and understanding of the child labour issue in order for appropriate implementation of legislative and educational measures.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

Practically, verifying the linkages between school drop-outs and child labour can only be captured by examining and exploring the burgeoning issues that revolve around them. School drop-outs and child labour in the rural settings of Vanua Levu in Fiji should not only be considered as a technocratic issue but must be placed within their social, cultural, economic, political and environmental context. This study undertakes an examination of these dimensions.

1.3 Rationale

The importance of examining and exploring the linkages between school drop-outs and child labour is ascribed to several major thrusts. Firstly, child labour has several social and economic ramifications. It is a potential obstacle to poverty alleviation and access to basic education. Secondly, both school drop-outs and child labour are increasing in Fiji and a systematic study is needed in linking the rising rates of these phenomena. The question is whether there is any linkage between the two. The focus of the study was to bring out the linkages with special reference to the rural settings of Vanua Levu in Fiji.

Thirdly, the significance of the study lies under the assurance that there has been no methodical study done to capture certain aspects that constitute rural settings, particularly the remote villages in Vanua Levu. Most of the studies are done by government and intergovernmental agencies such as reported by ILO (2010b) and Government of Fiji (2009). The issues in these cases however, have been over-simplified.

Furthermore, there is a need for a study that also takes into account the social, economic, cultural, political and environmental aspects associated with school drop-outs and child labour
especially in rural settings. Studies conducted earlier have largely focused on the certain general
perspectives articulated by those organising and commissioning them.

Finally, this study also stems from the researcher’s first-hand experience acquired through
involvement in an earlier field work done for two baseline surveys on child labour in Fiji,
commissioned by ILO in 2009. In addition, the personal experience of a childhood in Vanua
Levu and having known the hardships faced in rural settings has contributed a lot in doing this
research.

1.4 Research Questions

The general question this study seeks to answer is, what are the linkages between school drop-
outs and child labour in the rural settings of Vanua Levu in Fiji? Several specific questions are:

- What are the factors that cause children to leave school and work?

- What are the attitudes of parents about their wards dropping-out from school and enter into
some kind of cash earning labour or activity?

- Do rural schools have stimulating teaching and learning environments to encourage the
children to continue in schools?

- What could be done to curtail issues regarding school drop-outs and child labour in Fiji?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to bring out the linkages between education and child labour
particularly between school drop-outs and child labour in the rural settings of Vanua Levu in Fiji.

The specific objectives are to:
• bring out linkages between education and child labour in Fiji

• establish the linkages between poverty, school drop-outs and child labour in Fiji

• study the enrolment patterns in both primary and secondary schools in Vanua Levu in Fiji and linkages to school drop-outs

• study the causes of early school leavers in the rural areas in Fiji, especially in Vanua Levu

• examine the attitudes of children towards their education and dropping-out of school

• examine the attitudes of parents towards their children’s education

• identify the activities in which school drop-outs are involved in the Vanua Levu area

• study the background characteristics of school environment, teachers’ attitudes and the examination system contributing to school drop-out rates

• identify the problems of working children and the impacts on their lives

• examine the existing social protection mechanisms targeted at children in Fiji

• recommend policy issues based on the study findings

1.6 Sources of Data and Methodology

A ‘triangulation’ method was used by employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the study. Data and information were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through a field work. The primary research was conducted in the rural areas of Vanua Levu in Fiji. The field work involved the use of questionnaires and
targeting forty children who are school drop-outs between the ages of six and seventeen. The children’s parents and guardians were also interviewed. Samples were drawn from the three provinces of Vanua Levu namely Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata, targeting a total of twelve villages. Guiding questions were used for key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

In addition, secondary data were obtained from journals, census report, and reports of government, non-government and international organisations such as ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, and UNESCO. The data obtained were then tabulated and analysed.

1.7 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter One is an introduction section giving the research problem, research questions, objectives and the rationale. Sources of data and the methodology used are also described briefly.

Chapter Two gives a conceptual framework of school drop-outs and child labour. This chapter focuses on basic concepts and linkages to the subject in question. It provides insights into the various approaches, perspectives and models relating child labour to development in general and the Pacific region in particular. It also provides a review of literature that links to the topic and gives an overview of works done in the PICs and Fiji.

Chapter Three gives a detailed description on how the study was carried out. It discusses the methodology and methods adopted in the research. Sources of data are also explained in this chapter together with the research design and the methods used to collect data. The limitations, sampling and ethical questions are also.

Chapter Four provides a brief overview of Fiji’s geography, history, demography and economy. In addition, this chapter focuses on various aspects such as education, school drop-outs, children’s rights, health and poverty as determinants of child labour in Fiji.

4 The Methodology and Research design will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.
The main focus of Chapter Five is on the findings and analysis of the research with data interpretations. Data are presented in the form of tables and figures, which facilitates a proper understanding.

Chapter Six provides conclusions and recommendations based on the study findings. It looks at the linkages of theoretical approaches in relation to the findings. A summary of broad findings is also given in this chapter. Tips to the future researchers are also provided.
CHAPTER TWO

SCHOOL DROP-OUTS AND CHILD LABOUR: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the conceptual framework used for the discussion of the concepts of school drop-outs and child labour. It is divided into two parts. The first part examines the issues relating to child labour and education at a global level. Firstly, it describes briefly the history and the extent of child labour. Secondly, it examines the nature and causes of child labour. Thirdly, it generally reviews the theoretical approaches that best examines the aspects of child labour and the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Fourthly, the chapter outlines the different approaches or instruments developed and used by international agencies for the purpose of collecting information on child labour at all levels. Fifth, it examines the link between child labour and education. Then it analyses the link between poverty, education and child labour. The concept of urban growth and child labour is also looked into.

The second part covers education and child labour related issues in the Pacific with brief insights on Fiji. It examines the previous studies regarding child labour and looks into the extent of child labour in the Pacific region. Then it analyses the extent of urban growth and unemployment challenges in the urban centres. The regional progress in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with regard to education is also examined together with emerging issues of child labour in the Pacific.
2.2 Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

2.2.1 Understanding the History of Child Labour

In Western European countries-child labour is said to be born from the mid eighteenth century and through the mid-nineteenth century (industrial revolution\(^5\)) where children were recruited to work in key industries such as textiles and coal mining in squalid working conditions. Such working conditions provoked anger and caused a retreat in the mid-nineteenth century. “The conventional understanding of the history of child labour is informed, explicitly or implicitly, by a modernisation model of development based on the experiences of societies in the world’s North” (Cunningham and Stromquist, 2005). Virtually, children had worked in agriculture until experiences and current trends affected national economies.

Although developed countries today have very low incidence of child labour, this was not the case earlier in their histories. “Today, with the globalisation of markets, children have become more susceptible to global economic forces and the actions of governmental and private industrial agencies” (Sharma and Herath, 2007: 5). The underlying argument here is the significant outsourcing of economic production from the developed countries to the developing countries. Hence, the persistence of the child labour concept. Along this line of argument Cunningham and Stromquist (2005: 55) note that

\textit{Fifty years ago it might have been assumed that, just as child labour had declined in the developed world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so it would also, in a trickle-down fashion, in the rest of the world. Its failure to do that, and its re-emergence in the developed world, raises questions about its role in any economy, whether national or global.}

\(^5\) The industrial revolution began in England about 1780 with the growth of industry, an influx in rural urban migration with masses of people that work agonizingly in crowded and dangerous mines and factories (Binns \textit{et al.}, 2004). In the first half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} Cent, the first general laws against child labour were passed in Britain.
- The so-called second industrial revolution began in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century in which large companies were formed, an influx in industrial production and other mass production technologies.
- Industrial revolution now presents social thinkers with a huge number of pressing social problems that are occasionally debated in trying to find a solution.
The emergence of the children’s rights concept together with the introduction of universal schooling entered the notion of child labour into public dispute. In 1973, ILO adopted the Minimum Age Convention. Ratifying States then adopt minimum ages varying from 14 to 16 years. Today, leading agencies that advocate on the rights of children include UNICEF and UNESCO. Their emphasis and priorities are to advance health, education, equality and protection for children.

While the struggle to end child labour is necessary, its existence is sadly an essential for survival in many families. Combating child labour has been suggested through a number of approaches. From both development and humanitarian points of view, the long run solution to child labour problems is to “reduce poverty, improve the situation of women and increase access to and the quality of education” (Tzannatos and Fallon, 1998: 1).

2.2.2 Dimensions of Child Labour

No country is immune to the possibility of child labour. Documented by ILO (2007b), there are 2.5 million working children in the developed economies, and another 2.5 million in transition economies. In all societies children suffer abuse and exploitation, “but they are especially vulnerable when separated from their families by poverty, diseases or crisis” (Save the Children, 2004).

In the context of work distribution among children, ILO in 2002 estimated that 180 million children are involved in the worst forms of child labour, with 170 million engaged in work that is hazardous (Hagemann et al., 2006). Harmful work for children includes the military and prostitution. For example, the concept of military in Northern Uganda is intrinsically linked with child soldiers who are abducted by the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) and forced to fight their own people (Save the Children, 2004).

With the sectoral distribution of working children it is estimated than more than two-thirds (69 per cent) of all working children are involved in agriculture compared to 22 per cent in services and 9 per cent in industry (ILO, 2002). Most children also work in the informal sector, without
legal or regulatory protection. Another 8.4 million children are trapped in slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities and about 1.2 million of these children have been trafficked (ILO, 2007b).

In the context of age, it is estimated that there are about 218 million child labourers in the world and three-quarters of them (166 million) are younger than 15 years (ILO 2006). Of this, 73 million working children are less than 10 years old and every year 22,000 children die in work-related accidents (ILO, 2007b). As Figure 2.1 depicts child labour is by no means a problem only among older children. In fact, almost half of all child labourers in the world are younger than 12 years (ILO, 2006; Mehran et al., 2006).

**Figure 2.1 Global Trends in Child Labour by Age Group**

![Graph showing global trends in child labour by age group](image)


Despite the falling rate of child labour on a global basis, there are major differences regarding its prevalence across regions and sectors. With data problems, generalisations are often made using GDP per capita to capture incidences of child labour in different countries. The best predictor as described by Tzannatos and Fallon (1998: 3) is to relate it to the structure of production, such that when the share of agriculture in GDP is high, there is likely to be a high incidence of child labour.

Figure 2.2 is an attempt to showcase the number of working children for four different regions respectively. In the context of working children age 14 and under in each region, the largest
number is found in the Asia-Pacific with 96 million children (Figure 2.2). It will continue to harbour the largest number of child labourers (ILO, 2007b). Sub-Saharan Africa also has a large proportion (58 million) of working children of which nearly one-third of children are at the age 14 and under (ILO, 2010a).

Figure 2.2 Children in Employment (5-14 years) by Region in Million

![Pie chart showing children in employment by region](image)


Earlier studies by Wright et al. (1997) on six Asian countries including India, Bangladesh, and Nepal in South Asia and Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia in Southeast Asia reported child labour as a general problem of considerable significance. With an overwhelming difference between the countries the studies found serious incidence of child labour within the informal, unorganized sector of the economy.

Recent surveys by Sharma and Herath (2007) concluded that child labour in many Asian developing countries is the basis of economic activities that produce many consumer goods and export commodities such as agriculture and clothing. They argue that within Asia, incidence of child labour is high in the South and varies significantly between countries.

This is further acknowledged through an overview of child labour in India by Witzke and Subbaramanan (2007). The authors’ statistics on working children revealed that approximately 75 per cent of rural child labourers’ work in agriculture, 36 per cent in the secondary sector and 60
per cent in the tertiary sector. The study also revealed that children work predominantly in manufacturing, construction, trade, hotels, restaurants and private households.

2.2.3 Child Labour Disparities between Boys and Girls

Unlike boys, girls shoulder the burden of household work and taking care of siblings, even though they also work to supplement their family income (ILO, 2008a). Figure 2.3 shows the status of employment for both girls and boys 5-17 years old at a global level. Unpaid family work is higher for girls (72.7 per cent) compared to boys (64 per cent).

In some cases, to end their work could mean considerable deprivation to the families. Female child labour is a sad reflection of the state of a country’s social and economic health (Tzannatos and Fallon, 1998). With low remuneration compared to boys, work allocated to girls is often more tiresome and requires longer working hours (ILO, 2008a).

Figure 2.3 Child Labour Status in Employment by Sex (5-17 years) (%)

![Bar chart showing child labour status by sex](image)


2.3 Nature and Causes of Child Labour

The complexity and many interlinked explanations of child labour signify that no single factor can explain its existence. A great majority are engaged in agricultural activities in rural areas,
others are engaged in the informal sector and others are performing similar activities, such as street kids. The scale and nature are many. Understanding the causes of child labour is necessary in its prevention. Table 2.1 examines the causes of child labour at different levels. Categorised by ILO in 2002, it is an approach to analyse the causes of child labour at three levels – immediate, underlying and structural.

**Table 2.1 Levels of Causality for Child Labour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate causes</th>
<th>Underlying causes</th>
<th>Structural or root causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited or no cash or food stocks; increase in price of basic foods</td>
<td>Breakdown of extended family and informal Social protection systems</td>
<td>Low/declining national income; extreme unequal distribution of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family indebtedness</td>
<td>Uneducated parents; high fertility rates</td>
<td>Inequalities between nations and regions; adverse terms of trades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household shocks, e.g. death or illness of income earner, crop failure</td>
<td>Cultural expectations regarding children, work and education</td>
<td>Societal shocks, e.g. war, financial and economic crises, transition, HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No schools; or schools of poor quality or irrelevant</td>
<td>Discriminatory attitudes based on gender, caste, ethnicity, national origin, etc.</td>
<td>Insufficient financial or political commitment for education, basic services and social protection; “bad” governance; deep rooted cultural practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for cheap labour in informal micro-enterprises</td>
<td>Perceived poverty: desire for consumer goods and better living standards</td>
<td>Capitalist oriented societies; social exclusion of marginal groups and/or lack of legislation and/or effective enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family business or farm cannot afford hired labour</td>
<td>Sense of obligation of children to their families, and of “rich” people to the “poor”</td>
<td>Lack of decent work for adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Analysis of the causes of child labour shows the importance, at all levels, of the contributions of education or the lack of it. Noticeably, for example, the immediate cause of child labour is induced through there being no schools or schools of only poor quality. An underlying cause of
child labour is uneducated parents, which in turn generates high fertility rates. The structural or root cause to child labour is insufficient financial or political commitment for education.

2.4 Theoretical Approaches to Child Labour

2.4.1 Theory of Cumulative Causation

There is considerable agreement on the causes of child labour, and similarly, are the policies implemented to deal with the problem. However, there has been less agreement on the theoretical explanations and the theoretical underpinnings of policies and practices. “A theory that appears to have the breadth to cover both explanatory and policy-making requirements, as well as the depth to explore the economic and social causes of child labour, is the theory of cumulative causation (Bamberry, 2007: 27).”

The socio-economic factors in cumulative causation draw on an explanation of linking poverty and child labour. Inadequate or inappropriate provision of health and housing, as Pawar (2007), notes, contributes to poor educational and socio-economic outcomes, resulting in the persistence of poverty and the continuation of child labour. In this regard, the individual and community values and attitudes in supporting education are of great importance. Most significant is the community support of education for boys and in particular girls. This should include the availability, affordability and quality of education, the quality of teachers and the adequacy of school facilities.

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6Cumulative causation explains why child labour persists in a number of developing countries as well as how it could be used as the basis of policy to eliminate child labour. The theory has its origins in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century writings and was expanded in the mid-twentieth century in discussing economic growth in developing countries.

Unlike neoclassical economic theory, cumulative causation incorporates social factors, provides explanations for changes in, persistence of, social attitudes and beliefs, and stagnation or decline in explaining economic growth (Bamberry, 2007: 27-50).
With regard to the economic factors, the influence of demand on products is said to generate specialisation in the production of goods and services as a competitive advantage for future growth. A lack of demand, on the other hand, lessens opportunities for jobs and leaves many people in a state of poverty. Without the expansion of markets at all levels, opportunities for economic growth are unlikely and problems of poverty will still remain (Bamberry, 2007).

Concentration of economic activities in some locations and not others is further explained in cumulative causation concepts through industry agglomeration, polarisation, growth centres and industry clusters. The concentration of economic activities was mainly in the urban areas. This also denotes early years of industrial revolution. In this connection, locations, especially the rural, that fail to gain economic advantages are more likely to remain affected by poverty and child labour.

Understanding the nature and complexity of growth in urban areas and its impacts is exemplified through the works of Masser et al. (2011). The consequence of urban development commented on by Swinnerton and Rogers (2002) is that even in terms of helping the fiscal condition of the city, the long-term consequence of growth can be negative.

Negative growth could result in conflicts in social life. The social facts in this sense can shape human behaviour. They define the constraints, the struggles and opportunities within which people must act. In some instances, children are used for labour or exploited in ways for material gains as well as maximising parent’s consumption.

Article 7 of the ILO Convention 182 provides additional clarity about exploitative child labour. This is further extended in Swinnerton and Rogers, (2002) and UNICEF’s, (2005) models and approach towards exploitative child labour. The two key features in the approach are parents have imperfect information about whether employment opportunities available to their children are exploitative or not and firms choose whether or not to exploit child workers in their employ.

Atchoarena and colleagues (2000) extended the discussion of the role of government intervention in cumulative causation theory. Governments in this view are to provide proper infrastructure
and equal distribution of resources and incomes so that all could participate in the economy. In addition, policies are to support research and development and assist in the expansion of markets. This could lead to cumulative economic growth, which in turn could reduce poverty and child labour.

Change in cumulative causation is generally thought to be incremental. This, however, can be obstructed by “countervailing forces of stagnation such as time and inertia, independent countervailing changes” and offset changes released by development (Bamberry, 2007: 30). This is argued to have a negative impact on the changes needed to reduce poverty and child labour. Further, those enterprises who do not adopt technical change to reduce labour costs and improve production but use child labourers to improve productivity contribute to the continuation of poverty and child labour.

2.4.2 Rights of Children Under International Conventions

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution in 1989 and entered into force in 1990 (United Nations, 1989). With particular reference to Article 6, States parties must recognize that every child has the inherent right to life and State parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

The ILO Convention (No. 138) Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment was adopted at the Fifty-Eighth Session of the ILO Conference in 1973 and entered into force in 1976 (United Nations, 1989). With particular reference to Article 7, the national laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons 13 to 15 years of age on light work which is:

a) not likely to be harmful to their health or development, and
b) not such as to prejudice their attendance at school, their participation in vocational orientation or training programs approved by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received.
The ILO Convention (No.182) Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the worst forms of child labour was adopted at the eighty-seventh session of the ILO Conference in 1999 and entered into force in 2000 (United Nations, 2008). With particular reference to Article 7:

1) Each Member shall take all necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of the provisions giving effect to this Convention including the provision and application of penal sanctions or, as appropriate other sanctions.

2) Each Member shall, taking into account the importance of education in eliminating child labour, take effective and time-bound measures to:

   a) prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour;
   b) provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration;
   c) ensure access to free basic education, and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour;
   d) identify and reach out to children at special risk; and
   e) take account of the special situation of girls.

3) Each Member shall designate the competent authority responsible for the implementation of the provisions giving effect to the Convention.

The child’s right to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education is recognised by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). With relevant provisions of other international instruments as mentioned, State parties are to set minimum ages for admission to employment.

It is disturbing to note at this point, though, that there are no clear demarcations when it comes to labour rights between adults and children. This is reflected in the more recent debates on the
explosion of child labour in the developing countries in trying to discuss the rights of child workers and the rights of all workers.

2.4.3 Human Rights Approach to Education

An aspect to the relationship between human rights and education is the denial of an education itself, which is seen as a synonym for disempowerment (Rashid, 2005). Amnesty International defines Human Rights Education (HRE) as “a process whereby people learn about their rights and the rights of others, within a framework of participatory and interactive learning” (cited in Rashid, 2005: 3).

The recognition and right to quality education as advocated by the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003 to 2012 seeks to draw attention to its commitment to achieving education for all, (United Nations, 2008). This particularly applies to access to education for marginalised groups including girls and street kids, (UNESCO and UNICEF 2007). A rights-based approach to education is not without its impediments. In this regard, a sustainable, human rights based approach to education is needed and can only be achieved if existing commitments are fulfilled for further progress.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article 26 states that:

> everyone has the right to education and technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. It shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (United Nations, 1989:73).

Everyone’s right to be educated centres on the rights-based approach in putting people at the centre of development. Advocates of children’s rights argue that in applying a rights–based approach, children must be put at the centre of what you do, recognising them as rights holders and social actors (Weston, 2005). Governments on one hand are to be recognised as primary duty bearers accountable to their citizens, who include children. Parents and families on the
other hand should also be recognised as primary caregivers and protectors, who should be given the guidance and support to fulfil these roles (Save the Children, 2007a).

The approach to a commitment in education to inhibit child labour is recognised through the efforts of international organisations such as UNICEF, UNESCO and Save the Children. The principles of children’s rights they advocate should be expounded at every stage of work–planning, managing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating. An important feature of the approach is linked to mainstreaming gender in development, which means understanding how everything is done and its effects on boys, girls, men and women (Save the Children, 2007b).

2.5 Measures in Understanding Child Labour

There are quite a number of approaches, survey instruments and child labour related programs and strategies that have been developed for understanding children’s work and the impacts. Agencies such as ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children and the World Bank collect information on child labour using household survey instruments. Qualitative instruments used by ILO-UNICEF include rapid assessment tools.

ILO’s IPEC (International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour) program was created in 1992 with the overall goal of progressive elimination of child labour. This was to be accomplished by promoting a worldwide movement to combat child labour through strengthening the capacity of countries to deal with the problem. IPEC is an important facet of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda. It is the largest program of its kind globally and the biggest single operational program of the ILO with 88 countries in operation (ILO, 2009).

Over the years IPEC has expanded its partnership through employers’ and workers’ organisations, other international and government agencies, private businesses, community-based organisations, NGOs, the media, parliamentarians, the judiciary, universities, religious groups and of course, children and their families.

In 2006, ILO using Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on Child Labour (SIMPOC) data sets in conjunction with IPEC presented data with an analysis of child labour trends from
2000 to 2004. The estimates are based on an extrapolation of child labour data from 60 national household surveys. Key results are presented according to form of children’s work, age group, sector of activity, and region.

Further, ILO also designs labouring children surveys (LCS) with the objective of determining the conditions and consequences of child labour using the population of working children as its relevant base, whilst child labour survey (CLS) are designed with the primary objective of measuring the prevalence of child labour, including relevant information on geographical/administrative division, type of place, and various household and personal characteristics, (cited in Verma, 2008).

### 2.6 Child Labour and Education

Child labour and education are closely linked. Good practices in education and child labour take into account broad policy level activities to practices at the grass root level (ILO, 2007a). Practice at the grass root level is brought to light through a study of intergenerational child labour in Brazil (Emerson and Souza, 2003). When poor families cannot afford any longer the costs of education they are often compelled to send children to work. The key aspect is to involve all stakeholders to realise the importance of access, a good quality education and training and to recognise the dangers of child labour.

An estimated 158 million children, aged five to fourteen engage in child labour (ILO, 2006). By the year 2020, millions of new child workers will have joined the workforce, 90 per cent from developing countries, where child labour is most common (Wikipedia, 2011a). With the prospect of a prolonged increase in unemployment, deepening poverty and inequality as an aftermath of the global economic crisis, those that stand to be the most affected are children of the world’s poor and vulnerable families (ILO, 2009). The increase of unemployment and poverty is further argued to put at risk children’s health, welfare and in particular, education.

Children’s education is crucial to development (Ali, I., 2007; Longden and Yorke, 2004). However, children are still being exploited and forced into labour. The child labour issue is
complex. The number of children leaving school early and working is difficult to establish. School drop-outs could become recruits to child labour. Child labour prevents children from acquiring the skills and education they need for a better future (Hagemann and Allais 2008). It also perpetuates poverty and inhibits productivity and income growth. Child labour, education, poverty and development are mutually reinforcing.

Education, as stated by UNESCO (2010a: 135),

*has the power to transform lives. It broadens people’s freedom of choice and action, empowering them to participate in the social and political lives of their societies and equipping them with the skills they need to develop their livelihoods.*

Surveys on education find that the majority of children who leave school resort to work (Save the Children, 2009; Sedlacek et al., 2009; ILO, 2010a). Common reasons included parental neglect, financial difficulties (which leads to the inability to pay school fees), no family support and peer pressure, as well as poor academic performance.

Prospects for employment and earning are so extremely poor for school drop-outs yet an overwhelming number of children still leave school for varied reasons. Many UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO are involved in the funding and development of a variety of education and training programs. ILO-IPEC strongly contest that “education is pivotal to eliminating and preventing child labour, to establishing a skilled workforce and to promoting development based on the principles of social justice and human rights” (ILO-IPEC, 2009).

Most significant is the attention UN organisations give to girls’ education. It is claimed that schooling has a multiplier effect for women. An educated woman will typically be healthier, increase her income opportunity to support the family and be more likely to have fewer children. Consequently, her children will have a greater chance of attending school. A study by Dubey and Nielson (2002) of child labour in rural India also found that two-thirds of the increase in school enrolment for 1983 to 1999–2000 is explained by an increase in both household income and parental education.
Abbott and Pollard (2004: 37) provided a comprehensive statement quoting that “in nearly every Pacific Development Member Country (PDMC) rural schools do not get an equitable share of public resources devoted to education”. Studies have also argued that the nature and intensity of work in rural areas also affect school attendance. Hagemann and Allais (2008) write that “working children in rural areas are disadvantaged with respect to working children in urban areas in terms of their ability to attend school”. This they noted is an indication that the nature and characteristics of work performed in rural environments such as physical effort and the number of hours may have a more severe impact on the ability of children to attend school.

2.6.1 Education Disparities between Boys and Girls

Poverty, gender, ethnicity, geographical locations among other factors are mutually reinforcing interactions that create cycles of disadvantage in education. Even though enrolment rates for girls are increasing the problem of equal opportunity is still widely prevalent. Statistics on education by UNESCO (2010a) illustrate staggering figures of girls’ education in comparison to boys”; 145 million of the world’s children aged 6–11 are out of school, (85 million girls, 60 million boys); 283 million children aged 12–17 are out of school, (115 million girls, 132 million boys).

The focus on the girl here stems from the fact that the place of women in society and their role in development will depend largely on their opportunities for education. In most developing countries a high female illiteracy rate is attributed to factors such as the age of marriage, the issue of being a mother and the attitudes in society, among others (UNESCO, 2010a).

2.7 Poverty, Education and Child Labour

Large numbers of people still live with poverty globally (Thomas, 2000). Reducing poverty in half by 2015 is one of the international agendas world leaders have resolved to pursue (United Nations, 2008). Besides targeting poverty reduction, the chief priority of UNDP as a key player works to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders in addressing the factors that contribute to poverty. This includes fighting hunger and generating employment opportunity. According to
the United Nations report (2008), 820 million chronically hungry people live in developing countries.

Poverty plays a significant role in determining parents’ choice in sending their children to school. Some 77 million children have no access to primary education, and many who start attending are forced to leave and work because of poverty (Save the Children, 2009; UNESCO, 2010a). The pernicious effects of poverty often threaten the lives and wellbeing of children making them vulnerable as they are at the forefront of being exploited (Swinnerton and Rogers, 2002).

To prevent premature entry into child domestic work as well as to improve the working conditions of those who are already domestic workers, Save the Children has adopted an approach that stresses the positive value of education (Save the Children, 2004). This type of problem is exemplified in countries like the Somali Region of Ethiopia and Brazil where children have to work at home to take care of their family.

Even though poverty is a key contributing factor to children leaving school early and resorting to work, there are other interconnected factors that lead to children dropping out of school. They include: an education system that is examination-oriented, peer pressure, and the lack of parents interest towards their children’s education.

### 2.8 Urban Growth and Child Labour

#### 2.8.1 Migration, the Growth of Urban Centres and the Consequences

One of the key intensifying problems in Asia and the Pacific region is urbanisation. Earlier views on urbanisation under capitalism throw light on anti-urban feelings reflecting on the concentration, misery of workers, nullified opportunities and the destruction of social lives (Leo, 1997). Conclusions from the Todaro (1969) model help to explain why it is rational for people to continue to move to crowded cities where unemployment is high and rising. The following is of relevance:
- high urban unemployment is inevitable given the large expected income differentials between the rural and urban sectors which exist in many LDCs
- creating urban jobs is an insufficient solution to the urban unemployment problem because more migration is induced
- expanding education opportunities often results in more urban migration
- urban wage subsidies are counterproductive as they encourage more migration by increasing the probability of finding a job (Todaro, 1969).

The prevalence of the dual labour market theory, World systems theory and the world society approach is their focus on forces operating at an aggregated macro-level which links immigration to the structural requirements of modern industrial economies (Piore, 1979). For example, migration, in the view of World systems theory, is a natural consequence of economic globalisation and market penetration across national boundaries (Wallerstein, 1974).

The United Nations (2000) estimates of urban population growth in Figure 2.4 highlight that the growth in less developed regions exceeds the growth in the more developed regions. By 2030, a projection for population growth in the rural area shows a declining rate for both regions.

Figure 2.4 Estimated and Projected Urban and Rural Population of the More and Less Developed Regions, 1950–2030

Migration and/or uncontrolled drift into urban centres in developing countries creates a comprehensive number of issues that are not easy to deal with. Broad development impacts include unemployment, poverty and worsening of living conditions, settling on illegal areas of land and inadequate provision of essential basic services. Consequently, child protection diminishes, which heightens the exposure of children to other risks such as sexual exchange for money and child labour (UNICEF, 2010b).

Understanding the concept of why people move dates back to Ravenstein’s laws of migration in the 1800s, which incorporate the mathematics of a push and pull model (cited in Lewis, 1982).7 His laws of population mobility also denote the migration process in most developing countries whereby inhabitants of rural parts of the country move with preferences. A visible and growing impact is the increase in squatter settlements in the urban centres (Abbott and Pollard, 2004). Squatters are generally known to hold residence of the lower income group.

Mitchell’s (1985) emphasis on the push and pull factors recognises that people’s movements are determined by the social and economic conditions. Reasons include economic components such as relative wealth (or poverty) or employment opportunities. Seeking employment opportunities is experienced, for example, in remote rural locations where the young are commonly lost to urban centres.

This occurs primarily because push factors (lack of economic opportunities, boring lifestyles, restrictive family living) are strong and the corresponding pull factors of the towns (jobs, freedom and the ‘bright lights syndrome’) are also strong (Young, 1999: 92). Movement of people in this case is predominantly in one direction, from rural to urban.

The notion of migration initiated by both the source and receiver is very much reflected in the push–pull models (Lee, 1966). Neoclassical economies generally conceive the movement of people as an individual decision for income maximisation (Lewis, 1952; Todaro, 1969; Borjas, 1989).

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In contrast, new economics approaches view migration as a household decision that seeks to overcome capital constraints on family production activities (Stark, 1991). Even though a variety of factors is considered in the decision-making models that influence the migration decision, they still remain in the push–pull framework.

2.8.2 Urban Economics: The Supply of Labour and Wage determination

Specialised areas of study in applied microeconomics draw on methods from other fields such as urban economics (Todaro and Harris, 1976). The challenges faced by cities, such as sprawl, air and water pollution, traffic congestion, and poverty are examined in urban economics. The supply of labour and the determinant of wages must be examined in this light.

2.8.2.1 Labour and Wage determinant

In real life transactions buyers or sellers have the ability to influence prices. The demand for various commodities by individuals is generally thought of as the outcome of a utility-maximising process, with each individual trying to maximise their own utility. The set of choices in terms of labour which emerges to meet an individual or household need comes in question here.

As wages can be affected by financial capital flows within and between countries and the degree of capital mobility within and between countries, hiring of cheap labour (especially from children) makes more sense when it aids in producing output. Hence, supply is effectively manufactured, the employer’s revenue increases and thus profits.

The graph in Figure 2.5 of the value of marginal physical product of labour (VMPP_L) line above the marginal physical product of labour (MPP_L) is the value of the additional output produced by an additional unit of labour. The slope and/or decline of the MPP_L curve in the diagram to the right reflects the increase in the units of labour employed.

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8 Microeconomics is the part of economics concerned with single factors and the effects of the individual decision.
9 The Value of marginal physical product of labour is obtained by multiplying the marginal physical product of labour and the value of the output that it produces (MPP_L * P_Q = VMPP_L) (Stewart and John, 2000).
Figure 2.5 The Marginal Physical Product of Labour

Source: Stewart and John, 2000.

Neo-classical economists view the labour market as similar to other markets in the forces of supply and demand (Stewart and John, 2000). It is argued that when demands are high the need for an additional amount of labour depends on the Marginal Revenue Product (MRP)\textsuperscript{10} and the marginal cost (MC) of the worker (Baumol and Blinder, 1997).

Labour market imperfections are also reviewed through two theories; the Labour Market Dysfunctional Model (LMDM) and the Credit Constraint Model (CCM). The LMDM sees child labour as a problem created by the uncoordinated decisions of parents and the CCM approach sees market imperfections as the reason behind parents sending their children to work for an additional income (Herath, 2007).

2.8.3 Unemployment Challenges in the Urban Areas

Article 23 under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets a common standard that everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and protection against unemployment (United Nations, 1989).

\textsuperscript{10}If the MRP is greater than a firm's Marginal Cost, then the firm will employ the worker since doing so will increase profit. In economic theory, the firm only employs up to the point where MRP=MC, and not beyond (Stewart and John, 2000).
However, the increase in the number of people moving into the urban centres poses a great challenge for governments to absorb everyone in developing countries into the workforce, especially in Asia and the Pacific (ILO, 2010c). Or perhaps mobile young workers, in particular, are vulnerable to changes in the labour market because they lack relevant job skills and work experience (Verick, 2009; World Bank, 2007b).

The challenge lies in the differences of industrialisation experience, as best summed up by Angotti, (2005: 6-7):

*less developed countries always had proportionately less industrial investment per capita, lower wages (including social wages), export-led growth, and less diverse economies, adding up to the reproduction of dependencies that go back to colonial times. As a result, cities grew without the improvements in the quality of life that characterise cities in developed countries.*

Figure 2.6 represents the high youth unemployment rates between the years 1995 and 2005 in Africa, the Asian countries and the global level. Even though the per cent of youth unemployment rate decreased in the developed regions in 2005, the per cent of unemployed youths increased for both the Africa and Asia Regions.

**Figure 2.6 Youth Unemployment Rates, 1995 and 2005**

Unemployment in the city is related to the individual decision of rural–urban expected wage differentials (Todaro and Harris, 1976; Todaro, 1969). This process is further elaborated through a study by Penna et al. (2006: 608) in that “the migratory dynamics generated by agents that seek to adapt to the economic environment that they co-create leads the economy towards a long run equilibrium characterised by urban concentration with urban unemployment”.

2.9 Child Labour in the Pacific

2.9.1 Nature and Scale of Child Labour in the Pacific

Even with the lack of official statistics on the scale and nature of child labour, the worst forms of child labour are also found in most PICs. According to the US Department of Labour (2007) report, children are found to work in agricultural activities, the informal sector, family businesses, and on the streets for the following countries: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Timor Leste. The findings for this report with particular reference to Fiji are corroborated by the findings of ILO research done in 2009 regarding child labour (ILO, 2010b).

Exploitation of children through prostitution was identified in Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (Singh, 2008b) whilst commercial sexual exploitation of young girls by crew members from overseas ships existed in Kiribati and Tonga (Voigt-Graf and Duncan, 2008). Findings from Abbott and Pollard in 2004 also found families in PNG withdrawing children from school to work on plantations because of high labour demand. Additionally, there have been reports of children working as domestic servants and in hotels.

In Kiribati, in 2006 there was a noticeable decline in the Junior Secondary School enrolment, which reflected disciplinary problems and a growing sense that the education system is not meeting the needs of young people (ADB, 2008). The lack of economic opportunities with the specific problems of lack of education and insufficient available jobs highlights the degree of

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11 Child labour in Fiji will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.
needed income to access basic needs such as food and pay school fees. Although child labour was halted in the country in the 1990s there was a recurrence in Betio, where parents made children sell garlands and brooms on the streets to help feed families (ADB, 2007 and 2008). Significant problems such as teenage pregnancies are also prevalent among girls who do not finish primary and secondary schooling.

Case Studies conducted by ADB (2003a and 2003b) for both the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu found that youths who were poorly educated were restricted from acquiring good employment. Ousting this was the large numbers of extended families living under one roof. According to the report, child–youth related problems include school drop-outs, youth idleness, alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancy. In addition, hardship faced by many children, which is caused by parental neglect, was leading to an increase in the number of child abuse cases and children who have never been to school. A review of an investigative study by the Ministry of Education in Palau also affirmed this (Otto, 1998). With few employment opportunities, most are limited to construction work after finishing Form 4 level.

### 2.9.2 Previous Studies in the Pacific and Fiji

For Fiji, the only data source that provides valid, albeit limited, labour force information at the national level is the national census. There is a need for more surveys and studies to gain a more definitive picture of children having to work in the PICs. Projects funded by the European Commission/ILO-IPEC are underway in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. It is a four-year “Tackling Child Labour through Education” (TACKLE) project that began in mid-2007. The TACKLE project supports the capacity of national and local authorities to formulate, implement, and enforce policies and programs to fight child labour in coordination with social partners and civil society (ILO, 2008b).

Unlike most western countries, where a network of labour offices distributed throughout the country routinely collects labour force information (particularly on unemployment), such a network is non-existent in most developing countries. Consequently labour force information cannot be provided on a continuous basis. Data collection systems for most are through the
means of census and Labour Force Surveys. In this regard, only limited labour force information is available.

Gathering information on child labour in PICs includes industry studies. The ILO availability criteria for unemployment, which focus on usual activity\(^\text{12}\) and current activity,\(^\text{13}\) are used in some countries in the Pacific to measure the labour force. The current activity approach is usually used in countries where only very small proportions of persons are engaged in seasonal activities. The current activity approach is a preferred measure with information concerning occupation, industry and employment status, as they are linked with current activity.

In Papua New Guinea, the usual activity approach is sometimes considered as more appropriate because of a large proportion of people engaging in seasonal activities. This is often the case with plantation labour. In Fiji, seasonal labour exists mainly in the sugar industry and to some extent in the tourist industry as well. Distortions in the current activity data, caused by involvement in seasonal activities are considered as probably not very significant.

The latest labour force survey in Fiji was scheduled for 2009 and 2010. The last survey was carried out in 2004–2005 which presented the labour force situation during the interval between the 2000 and 2006 coups. Regrettably, these surveys are based on a relatively small sample of the population and provide statistically meaningful results only at the national and divisional level, as well as for the geographic sectors. The latest ILO child labour baseline survey in Fiji was done in 2009 through education, informal and squatter settlements, agriculture communities, street kids and sex workers (ILO, 2010b).

Fiji also has an established committee to develop awareness-raising programs to address child labour issues. One, which led up to the 2006 World Day Against Child Labour is a Partnership Protocol Agreement (PPA), was signed in Fiji to ‘TACKLE’ child labour. Further, the development of Fiji’s three-year strategic plans for education incorporated the involvement of all stakeholders in the ‘Education for All’ Action Plan (Tokai, 2005).

\(^{12}\) Usual activity refers to a long reference period of work of usually one year.

\(^{13}\) Current activity refers to a short reference period of work of usually one week. Both approaches, usual and current activity, are normally utilised simultaneously.
2.9.3 Poverty and Child Labour in the Pacific

Child labour does exist in the Pacific and is likely to increase. Evidence from around the world suggests that child labour is strongly tied to the level of household income (Sedlacek et al., 2009). In some Pacific Island countries the associated costs of education such as bus fares, uniforms and lunch money, prevent some low income families from enrolling their children (Abbott and Pollard, 2004). In fact, some child labour involved parents who wanted to maximise household income at the expense of their children’s future. Binns

Poverty is generally viewed as hardship due to lack or inadequacy of services like transport, water, primary health care and education. Hardship could lead to families withdrawing children from school. In countries such as the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Kiribati, where probabilities of employment are low after leaving school, returns on education are viewed negatively (ADB, 2003a, 2003b, 2008). In some cases, children are neglected and left to look after themselves.

Defining the extent of poverty in the Pacific falls broadly on the following elements as stated by Abbott and Pollard (2004):

- a lack of basic access to basic services such as primary health care, education and potable water
- a lack of opportunities to participate fully in the socio-economic life of the community
- lack of adequate resources (including cash) to meet the basic needs of the household or the customary obligations to the extended family, village community and/or the church.

The World Bank (2009) key findings on Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu found remarkable consistency in hardship that leaves children vulnerable. Characteristics of hardship included lack of educational skills, limited income opportunities, limited access to basic services, too many dependants and a range of child and youth related problems such as school drop-outs. Consequently, this reinforces the concept of children working at an early age to supplement income in most households.
2.9.4 Regional Progress of MDG in Education

It is apparent that in order to achieve the MDG 1 in education, social development requires that children are to complete a full course of primary schooling together with the elimination of gender disparities (MDG 2) in all levels of education. Universal Primary Education has almost been achieved in most PDMCs (United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), 2004). However, the lack of ability to enforce compulsory education for some countries in PICs such as Samoa and Vanuatu is linked to the emerging problem of child labour (Voigt-Graf and Duncan, 2008). Some countries face the challenge of access to educational facilities in remote areas. In some instances, education systems could be responsible for the children of the poor to continue to have the lowest schooling attainments and in some cases remain uneducated.

Child labour is said to be an obstacle to poverty alleviation and access to basic education. The appalling practice of child labour could also be largely traced to the socio-economic compulsions of parents and guardians who opt to have their children work rather than giving them the opportunity of a proper education. In this regard, low parental education has a strong negative effect on the probability that children will work. In general, the cultural expectations are that when parents become old, children will to look after them. A child when growing up in this sense has an obligation towards their parents. For children who are already living in poverty-stricken lives, education is almost negligible.

In terms of public education expenditure, inequalities in the distribution of resources mean that they are not usually allocated evenly among young people. The disparities in the spending are due to a number of interrelated factors such as children not having equal access to education, children never entering school and therefore, receiving no benefit from public funding for education. In addition, some children enter school but then drop-out before completing their primary education. Therefore, they receive only a few years’ benefit from public spending.

Generally in the Pacific other factors are also claimed to be obstacles to education enrolment and strongly influence whether a child is in school, including the cost of education; gender factors; place of residence (rural/urban); household wealth and a mother’s education.
2.9.5 Urban Growth in the Pacific

A UNESCAP publication outlined a unique feature of urbanisation and urban problems in the developing countries of the South Pacific. It is argued that “because of their small land mass and population size and their distance from global markets, Pacific island countries cannot benefit from the external economies or the economies of scale that most Asian countries enjoy” (UNESCAP, 2000).

A study by UNICEF (2010b) complemented this stating that an alarming rate of 40 per cent of Pacific Islanders live and work in town. As argued the growth in urban centres is partly caused by natural population growth because of a high fertility rate and a young population. People also move for easy access to services, search for work and the changing expectations as to what constitutes a desirable life (UNICEF, 2010b). In the Pacific, the highest percentages of urban population as presented in Figure 2.7 are the Northern Marianas, Palau and Nauru. Almost all the countries are experiencing high growth rates in the urban centres.

Figure 2.7 Urban Population and Population Growth Rate in the Pacific

2.9.6 Unemployed Pacific Youths in Urban Areas

Unemployment among the youth is growing, particularly among young people who move to the urban centres for education and fail to find work or leave school early. Data collected on unemployed youths are not consistently analysed and reported yet they engage in various economic activities within the informal sector such as scrap metal and bottle collectors.

The ADB Case Studies done in 2003 in the Pacific for the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu found high rates of young people living in the urban centres. Concerns raised in the assessments included the pressing problems of the young people with no alternative options. Apart from cramped living conditions, children in the urban centres were often neglected, which led to either dropping out of school and child abuse. Studies done in Fiji by ILO, (2010b); Mohanty, (2006) and Gounder, (2005) further elaborate this. The concept of economic difficulties in this instance is exacerbated when lower incomes for many are likely. Toppled by low employment opportunities, social issues such as youth idleness, alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, youth suicide, school dropouts and loafing could continue to increase in these countries.

Moreover, a study by Noble et al., (2011) on urban youths in the Pacific, covering the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tonga, again revealed a large and expanding number of young people. The survey identified some of the risk factors that lead young people to engage in crime and violence as low literacy rates, unemployment, exposure to violence and poor education quality. According to the authors, Pacific youths face numerous challenges such as urban migration and limited local employment opportunities. Children leaving school early in this regard succumb to unfavourable working conditions.

2.9.7 Emerging Issues of Child Labour in the Pacific

The magnitude of school drop-outs and child labour differs for each country. Studies are undertaken in different regions, areas, and settings, yet few of the studies have been devoted to exploring why children have to work and earn when a large section of the adult population is
unemployed or underemployed. Is child labour then both the cause and consequence of adult unemployment? If education plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of a country, why are more educated young people having trouble when first looking for work? Youth unemployment levels are certainly serious in most countries, including the PICs.

The school drop-outs and child labour are both problematic and costly for the nation. The problems of early school leavers and working children are often diverse and plural regardless of whether they live in rural or urban areas. There is a need to understand the implications: social or economic and political. Few detailed studies have been done on the subject and documentation on working children and the consequences for their well-being is largely non-existence.

Population growth rates remain high in most of the Pacific Island nations. Young people make up a large proportion of the populations of these islands. This ‘youth bulge’ is of concern because these countries generate relatively few job opportunities. Because of a lack of investment and job creation, the islands are losing the economic advantage they might otherwise have gained from the employment of these potential workers. Instead, large numbers of unemployed youth have been linked to growing social problems and this has been a factor contributing to civil unrest.

Improving awareness on issues relating to child labour is essential. Parents who are not aware of the negative impacts of children leaving school early to work must first feel more at ease in accepting and understanding through awareness programs. Following this, it is also important to give the public easy access to relevant authorities in reporting possible cases of school drop-outs as well as child labourers. In addition, the effectiveness of implementing legislation in controlling child labour should be kept in mind.

A government’s role should not only stand as a legislator but as an educator in making certain that legislation is understood. Accordingly, the setting up of a particular agency that is to be responsible for activities relating to child labour is highly desirable. Further, development processes at the national level are often lopsided, resulting in the marginalisation of the poor,
who are left with no option but use child labour as a survival strategy. This context bears on the scope for improvement in education participation especially in remote rural areas.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a conceptual framework for examining the phenomena of school drop-outs and child labour linkages. The literature provides insights into the various approaches, perspectives and models in trying to understand child labour and the significance of education globally and in the Pacific. The extent, nature and causes of child labour are also reviewed. Briefly, the implications of children leaving school early to work are outlined in relation to development in general.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology and the research approach used in the study. It begins with a general discussion on the conceptual methodological approaches. Then it discusses the sources of data and explains the research design. The research tools used in the study are discussed together with an explanation of the sampling method and the study analysis. The study area is also described. Finally, the chapter discusses the limitations and the ethical dimensions of the study.

3.2 Methodological Approaches

Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed in the study. The most significant differences between quantitative and qualitative research is the way in which each approach collects and treats data. Both of these two researches seek to describe and explain phenomena, but have different epistemological\footnote{Epistemology refers to the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope (Walsh, 2005).} positions.

Qualitative research follows a naturalistic paradigm which is based on the idea that reality is not predetermined but is constructed by the participants in the research (Walter, 2006). In this regard, the research allows continuous reflection, more interaction with the participants, and ongoing alterations as more themes appear.

Walsh (2005: 105) describes qualitative research as:
is total immersion in the community or lengthy field exposure; search for negative or deviant cases which may disprove (or falsify) the casual proposition, and triangulation...Qualitative information gathered from open ended questions in open ended questionnaires is used to add interest or explanations to findings based on tables.

A qualitative researcher as elaborated by Benz and Newman (1998) attempts to make sense or interpret a phenomenon by studying things in their natural settings. In this connection, the decision to employ the qualitative approach was preferred.

On the other hand, the process of measurement is central to quantitative research. It provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships (McIntyre, 2005). Quantitative research procedures are predetermined with little ability or opportunity to alter in the early findings. For the purpose of this study, the quantitative methodology was used for statistical analysis of the findings.

The primary research was conducted in the rural areas of Vanua Levu in Fiji. Qualitative research was used to collect data as it had the ability to present in detail the experiences of the individuals under study, particularly the school drop-outs. Past studies often lack the detail of influences that bore on individual students’ departure decisions. The philosophical approach provided the opportunity of looking deeply into the quality of social and economic life of the school drop-outs and child workers in the rural settings of Vanua Levu. The study also gathered data on the working children’s parents and guardians, who were often unaccustomed to taking the issue of child labour seriously.

### 3.3 Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data are used in the study. Structured and semi-structured questionnaires were used in the primary data collection. The questions were largely close-ended. The questionnaires included two sections: one for the working children and the other for the parents or guardians. Open-ended or guiding questions were used to generate or produce a flow of discussion for the key informants and focus group discussions based on a semi-structured questionnaire.
Some aspects of the questions that were covered in the questionnaire were: the socio-demographic information; education information of both the parent and the school drop-out; the nature and condition of work of the early school leavers; the experiences, opinions and ambitions of the working children; views on education for both the child and the parent; a comparative analysis between the parents’ reasons for consenting to their children’s working and the child’s reasons for leaving school early and the views of parents regarding school drop-outs and working children of Fiji.

Secondary sources of information were generated through literature reviews. Factual data were gathered from books, journals, reports of various international agencies, government and non-government, and other publications including population census report, and the Fiji Times reporting.

3.4 Research Design

The research design for the study includes the methods of data collection, the sample design used and the research analysis. The research design was carefully done to identify, define and gather data on the problems of school drop-outs and child labour in rural Vanua Levu, Fiji.

With limited resources to work with, the elapsed time\textsuperscript{15} and research days were calculated before the field work. The study was designed, planned and grounded objectively by using skills readily available. Given the barrier in dialects, the remoteness of some of the villages which could also be accessed by forest tracks and the traditional settings, three research workers who had the right set of skills were recruited for the study (Photographs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3).

The significance of recruiting a translator was in considering the ethical effects of researching vulnerable groups of people. For this study this generally included individuals who had only a limited education and who require a degree of understanding, in the case of the children under

\textsuperscript{15} “Elapsed time is the time between the start and the finish of a project” (Moore, 2000: 11).
study in particular. As the study areas in Cakaudrove and Bua province are accessible by four-wheel drives, only two of the individuals; the translator and presenter, were needed.

3.1 The Translator

3.2 The Track guide

3.3 The Sevusevu16 presenter


The study design also considered the importance of the quality and reliability of data that had to be gathered. Twelve villages were targeted, from the three provinces of Vanua Levu.

3.4.1 Data Collection Methods

The following section presents a brief description on the methods of data collection that were used. They include questionnaire, interview, observation, focus group discussion, case study, photograph and key informant discussion.

3.4.1.1 Questionnaire

The questions in the questionnaire17 were carefully designed to capture and help in seeking answers to the identified research questions. As Punch (2000: 27) noted:

* A research question is a question the research itself is trying to answer. A data collection question is a question which is asked to collect data in order to help answer the research questions. In that sense too, more than one data collection question,

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16 Sevusevu, a Fijian word, is the presentation of Kava to the village chief in a Fijian village to say hello and state reasons for visiting. It is only with the approval from village chief that one can conduct activities sought for.
17 Questionnaires used in the field survey are attached in the Appendix 1.
sometimes several and sometimes many, will be involved in assembling the data necessary to answer one research question.

For the purpose of this study both structured and semi-structured questionnaires were used. Questions in the structured questionnaire were separately designed for both the child respondents and their parents. The questions were linked to the set objectives of the research with the determining factors derived from the literature review.

The questions in the semi-structured questionnaire were designed for the key informants and focus groups. In the present context, they included the village chiefs, teachers, school committee members, carrier drivers and members of the community. The questions were semi-structured so that adjustment to the line of enquiry could be made during the interview itself. This provided valuable insights gained during the interviews as well as depth of information.

3.4.1.2 Interview

Interviews are information gathering tools used alongside other methods as a way of supplementing data, adding detail and in-depth information. Two types of interviews were used in this study. One involved the use of open-ended questions for the semi-structured interviews. The other involved a format of the questions for structured interviews.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face with key informants. The topics considered and issues raised highlighted key areas on which the interviewees could elaborate their points of interest. The structured interviews were administered face to face with the working children as well as the parents and guardians. The predetermined list of questions in the questionnaire ensured standardisation for efficient data analysis.

Standardising the questions was also a safety measure to safeguard the degree of control exercised by the researcher. This directed the flow of interview, the nature of responses and the length of the answers.
3.4.1.3 Observation

Observation method is an important method that provides first-hand information by observing or seeing events or activities in the study area. Observing by spending time in the rural villages offered holistic explanations by incorporating relations between various factors under study. It provided rich insights into the social processes of rural lifestyles and minimised sensitivity among the individuals under study. The attempt in observing was to discover and express the everyday social experiences of individuals in a rural setting.

Observation made while walking and travelling to various locations revealed the complex realities of having to live in remote rural areas as well as providing further understanding of the situations individuals face, cultural traits and processes and the physical settings.

3.4.1.4 Focus Group Discussion

As Bouma (2000: 181) noted, “focus groups are used increasingly as a way of learning about public opinion on a variety of issues”. This technique brings forth a combined strength of in-depth knowledge and valuable information through a group context. Further, it allows the researcher to identify issues, to explore attitudes and perceptions and see how various individuals from the group respond to others’ positions.

Focus group discussion was employed in the study to gather the basic opinions held in the communities about the issues of school drop-outs and child labour. The researcher as the facilitator used guiding questions to ensure the discussions stayed on topic. The groups, comprising not more than ten individuals, included the village chiefs, concerned parents and teachers. In a few cases school drop-outs were also gathered to express their views and opinions in the discussions. The native dialects were used in the discussions.
3.4.1.5 Photographs and Maps

Photographs were captured to provide visual images of the places visited and events, particularly the physical settings and the individuals who came for the interviews. Pictures were taken to provide adequate evidence on the types of activities children are involved in.

During the initial stages of the study before conducting the field work a map was used to show the physical features and settings, roads and the location of villages. A map was a valuable tool in giving directions during the field work as considerable distances were travelled.

3.4.1.6 Key Informants

Key informants’ interviews were conducted in the villages visited. Prior arrangements were made with the concerned individuals’ including the children and their parents. Eliciting information from key informants provided valuable insights into the subject. The interviews were comparatively easy to control, enabling specific ideas to be expressed from the interviewees and noted by the researcher.

A total of twelve key informants, one from each community was interviewed using semi-structured questions. The key informants interviewed comprised of village chiefs, teachers, school committee members and individuals who have direct access to the communities and have good grounds for providing valuable information concerning those under study.

3.4.1.7 Secondary Data

Secondary data from published materials provided valuable information and conviction on what to look for and study in the field. Review of literature led to further exploration as themes and focuses emerged. From this, research procedures were devised to fit the situation and the nature of the individuals that were to be studied.
As mentioned earlier, secondary information included such sources as books, various reports including population census, government, non-government and international organisations such as ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and Save the Children.

3.4.2 Sample Design

Sampling in qualitative research is used in understanding what is happening in specific situations then making a generalisation to large populations (Ezzy, 2006). “In much research it is necessary to sample units for study” (Lynn, 2002: 185). The findings of any research project are also limited by the nature of the sampling size and procedure. In this regard, the analysis and findings of this study is with precision to the defined target group, the school drop-outs of the areas under study.

A drawback in conducting the fieldwork was the non-existence of a sampling frame\textsuperscript{18} which covers the population of interest, the school drop-outs, in the whole of Vanua Levu and in particular, the areas of study. Given this, the snowballing\textsuperscript{19} technique was used during preliminary visits to elicit information from certain individuals on the nature and extent of school drop-outs within the three provinces of Vanua Levu. They include carrier drivers who frequent the areas, village chiefs, and teachers. This also helped in the construction of a sampling frame.

After defining the target population, twelve villages (Table 3.1) from the three provinces, Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata (CBM) were selected for the field work. The selection of villages was derived from explicit stratification\textsuperscript{20} through the use of grid squares plus the geographical boundaries of Vanua Levu (Map 3.1). The selection of some of the villages was also based on their remoteness plus the information already gathered regarding their school drop-out rates.

\textsuperscript{18} The sampling frame completely covers the target population and does not include individuals who are not part of the target population (Lynn, 2002).
\textsuperscript{19} Snowballing, also known as chain referral sampling – is considered a type of purposive sampling. In this method, participants or informants with whom contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study. Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit “hidden populations,” that is, groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies (Bouma, 2000).
\textsuperscript{20} Explicit stratification allows simple random sampling of grid squares of an area to be studied. The aim of stratification and for the purpose of this study was “to guarantee that the sample reflects the structure of the population at least in terms of one or more important variable” (Lynn, 2002:190).
The village samples (Table 3.1) drawn from Cakaudrove province included: Nukubalavu, Vakativa, Nacodreu and Naloaloa. Village samples from Bua included: Koroinasolo and Bua koro which had two villages within. Village samples from Macuata included: Nasuva, Nakavika, Namakomako and Vitina in Dogotuki.

### Table 3.1 Village Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Total no. of villages n=12</th>
<th>Village names</th>
<th>No. of Households interviewed n=40</th>
<th>Male n=28</th>
<th>Female n=12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nukubalavu, Vakativa, Nacodreu, Naloaloa</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Koroinasolo, Bua Koro, Dalomo, Tiliva</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nasuva, Nakavika, Namakomako, Vitina</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

Apart from the locations, sampling was also used for the selection of respondents, groups and situations to be observed, time frames and points of orientation for observations. Forty child workers who are also school drop-outs were chosen for this study. Besides, their parents/guardians were also interviewed using a structured questionnaire. Segregation of data was done based on gender, ethnicity and age-groups. Children between the ages of 6 and 17 were covered in the survey.

#### 3.4.3 Research Analysis

Based on the information that was gathered from the field, analysis of data was done in different parts. Data processing and tabulation and cross tabulation of quantitative data obtained from the findings of the study through the structured questionnaires was carried out utilising the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Data are then presented in the forms of tables and graphs and in pictorial forms to depict a better understanding of information gathered from the research. To some extent, Excel was used in some data preparation for the statistical package. Some
analysis results from the statistical package were also retrieved by Excel to create better formats for graphical illustrations.

Qualitative data obtained through key informant interviews, focus group discussions and case studies with the use of semi-structured questionnaires and guiding questions were recorded, examined and transcribed accordingly. As voice recording captures only the speeches and misses out on non-verbal communication and other contextual factors, it was not usually entertained. Somehow the presence of the recording equipment had an impact on the interview situation.

For this reason, a write–up based on notes was done immediately after each event. This provided reliable and accurate records of parts of the conversation that were most relevant to the research.

3.5 Study Area

The study area covered the rural areas in Vanua Levu\textsuperscript{21} Island. Vanua Levu, formerly known as Sandalwood Island, is the second largest island of Fiji. The island is divided horizontally by a rugged mountain range, which forms much of the boundary between the Provinces of Cakaudrove and Macuata. Bua province, which hosts the port of Nabouwalu, is located further down the Island. Map 3.1 shows the study area with the villages marked.

Surrounded by coral reefs and with a physical setting that is rough and hilly, the island has most of its villages located in remote areas. This was an ideal location in which to do the study considering the rural settings. Selection of the villages was further prompted from the researcher’s earlier research experiences in Vanua Levu.

\textsuperscript{21} More details of Vanua Levu will be discussed in Chapter Four.
Map 3.1 Map of Study Area

Source: Pacific Island Map, 2011

3.6 Limitations

Ideally, respondents would have been chosen on the basis of a sampling frame in order to get a fair representative sample of actual rural villages, population and school drop-outs of the area under study. Even though a sampling frame did not exist, being objective at the initial stages in designing the research helped to minimise expected error.

For the purpose of this study the findings are valid only for the sampled rural villages in the three provinces. Other variables that are not in the questionnaire may have introduced biases in the sample. The study does not assess the total number of economically active children engaged in work in the rural settings of the whole of Vanua Levu. It is based on the experiences of those who have dropped out of school to work in the areas under study.

The other limitations of the study were factors of time and limited funding in order to carry out the survey in urban areas and other rural areas in Fiji, especially in Viti Levu.
3.7 Ethical Considerations

Researchers are now routinely and formally required to conduct their research according to stated ethical principles. Simply, being considerate, however, is no longer enough. As stated by Bouma (2000: 190),

*The key to identifying ethical issues in research is to take the position of a participant in the research you propose. How would you feel if you were asked these questions, observed doing these things, or if your records and papers were examined for research purposes? How would you want researchers to handle the information they have about you? The ethical issues involved in doing research on humans are very much the same for both quantitative and qualitative approach.*

For the purpose of this study approval for conducting interviews was first obtained from the village chief through the presentation of sevusevu. Then consent was sought for from the parents of the individuals that were to be interviewed.

The study also placed the respondents at the centre of the research process. As noted by Oliver (2003: 35), respondents are important people to researchers and it is worth making sure “that they understand how much we appreciate and value their views”. The individuals were also given the assurance that data collected are to be kept confidential. Being considerate to the needs and feelings of the children and their parents in the initial stages of field work provided guidance to the end of the study.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an explanation on the research approach and the methodology used for the study. It discussed briefly the conceptual methodological approaches that were applied for the study. It then discussed the sources of data, research methods and the research design used in the study. This chapter also provided an account of the sampling and sampling size, study area and the limitations of research. The ethical dimensions’ governing the study was also discussed.
CHAPTER FOUR

BACKGROUND OF FIJI ISLANDS AND VANUA LEVU

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief background of the Fiji Islands. It discusses the geographic, demographic, and economic account of Fiji as a whole. Further, the chapter discusses information on children’s development at the national level, with particular references to education. It examines the efforts of different organisations in Fiji who are working towards the development of children in the country. The concepts of poverty, school drop-out and its link to child labour are also examined. This information is important in understanding the concept of school drop-outs and child labour in the country.

The chapter also provides a background of Vanua Levu where the study was undertaken. This includes the island’s physical setting, the historical evolution, population and the social and economic characteristics. The chapter then presents an overview of the educational situation in Vanua Levu, in particular the rural schools.

4.2 The Fiji Islands Context

4.2.1 Location and Geography

Fiji is located as an island group in the South Pacific Ocean (Map 4.1). The Republic includes 330 islands, of which some one hundred are inhabited. The geographic coordinates are between 176° east and 178° west (Kerr et al., 1994). The two main islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, account for 87 per cent of the landmass. The terrain is mostly mountains of volcanic origins.
The capital of the Fiji Islands is Suva, which is situated in Viti Levu. The second largest island is Vanua Levu followed by Taveuni, and the other islands respectively. The Yasawa and Mamanuca groups are located in the west of Viti Levu and the Lau group is located on the East of the Koro Sea. Administratively, Fiji is divided into four divisions and fourteen provinces (Map 4.1).²²

Map 4.1 Map Showing the Location of Fiji Islands and Divisional Boundaries

The Northern division includes the provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata (CBM). The Eastern division includes the Lomaiviti group, Kadavu and the Lau group. The Western division includes the provinces of Ra, Ba and Nadroga Navosa. The Central division includes the provinces of Naitasiri, Namosi, Serua, Rewa and Tailevu. About 87.9 per cent of land is owned by indigenous Fijians while 3.9 per cent is State land and 7.9 per cent freehold land (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Viti Levu, which holds the Western and Central Divisions, contains the major seaports, airports, roads, schools and tourist centres, as well as the main administrative centre for government.

²² The provincial boundaries of the Fiji Islands are outlined on Map 4.4 in Appendix 1c.
Fiji has a tropical climate characterised by high humidity and rainfall along the windward coasts. A drier climate is found in the interiors and along the leeward coasts. Only slight seasonal temperature variation is experienced with cyclonic storms occurring from November to January.

4.2.2 Brief History of Fiji

The original inhabitants of Fiji or Viti, who settled about three and a half thousand years ago are now called “Lapita people” after a distinctive type of pottery they produced (Geraghty, 2006). Remnants of the pottery have been found in practically all the islands of the Pacific east of New Guinea, excluding eastern Polynesia. Prior to the colonial rule in 1874, Fiji was divided into hierarchically organised coastal people and more egalitarian highland people in the interior. This social organisation is still featured today through patrilineal clans, sub-clans, and lineages.

In 1879, the first boatload of Indian indentured labourers arrived. In the next forty years, sixty thousand Indians were shipped to the islands, becoming a class of exploited plantation workers who lived in a world of violence, cut off from their cultural roots (Voigt-Graf, 2005). Depressed economic conditions in India caused most labourers to remain in Fiji after their contracts expired, finding work in agriculture, livestock raising, and small business enterprises (they were engaged chiefly in the sugar industry and commerce). Many left after the 1987 coup.

During the 19th century there was an influx of European beachcombers, traders, planters, and missionaries. Contract labourers were brought to the islands by the British. After nearly a century as a British colony, Fiji became independent in 1970. Democratic rule was, however, interrupted by two military coups in 1987.

As the end of the 20th century approached, Fiji like other Pacific Island nations looked for ways to control its own destiny (Kerr et al., 1994). For instance, military interventions together with external factors have changed the politics of Fiji. However, colonial influences are still evident regarding various administrative and the geographic boundaries (Walsh, 2006). Fiji today is a

23 Viti is the indigenous name of the Fiji Islands. An Austronesian word meaning “east” or “sunrise”. The word Fiji was first promulgated by Captain Cook through a foreign pronunciation (Kerr et al., 1994).
multicultural island nation with cultural traditions of Oceanic, European, South Asian, and East Asian origins.

4.2.3 Population and Household Growth

The 2007 census recorded the population of Fiji to be 837,271 (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2009). A large variety of ethnic groups comprise Fiji’s population. Indigenous Fijians account for nearly half the population. Indo-Fijians make up less than half the population with small groups of Europeans, Chinese, and Micronesians. Christian faith is practiced amongst most Indigenous Fijians with the Hindu and Muslim faith practiced mainly by Indo-Fijians.

Table 4.1 tabulates the growth of the total population of Fiji from 1891 to 2007. The doubling time in the last column in correspondence to the growth rate for the previous column expresses the number of years it would take for the population to double in size if it continues with that growth rate.

Fiji’s population experienced a very high growth rate during the first decades until 1976 when it started to slow (Table 4.1). Contributing factors are related to a very high rate of out migration (of the Indian component of the population) as well as a decrease in fertility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Population change (per cent)</th>
<th>Doubling time (yrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
<td>-137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>-791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In spite of increased out-migration and further decline in fertility, the increase in the population numbers continues. This is partly due to the natural increase the population is experiencing because of the high fertility rate experienced earlier and a young population. Fiji’s total population growth with its main ethnic components is projected to continue until 2030.

### 4.2.4 Internal Migration, Rural–Urban Composition and Urban Growth

The geographic sectors in Fiji are divided into two; the rural and the urban sectors. Urban boundaries are divided according to the census/statistical urban areas. Natural increase and rural–urban migration resulted in an increase in the urban population. The incorporation of rural areas into the urban sector also contributed to the increase of population in urban areas (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

Urbanisation continued to increase during the intercensal period of 1996–2007. This is affirmed by academic researches regarding urbanisation in Fiji (Chandra, 1981; Mohanty, 2006). An overview of population change for the rural and urban sectors during the years 1966–2007 is provided in Table 4.2. By 2007 the urban population was about 51 per cent, larger than the rural population. The continuation of the current urbanisation trend suggests that by 2030, around 61 per cent of the population will be urban.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Rural population</th>
<th>Urban population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>476,727</td>
<td>317,468</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>588,068</td>
<td>369,537</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>715,375</td>
<td>438,350</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>775,077</td>
<td>415,582</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>837,271</td>
<td>412,425</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>857,000</td>
<td>411,000</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>936,000</td>
<td>409,000</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>1,034,000</td>
<td>405,000</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1966 to 2007 are Census years. Figures for 2010, 2020 and 2030 are projected.
Clearly the table indicates that the urban population will continue to surpass the rural population. Kerr et al., (1994: 118) also noted that “the net growth rate of 2.4 per cent for Fiji’s urban population is higher than the growth rate of the population as a whole”. Contributing factors for people moving into urban areas generally include people seeking education and employment opportunities and the non-renewal of land leases for agricultural use.

4.2.5 The Socio-Economic Impacts

The continuation of the drift into urban centres is a further testimony in the desire to look for work even if it is low paid (Abbott and Pollard, 2004)). The link here is the cash income at hand, which would meet the costs of school fees and other essential household expenditures.

In reality, with increasing urbanisation, unemployment in Fiji is growing among young people who come to urban centres for education and fail to find work after completing their studies or quit school (ILO, 2010b). The irony as mentioned in Chapter 2 is an involuntary outcome of a too small labour market.

This places additional burden on those who work. In this connection, children are more likely to drift into child labour, urban crimes, drugs and alcohol use, teenage pregnancy and future poverty. Other social challenges include the risk of social unrest such as people worrying about losing their incomes, jobs and pensions which has grown recently. Moreover, urbanisation and urban growth are associated with problems such as social and community conflicts, inadequate housing and high rate of unemployment (Chandra, 1981; Kerr et al., 1994; Gounder, 2005; Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty, 2003; Mohanty, 2006).

4.2.6 Economy

The natural resources of Fiji include timber, fish, gold, copper, mineral water, offshore oil potential and hydropower. Dense tropical forests are mainly found on the windward sides of the islands and grassy plains on the leeward sides. Mangrove forests are also abundant.
Fiji’s economy is endowed with a large subsistence sector apart from its other main export resources such as timber, minerals, sugar, garments and fish. It is commonly known to be one of the most developed Pacific Island economies. Trading partners for the country include Australia, Singapore, the United States and New Zealand. Tourism and mining are also important to the economy. A major source of foreign exchange is the growing tourist industry.

The country’s major domestic exports in merchandise trade include manufactured goods, machinery and equipment, miscellaneous articles, crude materials, mineral fuels, animal and vegetable oil and chemicals (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Fiji’s industrial production consists of tourism, sugar, clothing and gold mining. The major export items are sugar, fish, gold and garment. Imports include meat and a wide range of consumer goods.

The government’s total revenue showed an increase from 2007 to 2008 with customs duties and ports due raking in the highest income of F$791,338 in 2007 and F$804,959 in 2008 (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Remittances from those working abroad also bring in income for the economy in terms of foreign exchange.

According to the UNICEF statistics (2010a), the GDP per capita average annual growth rate (per cent) for Fiji from 1970 to 1990 was 0.7 per cent. From 1990 to 2008, the average annual growth rate (per cent) of GDP per capita increased to 1.4 per cent. The per cent of central government expenditure, form 1998–2007, allocated to education was 18 per cent.

4.3 Children’s Status in Fiji

4.3.1 International and National Legislations on Children’s Rights in Fiji

The international standards that define children’s rights and have given the necessary frame for Fiji to formulate its own policies and legal concepts are the following:

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24 Fiji’s education budget in Table 4.3 has more details.
- The ILO’s Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); Fiji ratified the Convention in 2003.


- The ILO’s Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); Fiji ratified the Convention in 2002.

The elimination of child labour and the protection of children’s rights policies in Fiji are adopted through the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). A child defined to be below the age of 18 under Fiji’s Employment Relations Promulgation 2007 (ERP) is safeguarded from all forms of labour practices that could affect them either physically and mentally. The ERP verifies the minimum employment age for children at 15. Those in the age range of 13–15 could be engaged in work that does not impair their health as well as disrupt their school attendance.

The number of ‘flexibility clauses’ in the Conventions left to the discretion of any national authority means that there is no single legal definition of child labour across countries (ILO, 2008a). The areas of flexibility include minimum age, scope of application, light work and other exceptions. Currently a child labour subcommittee of the National Coordinating Committee of Children (NCCC) exists in Fiji.

The updating of Fiji’s labour laws through Fiji’s Employment Relations Promulgation 2007 (ERP) is more aligned with the ILO Convention Nos 138 and 182. There are, however, gaps in the application of ILO Convention No. 182 in Fiji as there are no procedures in place to eliminate and prevent the involvement of children in the worst forms of child labour (IPEC-ILO-EU, 2009). In this regard, a comprehensive national policy on child labour is needed.

Fiji has a Juvenile Act that makes provision for the custody and protection of juveniles in need of care, protection or control and for the correction of juvenile offenders. However, the Penal Code
(Cap. 17) and the Juveniles Act (Cap. 56), which govern criminal offences by and against children, are both in urgent need of review and amendment (IPEC-ILO-EU, 2009).

Fiji’s Family Law Act of 2003 also provides a comprehensive reform of the judicial system regarding the enforcement of child support orders in respect of a child’s care. The Act also considers the wish of a child during a court hearing and ensures that a child is properly represented in a custody hearing (Beach, 2011).

In the context of education, the Fiji Education Act 1978 regarding compulsory education states that the Minister may, with the consent of Parliament, by order, specify any area or areas of Fiji in which all children of such age or ages as may be specified in such order shall be required to attend a school (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2009b). When any order has been made under the provisions, the Minister may make regulations to secure that every child of the age specified in such order shall receive education in a school.

The Education Act 1978 (Cap 262, Part XI, Section 28), on Compulsory Education in Fiji stipulates that it is the duty of every parent or guardian to ensure that every child of compulsory school age receive suitable and relevant education by regular attendance at a school. Currently, the minimum age for completion of compulsory education varies throughout Fiji and ranges from 12 to 15 years (IPEC–ILO–EU, 2009).

Interestingly, the Education Act and subsidiary legislation regarding the minimum age for completion of compulsory education barely complement the minimum working age of 15 in the ERP. In this regard, an inclusive review of the Ministry of Educaiton’s legislation, policies, structure and budget should be recommended in order to address key issues including the funding of basic education and to enforce compulsory education mentioned.

Fiji also has a Child Protection policy that applies to organisations, employers, employees, volunteers, partner agencies and other affiliates to guarantee the protection of children from all forms of abuse. The policy will be subject to a process of continuous improvement and regular monitoring of policy knowledge and compliance.
4.3.2 The Education System in Fiji

In Fiji, the delivery of education and training services to schools, pre-schools and training centres is the responsibility of the Fiji Ministry of Education (MOE). This includes the provision of curriculum frameworks, policy guidelines, qualified teaching personnel and program support to controlling authorities and education. Apart from ensuring that standards in education are met and maintained, MOE is also responsible for the preservation of different cultures in Fiji. Support to school managements for the effective running of schools as well as financial assistance for construction and maintenance of school facilities is provided through advisory services. The Fiji Ministry of Education also ensures the special education service in seventeen special schools.

The education structure in Fiji is divided into four divisions. Within these boundaries are education offices that correspond with the Ministry’s administration and management of education policy. Map 4.2 shows the boundaries of the four Education Divisions in Fiji and the nine District Education Offices are marked in blue boxes.

Map 4.2 Classification of Education Structure by Divisions and Districts in Fiji

![Map 4.2 Classification of Education Structure by Divisions and Districts in Fiji](Source: Fiji Ministry of Education, 2009b.)
Altogether, there are a total of 721 primary schools and 172 secondary schools, in Fiji (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2009a). In 2009, the description and number of schools in Fiji were:

- government schools, primary (2), secondary (13)
- non-government and private schools, primary (719), secondary (159) (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2009a).

The provisions of tertiary education in Fiji are through the University of Fiji\textsuperscript{25}, Fiji National University\textsuperscript{26} (FNU), the University of the South Pacific and other educational institutions that provide certification levels. The regional University of the South Pacific (USP) has 12 member countries of which Fiji is the largest.\textsuperscript{27}

### 4.3.3 Government Expenditure on Education

The government’s expenditure per student “reflects the investments and costs associated with education” (UNESCO, 2007a: 2). In Fiji it should cover contributions to the full range of expenses, such as the construction and maintenance of schools, the salaries of teachers, learning materials, as well as scholarships for tuition and student living costs.

Table 4.3 presents the Fiji government’s expenditure on education from 2005 to 2009. The total per cent of the national budget spent on education including higher education showed an average of 20 per cent from 2006 to 2008 until it declined to 16 per cent in 2009. Notably, the government’s expenditure on education had decreased from 2007 to 2009 (Table 4.3).

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\textsuperscript{25} The private University of Fiji was registered in 2004. Its first students were admitted in 2005 as well as a full teaching operation. It was only in 2008 that the University started receiving grants from the government after receiving recognition (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2008).

\textsuperscript{26} The establishment of FNU in 2010 was achieved through the merging of six public institutions, namely, The Fiji School of Medicine, the Fiji Institute of Technology, the Fiji School of Agriculture, the Fiji School of Nursing, the Fiji College of Advanced Education and the Lautoka Teachers College.

\textsuperscript{27} Established as a regional university in 1968, its 12 member countries include, Fiji, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu (Walsh, 2006).
Table 4.3  Education Budgets in Fiji, 2005-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total National Budget in F($) Million</th>
<th>Ministry of Education Budget</th>
<th>Per cent of National Budget Spent on Education (Including higher education)</th>
<th>Government Expenditure on Education in F($) Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,424.48</td>
<td>260.4</td>
<td>21.30</td>
<td>292.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,548.66</td>
<td>301.2</td>
<td>19.45</td>
<td>319.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,572.36</td>
<td>320.7</td>
<td>20.39</td>
<td>310.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,527.91</td>
<td>296.5</td>
<td>19.41</td>
<td>291.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,715.23</td>
<td>278.4</td>
<td>16.23</td>
<td>242.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4.3.4 Primary and Secondary Education in Fiji

Primary schooling in Fiji is facilitated by the government’s Ministry of Education through the Primary Education Service (PES). One of the specific functions of the PES is in the provision of adequate staffing of all primary schools, including the placement of teachers. In addition is the support given to the school managements through donor agencies such as the Fiji Education Sector Program (AusAID) and FESP (EU) in delivering quality education. Beyond this, the government supports the facilitation of teacher’s pay including allowances and grants (tuition and salary).

Table 4.4 shows the grand total of primary and secondary school enrolments from 2007 to 2009, which comprise both male and female. The grand total of primary school enrolments shows a decline in rate for the years 2008 and 2009 which further declines at the secondary level for both genders (Table 4.4).

Considering the factors that could have led to a decline it should be noted that of the total one hundred thousand plus students that enrol at primary level only an approximate 70 thousand complete secondary level (Table 4.4). The table clearly indicates that even though more males enrol at primary level, there is a significant decrease in the number of male students enrolling at secondary level in comparison to the female students.
Table 4.4 Primary\textsuperscript{28} and Secondary\textsuperscript{29} School Enrolments, from 2007-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary Level</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Secondary Level</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>69,579</td>
<td>64,256</td>
<td>133,835</td>
<td>32,934</td>
<td>35,970</td>
<td>68,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>68,508</td>
<td>64,214</td>
<td>132,722</td>
<td>33,571</td>
<td>36,208</td>
<td>69,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>67,204</td>
<td>62,240</td>
<td>129,444</td>
<td>32,029</td>
<td>35,043</td>
<td>67,072</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Primary education should form the core of education targets in order to reach the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO, 2007b). In this connection, it is therefore important for policymakers to evaluate closely public investment in schooling at primary level.

In Fiji, the annual public expenditure per primary student as a percentage of GDP per capita is around 19 per cent over the median range of 14.6 per cent for the East Asia and the Pacific Region (UNESCO, 2007b). This indicates that the administration of primary education in Fiji is somewhat coordinated and facilitated for a quality delivery of teaching.

The function of the Secondary Education Service (SES) within the MOE is to provide qualified staffing to secondary schools with relevant curricular frameworks and facilities. Major objectives of the SES include;

- providing education access to secondary school age children who live in the disadvantaged rural and populated urban communities
- ensuring good quality secondary and vocational education
- preparing students for further education and training in tertiary institutions (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2007).

\textsuperscript{28} Primary school students should generally include the children from the age group of 6 to 13 yrs old (class 1 to class 8).
\textsuperscript{29} Secondary school students should generally include the children from the age group of 14 to 18 yrs old (form 3 to form 7).
4.3.5 Education in the Rural Areas

A recent study of child labour incidents in Fiji by ILO (2010b) through an education baseline survey noted that the majority of children drop-out of school from rural areas, particularly in the western division. The findings revealed that of the 558 children interviewed, a total of 105 children in the rural areas stated they had dropped out of school compared to 45 in the urban centres.

Figure 4.1 Education Status of Children by Location in Fiji, 2009

Source: ILO, 2010b.

4.3.6 Literacy Rate

The target of achieving a 50 per cent adult literacy by 2015 at a global level is far-fetched as millions of adults still lack the basic literacy skills needed in everyday life (UNESCO, 2010a). Fiji is argued to have one of the best education systems in the Pacific (ADB, 2006; World Bank, 2006 and 2007a).

Primary level education is compulsory in Fiji for eight years. In 1996, the literacy rate in Fiji was 96.5 per cent for Fijians compared to 93 per cent in 1986. Concurrently, for the same periods, it was 80 per cent for Indians in 1986 and 88.7 per cent in 1996 (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The country’s literacy rate will inevitably rise with every school generation as more children enter school and leave with literacy skills.
4.3.7 Fiji’s Progress Towards Achieving the MDG and EfA

According to the Fiji Ministry of National Planning (2010) and the United Nations (2006) Reports, Fiji has a strong potential for achieving universal primary education (MDG 2) and for all children to complete the full course of primary education. Accordingly, the elimination of gender disparity in education (MDG 3) is also to be expected. This according to Chandra (2009: 3) arises out of the very strong grassroots support within Fiji for education, and the innovative sharing of responsibility for financing education among parents, communities (especially religious organisations) and the State.

Fiji’s ranking according to the Human Development Index (HDI) has, however, dropped even though it still remains above the average HDI value for all Medium Human Development countries and well above the average HDI for Low Human Development countries (Fiji Ministry of Education-UNESCO, 2008). The value of ranking signifies the country’s progress in attaining satisfactory levels of education, health and income.

Meeting the target of Education for All by 2015 is in progress given the efforts by the Ministry of Education. Fiji targets three main objectives: to improve the quality and relevance of education to all; improve education facilities and resources in rural areas; and increase the school participation rate and reduce the drop-out rate in basic education (Fiji Ministry of Education-UNESCO, 2008). Developing a ‘No Drop Policy’ amongst school-age children in Fiji and substituting external examinations with school-based internal assessment are other approaches to lessen numbers of school drop-outs (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2009c).

4.3.8 Challenges in the Education System

The low enrolments for both primary and secondary levels of schooling (Table 4.4) and the declining rate of students sitting school leaving examinations are noteworthy. In addition, the number of students qualified to enter higher levels of education has also declined from 2005 onwards (Chandra, 2009). This calls for concern regarding improvements in quality education within the teaching context.
As in most Pacific Island nations, the real issue lies in the lack of employment opportunities after completing education (Abbott and Pollard, 2004). The challenge here is a bulging workforce and the rate of economic growth that can not absorb all exiting the education system (Narsey, 2007 and 2008). Fiji’s country report on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) also noted that educated unemployment and associated social problems have arisen because job opportunities fail to keep pace with the rising expectations of those with formal education qualifications (Tuisawau, 2009).

The initiative in TVET is important because if education is used as a transformation tool for children to prepare themselves for their future yet the government or the society at large is unable to accommodate their transition from school to work, then perhaps the education content needs to be reoriented. The suggestion is that the changes within the teaching infrastructures (secondary and tertiary) should prepare those exiting education with other practical skills to earn a living given the lack of adequate jobs and insufficient job opportunities.

4.4 Organisational Development and Welfare for the Children in Fiji

Certain organisations in Fiji work towards the development of children in the country. The Fiji Police, the Social Welfare department, the Ministry of Education and a number of non-governmental organisations inculcate a keen interest in the issues relating to the welfare of children. Modest campaigns, workshops and awareness programs to promote the rights of a child are fundamental in upholding the context within which they exist. The following parties are found to contribute to the development of children in Fiji.

4.4.1 The Fiji Police Force: Fiji Police has a Juvenile Bureau with a Child Abuse and Sexual Offences Unit that looks into the abuse and sexual offences of children in the country. The Unit’s work also involves responding to alerts sent by the Australian police detailing movements of convicted sex offenders who are travelling to Fiji. This followed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Fiji and Australia in 1998 to combat child sexual abuse and to allow the easy tracking of child abusers exploiting children in the Pacific
islands. Recently, in 2011, the Fiji Police Force embarked on awareness programs in schools and communities given a high rise in sexual offences against children (Vula, 2011).

4.4.2 The Social Welfare Department: The Department’s role includes the facilitating of allowance payments to families, together with care and protection, particularly, the care and protection of children and juveniles. It also makes recommendations in the best interests of children in the adoption and family court proceedings. As part of the family court and protection proceedings counselling services are also provided to children and young people.

4.4.3 The Ministry of Education: Through donor agencies, the Secretariat of the Fiji National Commission and an Advisory Council, MOE is able to enhance the quality of education to children in Fiji. The following, according to the Fiji Ministry of Education (2009a) elaborates on this:

1. **The European Union (EU) and the Fiji Education Sector Program (FESP).** The EU fully funds the FESP to provide widespread and vital assistance to Fiji’s education system. The F$56,000,000 program was signed by the EU and the Fiji Government in 2005 and focused on five key result areas. These were: (1) improving schools’ infrastructures and facilities; (2) increasing the capacity of teachers, principals and Ministry officials; (3) quality and adequate resources and materials; (4) effective and efficient processes and mechanisms; and (5) community building through education and partnerships.

2. **FESP and the Australian Government - AusAID Initiative.** This was an AUD$25M program which assisted the MOE to deliver quality education services to children especially in disadvantaged and remote communities. The program commenced in June 2003. The FESP program was to support mechanisms that improve the relevance and flexibility of the education curriculum; the planning, management, provision and monitoring of education services; and the competence of teachers to deliver quality education to the students.

3. **The Embassy of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).** Support from the Embassy of Japan includes infrastructure development in schools and technical
cooperation. Infrastructure development for the year 2009 amounted to US$675,903. Technical operation involves: (1) a special education program; (2) a basic education program; (3) a mathematics education program; and (4) a TVET Program.

4. **Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE)**. The PRIDE project was implemented by the Institute of Education (IOE) at USP and funded by the EU and the New Zealand Agency for International Development. Various projects have been completed while others are still in process, which includes the review of the Education Act with a funding of FD$50,000. The focus of the project is to widen children and youths’ opportunities in acquiring values, knowledge and skills for active participation in the social, spiritual and cultural development in their communities and for a positive contribution in creating a sustainable future.

5. **Fiji National Commission for UNESCO**. The Secretariat of the Fiji National Commission for UNESCO functions as a unit under the MOE. Its roles are: (1) to ensure proper co-ordination and consultation between the Commission and other government ministries, institutions and agencies; (2) to properly record local and overseas sponsored projects; (3) to ensure that UNESCO programs are well executed and proper records are maintained; (4) to help in the co-ordination and organisation of UNESCO and sponsoring agencies’ projects; and (5) to organise country workshops/meetings with other ministries, institutions or agencies. The total participation program assistance approved for the year 2008–2009 under 8 projects was US$140,000.

6. **National Substance Abuse Advisory Council (NSAAC)**. Established in 1999 under MOE, the council collaborates with government ministries and NGOs to identify, examine and address problems arising out of drug and substance abuse nationwide and particularly in schools. Achievements of the Secretariat in 2009 included; (1) legislation and policy in schools; (2) education and training of teachers on drugs, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS; (3) research on school offences and the status of counseling in Fiji; (4) production and dissemination of drugs and HIV/AIDS education materials to school children, youths and the
general public; (5) NSAAC monitoring and evaluation; and (6) awareness on HIV/AIDS and substance abuse in schools.

4.4.4 Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC): Established in 1984, FWCC is a non-government organisation that offers counselling, legal, medical, and practical support to woman and children who are victims of violence (FWCC, 2011). Apart from the Centres work in addressing all forms of violence against women it also looks into the sexual harassment and abuse of children. The centre’s work with children involves counselling services for children who are survivors of physical, sexual and emotional violence countrywide.

4.4.5 Save the Children Fiji (SC): Established in the 1990s, the NGO uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children to guide its programming. SC focuses on key strategic directions in promoting the welfare of children in Fiji. The key areas of concern for Save the Children are: (1) promoting equity in education and (2) advancing children’s rights (Save the Children, 2001). Investments in children’s education involve a partnership with MOE and Fiji Early Childhood Association (FECA) in providing Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres. From 2002 to 2007, 17 ECE centres were established in the Central, Northern and Western divisions. The organisation has also joined twelve governmental institutions, three statutory bodies and three international organisations in signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Immigration Department to eradicate trafficking in persons and child trafficking in particular.

4.4.6 Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECREA): Initially called the Fiji Institute of Contextual Theology, the NGO was officially launched on 25th October, 2001. The organisation advocates on the rights of all and works with poor communities in Fiji. ECREA works with children involves a Youth Peace and Development Program that capitalises on the “creativity of youths and their openness to mutual learning, self-analysis, barrier-crossing, and re-vision to address issues of division and tension in Fiji, specifically those related to discrimination” (ECREA, 2011). The program also includes a forum that provides a safe space for young people to dialogue actively on their own experiences.
4.4.7 Foundation for the Education of Needy Children (FENC) Fiji: Officially launched in 2010, FENC is an NGO whose specific target is to help the poorest of the poor in Fiji. In particular, the support is in the education of the poorest children in the country. The organisation’s programs and activities include a database for the poorest of the poor in Fiji that is available for access to CSOs and institutions and the Child Education Support Scheme and Related Activities, which is intended to improve the status of the poorest children (FENC, 2011). The Child Education Support Scheme is an assistance given to the poorest children of primary school age (6–13 years). The Related Activities focuses on capacity building programs for families of the poorest children in order to become self-reliant and come out of poverty situations.

4.5 Poverty in Fiji

4.5.1 Rural Poverty

Poverty trends in the rural areas are similar across Fiji (Government of Fiji-UNDP, 1997). An analysis of poverty and income distribution by Narsey (2008) for both rural and urban areas found that a large share of the poor (57 per cent) live in the rural areas (Table 4.5). In addition, the condition of the poorest 30 per cent of the population was more in the Western division (38 per cent) followed by the Northern division (28 per cent) (Narsey, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fijians</th>
<th>Indo-Fijians</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Rotuman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A recent survey by the Social Welfare Department in rural Fiji (cited in Chand, 2011) found that more than 50 per cent of people who live in Ra, Ba, Cakaudrove and Macuata provinces live in poverty. The households with children and elderly accounted for the poorest group. A change in the incidence of poverty among the ethnic group in the rural areas is probably caused by movement of people into urban areas.
4.5.2 Poverty, School Drop-outs and Child labour

Child labour is often seen as a source of income for poor families. This is experienced among low income families with several children, where costs could be so overwhelming. Studies have also found links between low education and poverty in Fiji. The survey findings by Father Kevin Barr cited in Goundar (2009) suggest that almost two-thirds of student drop-outs in Fiji are due to poverty or the inability of parents to pay school costs.

Apart from poverty, there are many factors that are said to contribute to school drop-out rates in Fiji. Lal and Angi (2005) argue that the school drop-out phenomena in Fiji is due to the fact that the education system is too examination-oriented. Others argue differently (Whitehead, 1986, and Hallack, 1990).

The existence of school drop-outs and its link to child labour was also highlighted in studies conducted by ILO on the working children of Fiji (ILO, 2010b). In addition, 2008 research conducted at the Matua Program in Nabua found out that 14 per cent of participants had left school to work in order to assist the family (Government of Fiji, 2009). Every year, on an average, 3,500 children drop-out of school between classes 4 to 6 in Fiji and most of these children are used for activities that are unacceptable and harmful for their welfare (Zakaria, 2005). The engagement of children in different activities destroys their future potentials and values in life.

4.6 Background of Study Area: Vanua Levu, Fiji

4.6.1 The Physical Setting

Vanua Levu is the second largest island in Fiji of about 100 miles long and is located to the North of the largest island (Viti Levu) (Map 4.3). The island has an area of 5,556 square kilometres and is surrounded by coral reefs (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The north

30 The Matua program is an initiative of the Fiji Government to educate those who had left school early under certain circumstances and wish to continue their education (Government of Fiji, 2009).
east of the island which is about 180 square kilometres in length, is a well known peninsula called Udu Point (Wikipedia, 2011b). The Island of Vanua Levu boasts a tropical climate all throughout the year and supports sugarcane plantations on the dry Northwestern side. The Southwestern side of the island is covered with rainforest and coconut fields.

Map 4.3  Fiji’s Second Largest Island – Vanua Levu

Source: Pacific Islands Map, 2011.

A horizontal rugged mountain range divides much of the three provinces Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata. Two mountain peaks are over a thousand metres high (Mt Batini and Mt Thurston) and the main mountain ranges lie near the windward southern coast, making them much wetter. The island also has a number of rivers including the well known Dreketi River.\(^{31}\) The main town, Labasa, is located on a delta formed by three rivers (Labasa, Wailevu and Qawa).

\(^{31}\) Dreketi River is currently the deepest river in Fiji.
4.6.2 Historical Evolution of Vanua Levu

Vanua Levu was formerly known as the Sandalwood Island. The island was first sighted in 1643 by a Dutch Navigator, Abel Tasman, followed by Captain William Bligh in 1789 (Kerr et al., 1994). Apart from sandalwood trading, whaling and beach-de-mer also thrived in the 1800s, until the depletion of supply.

Towards the end of the 1800s settlers from Australia and New Zealand settled in Savusavu and established coconut plantations. Successful sales in copra lasted until the great depression in 1930, which led to a collapse (Wikipedia, 2011b). In the same period, Labasa town was founded as a sugar producing centre.

Today, various shopping centres and two towns, Labasa and Savusavu, exist on Vanua Levu, both available by plane or ferry boats. The island is divided into three provinces, Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata, for administrative purposes. The island of Taveuni which has an airstrip is included in Cakaudrove province. The other airstrips are located in Waiqele and Savusavu. Waiqele is less than an hour drive from Labasa. The three provinces also comprise the Northern Division of Fiji’s education structure regarding the classification (refer to Map 4.2).

4.6.3 Population

The island of Vanua Levu has a population of about 130,000 (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Apart from the main ethnic components (Fijians and Indo-Fijians) other ethnic groups comprise the total population. The total population growth for the Northern division (Vanua Levu) between the years 1996 and 2007, as detailed in Table 4.6, experienced a negative population growth rate. The period alone experienced a 25 per cent loss of rural Indians (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

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32 Around 1805, traders began exploiting sandalwood in Bua Bay, hence the name Sandalwood Island (Wikipedia, 2011b).
33 The terms Fijians and Indo-Fijians have recently been changed to i-Taukei (Fijians) and Fijians of Indian descent (Indo-Fijians). The citations are with reference to the previous official reports of the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics.
Table 4.6  Growth of the Main Ethnic Components of the Population, Provinces in the Northern Division, 1996-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division/Province</th>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Census population 1996</th>
<th>Population change (%)</th>
<th>Census population 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>64,940</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>75,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>66,488</td>
<td>-20.5</td>
<td>52,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8,088</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
<td>7,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>139,516</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
<td>135,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>31,585</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>35,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>6,838</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>7,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5,898</td>
<td>-7.8</td>
<td>5,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44,321</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>49,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>10,992</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>11,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>3,356</td>
<td>-29.5</td>
<td>2,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,988</td>
<td>-5.4</td>
<td>14,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>22,363</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>28,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>56,294</td>
<td>-24.4</td>
<td>42,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>1,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80,207</td>
<td>-9.7</td>
<td>72,441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The substantial decrease was mainly concentrated in the sugar cane belts from the Macuata Province. The common reason was due to the out-migration of its rural Indian population whose farm leases had expired and not been renewed. For the two main ethnic groups, only the Fijian population experienced an increase in all the three provinces, in 2007 (Table 4.6).

Macuata is still a province with a predominant Indian population regardless of a large departure of Indian rural dwellers from 1996 to 2007 (Table 4.6). However, the ethnic composition of Macuata is predicted to change in the years ahead. This is because even though the Indian population comprised 70 per cent of the population in 1996, it had been reduced to 59 per cent in 2007 (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

4.6.4 Internal Migration

Losses from the three divisions through the migration of individuals and families into the urban centres have resulted in a negative population growth rate. The destinations of these out-
migrants are yet to be established. It is assumed that they have moved to the urban areas of Savusavu, Nausori or Nasinu. Even though Indian out-migrants have partially been replaced by Fijian in-migrants within the sugar cane belts of Macuata, most Fijian in-migrants have also moved to the urban areas of Labasa (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

Movement or the out-migration of people from Bua Province during the 1996-2007 intercensal period was also predominant among the Indian population (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2010). In 1996 alone, about 30 per cent left the province (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2008). It is assumed that they had moved to the urban areas of Savusavu, Nausori or Nasinu for various reasons. Contrary to Macuata, Cakaudrove like Bua is a predominantly Fijian province. Marginal population growths and movements were experience within the province during the 1996 to 2007 period (Table 4.6).

4.6.5 Economic Characteristics

The North of Vanua Levu is dry eight months of the year, enabling the island’s major crop–sugar cane–to grow well. Labasa is also one of the main centres of sugar cane production. However, the implications of the non–renewal of land leases–for the sugar cane sector as well as overall development in Macuata Province–are noteworthy.

Apart from the sugar industry, activities in tourism are also apparent. The popular centre for tourism in the North is Savusavu, which is well known for diving and yachting facilities. Savusavu is also known to farm pearls. Tourism exists as well on the island of Taveuni. In addition, copra is an important crop with production found mainly in the province of Cakaudrove. Subsistence crops such as yaqona (kava) and dalo (taro) are grown on the island in all the three provinces. Dalo production is prosperous in the Cakaudrove province, particularly on Taveuni.

Although development is slow, tourism is becoming a major industry in Vanua Levu. A current development for the Island in 2011 includes the introduction of tourist boats that stop over in Labasa for a few hours of shopping and cultural experiences. The visit by Captain Cook cruises
shows a positive response for the Look North Policy. This is highlighted to revive the economy of the North.

Savusavu town is also evolving albeit slowing. After the political turmoil in 2000 many local plantation owners have subdivided their lands to sell, which were earlier used as coconut plantations. Other developments include proposals for a new marina complex.

### 4.6.6 Educational Status in Vanua Levu

In Vanua Levu, there are a total of 157 non-government and 4 private primary schools, with no government primary school. There are, however, 2 government secondary schools, with 33 non-government (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2009a). There are 75 schools in the Cakaudrove province, with 64 primary schools, 10 secondary schools and 1 special school. Within the Macuata and Bua provinces, there are a total of 97 primary schools, 25 secondary schools and 1 special school (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2009).

An anecdote by the Foundation for the Education of Needy Children Fiji (FENC) in June, 2011 revealed that many students in the Northern Division do not attend school due to poverty (Nisha, 2011). Answers to the Foundations enquires on one of the schools in the outskirts of Labasa discovered that apart from missing school regularly, children often come to school without lunch as they survive on what their parents earn on a daily basis. Plans by the FENC committee for the upcoming year include engagement with children, visiting schools and fundraising for the needs of the poorest children.

In 1998, the USP Labasa Campus was established with operations covering the whole of Vanua Levu, Taveuni, Rabi and the outlying islands. The centre is currently located in Labasa town with 23 exam centres around Vanua Levu and Taveuni. Apart from USP, there is also FNU and other educational centres that provide secretarial and computing classes at affordable rates. Similarly, educational workshops are conducted by certain Ministries such as the Ministry for Women, which target capacity building to help unemployed individuals earn a living.
More than 1000 unemployed individuals were also educated through training programs conducted by the National Employment Centre (NEC). From 2010 to 2011, 300 students of the centre secured jobs in the tourism industry (Vosamana, 2011).

4.6.7 Schools in the Rural Area of Northern Provinces, Fiji

Some rural schools in the North are located in remote areas within the three provinces. Reaching the schools could take long hours of travelling. For these schools, access to public services is minimal and transportation costs are quite high as bus services are limited. In some cases generators are used for electricity supply. For a few villages that stand along the coastline within the Bua province a boat ride is a more preferred option to transport children and to access health centres.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a certain background of the Fiji Islands and Vanua Levu, where the study was undertaken. It discusses the historical, geographical, demographic, and economic account of Fiji and examines Vanua Levu in the same way. Further, the chapter introduces information on children’s development at the national level, with particular references to education characteristics particularly in the rural settings. This information is important in understanding the linkages for the analysis of school drop-outs and child labour in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of school drop-outs and child labour in the rural settings of Vanua Levu, Fiji. An analysis of both concepts is done at the macro and micro level. The extent and nature of both school drop-outs and child labour in Fiji are examined at the macro level. The analysis at the micro level is with particular reference to the household study findings.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part examines the nature and extent of school drop-outs and child labour in Fiji. The findings of certain organisations whose efforts brought to light the concept of school drop-outs and child labour in Fiji are highlighted. The second part is the survey analysis of the three provinces under study. It clearly validates the differences in findings from the three provinces and captures the respondents’ experiences under study.

5.2 School Drop-outs and Child Labour in Fiji

5.2.1 School Drop-outs

The concept of school drop-outs in Fiji is brought to light through the findings and efforts of certain individuals and organisations. The school based education survey by ILO in 2009 confirmed that about 15 per cent of Fiji’s children do not survive the eight years of primary school education and an even lesser percentage make it to the final year in Form 7 (ILO, 2010b). Figure 5.1 illustrates the education status of children by division from a total number of 588 children under study by ILO in 2009. About 438 (i.e 74 per cent) attended school in 2009, of which 150 (i.e about 34 per cent) dropped out (Figure 5.1).
The incidence of dropping out of school was higher in the Western division (59 per cent), followed by Northern (46 per cent) and Central (21 per cent) division. In other words, the level of schooling children attained was better in the Central division than in the Northern and the Western divisions (Figure 5.2).

In Fiji, the enrolment patterns in primary level indicate rapid declining trends, which signify that the problem of school drop-outs remains a concern. In 2011, The Foundation for the Education of Needy Children Fiji (FENC) reported that most parents are still struggling to pay school fees as their children drop-out of school (FENC, 2011). The number increases at the secondary level, with drop-out rates higher among boys.
5.2.2 Survival Rate

Table 5.1 illustrates the survival rate of a class one cohort in 1994 until the seventh form in 2006. From a total 100 per cent enrolment at Grade 1, the number declines to a mere 17 per cent at Form 7 level. The changes in percentage signify that most students drop-out at the point of entry to secondary level, at the end of form 4 and—the greatest fall—at the completion of form 6.

Table 5.1 Percentage of Survival Rate for Fiji Students from 1994 to 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Fm 3</th>
<th>Fm 4</th>
<th>Fm 5</th>
<th>Fm 6</th>
<th>Fm 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The survival rate of Fiji’s children as stated by the Ministry of Education in 2008 is similar to that in other developing nations even though Fiji had a head-start in the 1970s. In statistical terms Singh (2008a:1) stated that:

*Around 15% of Fiji’s children do not survive the full eight years of their primary education. Of those who enrolled in form three in 2003, only 78.5% reached form six. For those who started form three in 2004, only 74.9% reached form six in 2007. On average about 74.9% of those who start secondary education in Fiji get to form six and lesser percentage make it form seven.*

The urban and rural educational divide remains wide in Fiji. Chandra and Lewai (2005) found that more rural Fijian boys aged 14–17 were not attending school compared to urban Fijian boys. Between 1999 to 2002, SPC (cited in ADB, 2006) reported that enrolment ratios for both secondary and tertiary education in rural areas were much lower for both males and females in comparison to the urban areas.
Within rural agricultural communities children provide seasonal labour on farms when needed and to some extent leave school completely (ILO, 2010b). Activities include harvesting, vegetable farming, tending livestock, collecting firewood, cooking, washing and cleaning. The study also found that the school drop-out number was higher in the age group of 15 to 17 then in younger age groups.

A poignant feature of girls’ dropping out of school in Fiji as revealed by Shamima Ali (2006) is sexual abuse and the preservation of a culture of silence surrounding it. A survey by Save the Children Fiji (SC) in 2004 revealed that 26 per cent of girls who were living with their extended families while attending school dropped out because they were sexually abused by male relatives while living away from home (cited in S. Ali, 2006). In 2011, pregnancy among the girls under 15 years as revealed by the Ministry of Health is also on the rise (Whippy, 2011; Vula and Vosamana, 2011).

The annual reports of the Ministry of Education also reveal an increase in the number of children exiting the education system early from primary and secondary levels. As shown in Table 4.4, there has been a decrease in the number of students enrolled at secondary level from 2007 to 2010 compared to the enrolment rate at primary level.

5.2.3 Child Labour in Fiji

In Fiji, children below the age of 15 should be at school full-time and child labour is illegal. In 2009, ILO conducted five baseline surveys regarding child labour in Fiji. The studies were carried out through informal settlements, selected schools, rural agricultural communities, street children and commercial sex workers. Conclusions from the surveys published a year later confirmed the existence of child labour and children’s exploitation in the country (ILO, 2010b).

Child labour activities in rural agricultural communities do not exempt those in the younger age groups. A study conducted on the tobacco industry found that 2 per cent of farm children in the tobacco growing areas miss school on a regular basis to work on the farm while 18 per cent miss
school occasionally during busy times (Farm Consultancy, 2004). In addition, many rural Class 8 school drop-outs are engaged in subsistence activities.

Even though tobacco farming in Fiji is on a limited scale some of the features that contravened international conventions indicating worst forms of child labour are children having to work with hazardous chemicals and heavy equipment. Within the sugar industry, activities connected with the sugar cane harvest take up a significant part of the year and a large proportion of the persons involved in the harvest consists of family labour of all ages.

I. Ali (2007) questioned the necessity of child labour in poor families. Parents, he asserts, are compelled to send children to work because their labours are also necessary for survival. The extent of poverty in the Northern division in Fiji as revealed by the Foundation for the Education of Needy Children (FENC) leads to many children missing out on a number of days from school on a weekly basis (Nisha, 2011).

Apart from the censuses, labour force surveys are also conducted in Fiji using the International Classification of Labour Force Statisticians (ICLS).\textsuperscript{34} The labour force questioning of all persons age 10 and over in 2007 was to capture the general belief that child labour was on the increase. It is quite a common sight to see young children under the age of 15 years at work in the informal sector, for example, as shoeshine boys, wheelbarrow boys and bottle collectors in urban areas in Fiji.

\textbf{5.3 Survey Analysis of School Drop-outs and Child Labour}

The concept of child labour is an area with lack of awareness and unusual information given the lack of understanding among most individuals. Children in the rural areas of Fiji drop-out out of schools to work and help support their families. The findings of the present survey from the

\textsuperscript{34} This classification was introduced in 1982, asking labour force questions of all persons 15 years and over. The agreed age cut-off point of 10 in 2007 was to verify the existence of child labour in the country (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2009).
three provinces under study in Vanua Levu reveal that children are leaving school early to work as a result of many interrelated factors.

All of the working children interviewed were of Fijian decent (i-Taukei), and were between the age range from 11 to 17 years. A total of about 48 per cent represented Cakaudrove, 23 per cent from Bua and 30 per cent from Macuata.

5.3.1 Education Status of Working Children

5.3.1.1 Number of Working Children who had Attended School

Figure, 5.3 shows the education status of working children. The study noted that out of the sample of 40 Vanua Levu child workers interviewed, about 98 per cent had attended school while 2 per cent never attended school (Figure 5.3). All of the respondents had left school entirely and were neither enrolled in any other form of education.

**Figure 5.3 School Attendance of Working Children**

![School Attendance Chart](chart)

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

5.3.1.2 School Attendance by Gender and Province

Figure 5.4 illustrates the percentage of males and females who had attended school by province. Across the whole sample, just under 70 per cent of the male drop-outs had attended school. Of Cakaudrove male drop-out respondents, 78 per cent had had at least some schooling; for Bua male respondents, 67 per cent; while for Macuata, the figure was only 54 per cent. For female
drop-out respondents, the CBM provincial figures were 22 per cent, 33 per cent and 42 per cent respectively. The implication that formal schooling is considered less important for females is difficult to miss.

**Figure 5.4 School Drop-outs by Gender in Rural Vanua Levu**

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

*The number of sample represents only those who had attended school.

### 5.3.1.3 Level of Schooling

An investigation into the level of schooling attained by the school drop-outs revealed that a total of 59 per cent of males had completed primary level compared to 67 per cent of females (Table 5.2). The percentage of males who reached secondary level education on the other hand, was higher than females with 41 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. Findings from the villages in Cakaudrove and Bua noted no females reached secondary level (Table 5.2).
Table 5.2  Level of Schooling Attained Among the Working Children by Gender and Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of Sample n=39*</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Level of schooling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male n=27</td>
<td>Female n=12</td>
<td>Primary Male (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>59.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

* The number of sample represents only those who had attended school.

The findings revealed that the level of schooling received for males is far better compared to the females (Figure 5.5). While the level of schooling among the females is higher at primary level compared to males, this lead decreases sharply at secondary level, although the percentage of females who had reached the secondary level of education was a high 80 per cent for the small Macuata sample group of 5 girls.

Figure 5.5 Level of Schooling for Each Province by Gender

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

The study found that a significant contributing factor for girls leaving school early was teenage pregnancy. In June 2011, the media reported seven cases of primary school students aged
between 11 and 14 years dropping out of school because of teenage pregnancy in Cakaudrove province (Vula, 2011).

5.3.1.4 School Drop-outs Response on Parental Support

From the working children’s interviews the study found that most of the parents (74 per cent) supported their children for schooling (Table 5.3). However, the study found that lack of income, for the majority of parents, led to their children dropping out of school early. A total of about 26 per cent of school drop-outs responded they had received little or no parental support while attending school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of sample n=39</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

5.3.1.5 Modes of Travelling to School in Rural Vanua Levu

The school drop-outs were also questioned on their means of travelling to school, with a time reference regarding the distance to find out whether this affected their school attendance. In rural Vanua Levu as a whole, the majority of the children (46 per cent) responded that they walk to school. This is also true in the case of villages in Bua and Macuata. In the case of Cakaudrove, a total of 50 per cent travelled by bus and 44 per cent walked (Figure5.6). The time taken to reach school varied given the different locations of the villages. The walking distance to reach home after school was approximately thirty minutes to one hour for the farthest settlement.
Children in the Bua villages, which include Koroinasolo, Bua, Dalomo and Tiliva, took much less time to reach their classrooms as the schools are located adjacent to these villages. A total of around 44 per cent travelled by bus to attend school elsewhere. However, a rather depressing feature the study found was the longer distance children had to travel when they needed medical attention.

The study found that the working children in the Macuata province were the most disadvantaged. A total of 42 per cent walked to school daily (Figure 5.6). For example, the children of Nasuva and Nakavika villages walked using bush tracks for one hour or more to reach school with the same time frame of walking back to their villages after school (Interview by researcher, 2011). Children from these villages also cross rivers to reach schools which can not be accessed when there is a flood.

During the survey the researcher found out that with no access to bus services, their only option was to wake up early in the morning to get ready for school and leave home around 6 o’clock. Such experience is hard, tiring and leaves little time for children for their school work. With some parents putting up their children as boarders, others argue that children are still too young at the age of six to look after themselves, especially when it comes to doing their own laundry.

**Figure 5.6 Mode of Travel to School by Province**

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.
The use of carriers to transport children to school was common in Macuata. Nearly one-third children responded that they used carriers to reach schools. The study also observed, many parents set up of temporary settlements closer to school to accommodate the younger children to reduce travel distance they had to walk every morning and back home.

Discussions with the parents of working children in Dogotuki and the Head teacher of Vitina primary school revealed that children who live around cane farming areas also use tramlines for fast access to school (Plate 5.1). Farther inland students were also transported by boats during high tides as bus services are not very efficient due to road conditions.

**Photograph 5.1 Modes and Ways of Reaching School**


### 5.3.1.6 Number of School Days Attended

The number of school days attended by children varied in all the provinces. Interestingly, all the school drop-outs interviewed in Cakaudrove attended the full five days a week. The responses from the school drop-outs in Bua on the number of days attended was positive as schools are within a walking distance and within the village boundaries. In contrast, working children in Macuata attending on fewer days while they were schooling.

The study found some of the factors that caused children to miss school sometimes include: (1) the distance one had to travel to get to school; (2) the negative attitude of teachers when children arrive late; (3) to avoid punishment for not doing homework; (4) lack of money to pay for bus fare; (5) no lunch prepared; and (6) river floods.
5.3.1.7 Time Spent on School Work on a Daily Basis

A concern the study found was the amount of time spent on studies and school work given from school. In comparing the time devoted to studies between males and females, the study noted a wide disparity between the two genders (Table 5.4). The males reported they had more time available to do their studies.

Of the total eighteen school drop-outs who had attended school in Cakaudrove, around 93 per cent of males and 75 per cent of females responded they spent more than an hour each day to complete their homework and studies (Table 5.4). While around 67 per cent males professed they were given ample time to study between one to three hours, 33 per cent of females responded they spent thirty minutes to 1 hour and another 67 per cent spent less than 30 minutes. Positive responses were gathered from Macuata regarding the time females spent on school work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of Sample n=39*</th>
<th>Less than 30 minutes</th>
<th>30 minutes to 1hr</th>
<th>1hr to 3hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>Female (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.
* The number in the sample represents only those who had attended school.

5.3.1.8 School Performance of the Working Children

Table 5.5 shows the school drop-outs’ performance while they were attending school. Overall, 59 per cent responded they were doing well, another 31 per cent said satisfactory and the remaining 10 per cent reported poor performance.
Table 5.5 Working Children’s Performance While Schooling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of Sample n=39*</th>
<th>Good (%)</th>
<th>Poor (%)</th>
<th>Satisfactory (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>59.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

* The sample represents only those who had attended school

5.3.2 School Environment

The working children were also asked whether their schools had stimulating environments to encourage learning. A total of 72 per cent responded their schools had a good environment while 28 per cent said no (Table 5.6). A high proportion (nearly 67 per cent) from Bua Province said the environment to be bad. Some of the reasons why children said the school environment was bad include: (1) teachers’ harsh attitude; (2) the lack of facilities; (3) uninteresting and insulting teachers; and (4) corporal punishments.

Table 5.6 Working Children’s Response Regarding School Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of Sample n=39</th>
<th>Response on whether school had a good environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>71.8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

5.3.2.1 Attitudes of Teachers in School

The study findings revealed that children also leave school because of teachers’ attitudes. Figure 5.7 show that a large number of children, 54 per cent, responded that the teachers were harsh in school. On the contrary, only 21 per cent said the teachers’ attitude was good.
Table 5.7 School Drop-outs Response About Teachers Attitudes While Schooling (%)

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

Table 5.7 shows the teachers’ attitude in Cakaudrove was worse with about 67 per cent saying the attitude to be harsh. Only 6 per cent of respondents reported the teacher’s attitude to be good. On the contrary, in Macuata Schools a large proportion of respondents, about 42 per cent, said the teacher’s attitude to be good.

Table 5.7 School Drop-outs Response on Teacher’s Attitude by Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of sample n=39</th>
<th>Good (%)</th>
<th>Harsh (%)</th>
<th>Okay (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>53.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

Comments by Kare, a 16-year-old boy from Bua were noteworthy (Box 5.1).
Box 5.1 Case Study 1

The Experience of a 16-year-old Boy from Bua

Kare really wanted to remain in school. His teacher was not so nice though and he still recalled how the teacher used to give him a hiding. He used to be in the 8th position for the whole class but his grades kept dropping until he reached the 37th position. Kare never got that much support either. He had three other brothers who were still in school. His father got injured and he finally left school when he was in Form 2. He had to continue with the farming. Then his older sister who was in Form 4 got pregnant. Now he also goes fishing to earn extra money. He tried copra production but his boss always cheated him. Work usually starts at 7 am and finishes at 6 pm. He used to receive $7 a day when he started then it got worse so he left. For now, its fishing and farming with extra weaving money from his mother.

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

5.3.3 Children’s Reasons for Leaving School

The study found that in most cases children left school and went to work because of several factors. For example, a child from Macuata reported not only because of the distance he had to travel but reasons also included factors such as lack of support from parents to continue, teachers’ negative attitude because of lateness, hardship at home because either the father or mother had left and the comfort the child finds among his/her peers that have also left school.

Figure 5.8 shows the working children’s reasons for dropping out of school. Figure 5.8 reveals that poverty (financial constraint) was the common type of hardship faced by most of the children in the three provinces under study. About one-third of respondents’ revealed hardship at home was the cause of dropping out of school. This was followed by another 15 per cent who responded they had no parental support. School-related-factors, which pushed these youngsters out of school included; not coping, exam failure, distance, suspension and school environment.
The study found that in many instances parental separation and death leave a child destitute. Absence of social security and the negligence or weak support from relatives had left the child with no choice but to look for ways to earn an income of his/her own. There were also cases where children left their own families to work independently for their survival. The taste of independent life and to roam freely with other school leavers complemented other factors that prompted children to drop-out of school and join their peer groups. The other reasons for drop-out were distance from school, discouraging school environment, failure in examination and poor health.

5.3.4 Children’s Views on Education

Of the thirty-nine sample of early school leavers interviewed 97 per cent viewed education as an important aspect of life.

5.3.4.1 Reasons Given for Importance of Education

Children’s responses (Figure 5.9) on the significance of education include: improving lifestyles (15 per cent), to gain independence (33 per cent), to further knowledge for more opportunities
and prospects (15 per cent). The children responded that work opportunity (about 38 per cent) was the primary reason for which education is important. More than one-third supported this view.

**Figure 5.9 Working Children’s Response about the Importance of Education**

![Bar chart showing reasons for the importance of education.](image)

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

The context of independence revealed that most of these individuals prefer a life of their own and not to be burdened by their traditional affiliations of having to contribute to the family welfare. Of the total number of children who gave the reason to be independent, about 56 per cent were from Bua followed by Macuata (42 per cent) and Cakaudrove (16 per cent) (Table 5.8).

**Table 5.8 Working Children’s Reasons on the Importance of Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of sample n=40</th>
<th>For work opportunities (%)</th>
<th>For knowledge (%)</th>
<th>To be Independent (%)</th>
<th>To improve lifestyle (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>37.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>32.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

**5.3.5 Children’s Awareness of their Rights**

The respondents were also asked questions on the understanding of their individual rights. The study found that in all the provinces, children seemed to have a very limited understanding of
their rights. The study gathered that the social, cultural and material barriers deprive them not only of upholding their rights but also from even knowing their rights.

Photograph 5.2 A group of School Drop-out Boys (Bua)

Through group discussions with school drop-outs from Bua and the other two provinces the children came out with suggestions to help the children’s education and to help those who had dropped-out of school. These include: (1) setting up of community projects to help facilitate income so children are given more time to study; (2) workshops to educate working children’s parents on the importance of education; (3) youth workshops and projects to educate youth on the long-term implications of dropping out of school and other social problems such as substance and drug abuse; (4) government intervention to prevent children leaving school early and the issue of teenage pregnancy; and (5) community support in sending children to school.

The issue of teenage pregnancy revealed interesting responses during group discussions. Young boys in particular expressed grave concern regarding their female counterparts who get pregnant at young ages while still in school. This was the experience found in all the provinces.

The children also viewed lack of resources available to them as a cause of unsuccessful transition into adulthood, particularly for their female counterparts. Teenage pregnancy, they argue, does not help girls in their progress; they remain less educated, unhealthy, and unable to express their voice in community meetings out of shame and are less productive economically. The study
gathered the need to educate girls while still in schools on the importance of education as a means of progress not only for themselves but for their families.

5.3.6 Preference to Return to School

The findings of the survey revealed that about 83 per cent of the school drop-outs expressed their interest in and preference for staying in school. On the contrary, about 17 per cent stated they had no interest in continuing their education (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10 Working Children’s Willingness to Return to School

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

A higher proportion, i.e. around 21 per cent, of working children in Cakaudrove (Table 5.9) expressed their unwillingness to return to school. The corresponding figures for Bua and Macuata were 11 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. In other words, the highest per cent, about 92 of working children who wished to return to school, was found in Macuata followed by Bua and Cakaudrove (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9 Working Children’s Response on Willingness to Return to School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of sample n=40</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.
5.4 Types of Work\textsuperscript{35} and Working Conditions of Child Labour

The Republic of the Fiji Islands has various laws and policies that impinge on the welfare of children in the country. As noted in Chapter 4, these include the Crimes Decree (2010); Employment Relations Promulgation (2007); Health and Safety at work (Control of Hazardous Substances) Regulations (2006); Immigration Act, (2003); Juveniles Act; Family Law Act (2003) and the Penal Code (1978).

Whether this existing legislation is adequate to prevent children from leaving school early and involving themselves in exploitative activities is a challenge. This is because as the study found, one of the poignant features of contemporary life in the villages surveyed is that children still leave school to either help out to support family or look for casual employment to earn a household living. The significance of these children leaving school early lies not only in its influence on the individual but also in its effect upon the country and the economy at large.

5.4.1 Nature of Work

Figure 5.11 illustrates that of the total sample of 40 working children that were interviewed, nearly 48 per cent represented Cakaudrove, 23 per cent from Bua and 30 per cent from Macuata.

\textbf{Figure 5.11 Distribution Patterns of Child Labour Samples by Province}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure5_11.png}
\caption{Distribution Patterns of Child Labour Samples by Province}
\end{figure}

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

\textsuperscript{35} Work refers to any type of activities the respondents involve themselves in, which affect them either physically, emotionally and socially.
The gender analysis breakdown reveals that a large proportion of working children were male. Male child workers accounted for about 70 per cent (Table 5.10).

**Table 5.10 Gender of Working Children by Province in Vanua Levu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of Sample n=40</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>70.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

**5.4.1.1 Support from Parents to Work**

All respondents said their parents had approved for them to work. Permission was also given at times to work outside the family while they were still attending school. During school holidays the children’s activities included cane harvesting, casual work in other farms and helping out relatives.

**5.4.1.2 Response if Enjoying Work**

Figure 5.12 depicts working children’s response on whether they were enjoying the work in which they were involved. The figure also includes the response of children who were employed outside the family. A total of 35 per cent of working children said they were not enjoying the work while a large proportion of respondents (42.5 per cent) could not decide.

**Figure 5.12 Response of Child Labour if Enjoying Work**

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.
The highest percentage of working children (26 per cent) who responded they were enjoying their work were in the Cakaudrove sample, followed by Macuata with 25 per cent (Table 5.11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of Sample n=40</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Can’t say (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

5.4.2 Types of Child labour Activity

Figure 5.13 shows the distribution of gender and type of work the school drop-outs were involved in from the selected provinces. Domestic duty was held to be the largest category of child labour activity. About 83.3 per cent of respondents said they were involved in domestic duty and these were mainly females. This was followed by farming (39 per cent), copra production (25 per cent) and casual labourers (18 per cent). The other activities in which children were involved were fishing, shop keeping and security guards and house girl. In Figure 5.13, the distinction is made between children who work on their family farm as farming category, those who worked in other farms as casual labourers and those involved in copra production. The preponderance of these three categories is overwhelming.

The study found that children, particularly boys, who worked in other farms as casual labourers face physical exploitation. Children who worked as casual labourers were exposed not only to occupational hazards but also to exposure under the sun’s heat as well as strain from stooping to weed for hours. Agricultural related toxicity and poisons are an additional hazard. The surveys by ILO (2010b) covering the economically viable agriculture communities around Fiji confirm this fact.
5.4.2.1 Child Labour Activities Province-Wise

The following section explains child labour activities in the three provinces separately.

**Cakaudrove:** The study found that a girl’s work in Cakaudrove province as elsewhere was a matter of domestic duties and helping with light agriculture activities such as gathering produce for roadside stalls for their mothers to sell. Most children, particularly males in the Cakaudrove province, were engaged in copra production. For the school drop-outs, this type of activity is part of their livelihoods for a quick weekly income. On an average, two to three days in a week are used by children for copra production, with a target of two to three bags of copra at seven to ten dollars each. Two individual respondents from the province also mentioned they had been formally employed as a security guard and also employed as a nanny. Plate 5.3 shows teenage boys at work in copra production.
The study noted that most of the boys observed during the field work have acquired the ability to perform the prolonged tasks of copra production. While observing them at work, it was noted that the child’s capacity to do a specific task depended on his experience.

**Photograph 5.3 Copra Production (Cakaudrove)**

![Photograph 5.3 Copra Production (Cakaudrove)](image)


The lack of experience at times caused injuries to children while working. The story and comments of Adrea, a seventeen-year-old boy from Nacodreu village in Cakaudrove, are revealing (Box 5.2).
Box 5.2 Case Study 2

The Experience of a 17-year-old Boy from Cakaudrove

Adrea knew he was going to leave school one day. His older brother and sister had done it and some day it would be his turn. He wanted to do something different but nobody really helped him. He’s thinking of going to relatives in Suva. Seeing the other school leavers in the village made him relax and created for him a comfort zone. He’s not saying it’s easy living. Every week he helps in collecting coconuts, husking and removing coconut flesh. He had cut himself several times and again yesterday (04/03/2010). Removing the coconut flesh from the shell is the hardest part. He’s still getting used to it. Together with his father and brother and they usually target one or two bags of coconut flesh for a week, which earns them eight dollars per bag then. The money gained goes for the family’s food items. He normally sells taro\textsuperscript{36} on the road side for extra cash.

\textbf{Photograph 5.4 Wounded Finger covered in medicine leaves and wrapped in cloth}

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

\textbf{Bua:} Like their counterparts from the province of Cakaudrove the young people in the rural areas in the province of Bua also involve themselves in copra production. In addition, fishing and agricultural activities are also ways of gaining an income by the children, mostly by male ones. Girls, on the other hand, are subjected to household chores which, involves cooking and washing.

\textbf{Macuata:} Most of the children in the Macuata province engaged in activities such as harvesting Yaqona\textsuperscript{37} and other produce for sale in the market. It is not uncommon to find young girls engaging in agricultural work including the sorting out process of garden goods to be marketed. Together with their male counterparts they engage in work in the cane fields during the harvesting season. Other works of girl children includes cooking for the cane cutters, washing their clothes and running errands for the cane farmers. In some cases where there is lack of manpower, girls are also seen loading cane trucks for transportation to the mills.

\textsuperscript{36} Taro also called Dalo is a staple root crop used for eating.

\textsuperscript{37} Yaqona also named Kava is a plant that is used in most Fijian traditional ceremonies. Roots of the plant are usually pounded after being dried and used as a drink for most social gatherings.
A significant feature of the male children’s work is employing themselves as casual labourers in other farms for short periods of time. Both males and females were engaged in the transporting of heavy goods either by carrying on their shoulders (Plate 5.5) or using a horse borrowed from others.

**Photograph 5.5 Children Carrying Sacks of Breadfruit (Macuata)**

![Children Carrying Sacks of Breadfruit](image)

Source: Photo by Researcher, 2010.

### 5.4.3 Domestic Duties for Girls

It is not difficult in light of the facts mentioned to understand the exceptionally heavy work done by girls. Domestic service, which might have provided extra work for them, is never really popular among most of these girls, who very much prefer to continue their education if given the chance to do so. Although the conditions and domestic work girls do at home may be far better in some respects than for those who work outside their homes, incentives given to them in the form of money and kind are relatively low. The study found that girls who were asked to help other family members received payment in kind, such as clothes and food.

The experiences of a number of girl children who suffer hardship after leaving school are worth recording. The case study mentioned in Box 5.3 sheds some light on this.
Box 5.3 Case Study 3

The Experience of a 16-year-old Girl from Macuata

Miri left school because her parents couldn’t really afford it. Now she get sent to different houses all the time when any of the relatives’ wives or in-laws give birth. Babysitting was okay but the hardest part was having to scrub the napkins. This she said takes a while. When there is no newborn in the family she cooked for all the meals for the whole day because her mother usually accompanied her father to the garden. Her mother sells from Seaqaqa Depot on Saturdays. Her father, who is over 50 years of age, welcomes payment in kind and even the smallest payment in cash from relatives. There were five of children altogether. At the time of interview, none of them was going to school. There were two other teenage boys living with them. In a way, she said that she ‘had shared in the maintenance of my family’. She complained that no one cared. What she did was like a task she had been assigned to do since she left school. She’s given money about $1 to $2 when she asks for it but complains and that it would be better to earn money for her own use.

Photograph 5.6 Domestic Duties for Rural Girls

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

The study found that for most of the girls, low value is accorded to the domestic and household work they do. Such activities are seen as tasks that girls should do without monetary compensation. One common characteristic of girl child workers is their concentration in unskilled daily routine work which offers little opportunity for more productive work openings.

5.4.4 Working Children’s Siblings

Questions were asked to the parents regarding the daily duties of other siblings in the family who are still attending school. It was found that children involve themselves in household daily chores after school in rural areas. All responded positively and admitted that children were being sent after school to gather firewood, root crops, vegetables from the farms, and feeding the livestock. Girls’ activities usually involved washing, cooking and cleaning of the house if both parents are out in the field for the whole day. In most cases, children are left to find their own time to study when all the chores are completed.
5.4.5 Treatment from Employers

Figure 5.14 elicits the children who are employed outside their family and the treatment they get from their employers. This captured children who were involved in activities such as casual employment by fishermen, copra producers, resort employers and as security, house girl, and casual labourers in other farms.

Figure 5.14 Response of Good Treatment from Employers by Province

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.
* The number of sample represents children who worked outside their home.

About 71 per cent of child workers responded that they were not treated well by their employers. Province-wise such figures were 83 per cent for Bua, 71 per cent for Macuata and 64 per cent for Cakaudrove. However, 29 per cent of children responded that they were treated well by their employers.

5.5 Working Hours and Wages

5.5.1 Working Children’s Daily Hour of Work

Figure 5.15 reveals that female workers work longer hours compared to their male counterparts. On an average, girls spend almost twice as many hours of work compared to boys. In all the villages surveyed, girls spent more than 11 hours daily to complete their work. Boys on the
other hand spent an average of 7 hours. The highest number of daily working hours for females was experienced in Bua with 12 hours and 8 hours for males. The corresponding figures for Cakaudrove were 11 hours for females and 5 hours for males and for Macuata 11 hours for females and 8 hours for males (Figure 5.15).

**Figure 5.15 Daily Hours of Work by Gender and Province**

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

### 5.5.2 Weekly Wages of Child Labour

The study found that all of the children interviewed have at a very young age formed an integral part of the household economy. They have been contributing individually to the family’s income by helping their parents.

#### 5.5.2.1 Gender inequity in wages of child labour

The study found that a wide gender inequity existed in terms of wages. Females worked longer hours compared to males but they were paid a lesser amount in monetary terms (Figure 5.16). The ratio in wage differentials between female: male child workers in Vanua Levu as a whole was 1: 4.6. In other words, male child worker received 4.6 times higher weekly wages than that of females. The gender inequity ratio value was highest in Macuata (1: 6.7) followed by Bua (1: 5.2) and Cakaudrove (1: 2.8).
An average of $32.32 was paid to males per week while females received a meagre of $7.42. This was experienced in all the villages under study in rural Vuni Levu. The highest amount of wages given to a male child worker was in Bua. The weekly average wage around was $53.00 for males compared to $10 for females. This was followed by Macuata with an average of around $43.00 a week for males with Cakaudrove province accounting for the least wage of $19.00. This was still higher than the total amount received by females in all the provinces.

### Figure 5.16 Weekly Wages (FJDS) by Gender and Province

![Figure 5.16 Weekly Wages (FJDS) by Gender and Province](image)

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

Some evidence of children who are leaving school to participate in their home based business was found in Bua and Macuata. For example, a girl from Vitina village in Macuata left school early to run their family canteen because other family members were involved in other activities. She revealed that she was receiving $40 a fortnight in a form of wages. Similarly in Bua village, a sixteen-year-old boy left school to join his two brothers on their animal farm and received an average of $70 a week. Boys who did casual work in agriculture in other farms particularly in the Macuata province received wages of between $40 and $60.

### 5.5.3 Other Mode of Payment

Of the total 40 respondents only 9 children revealed they received payment in kind in addition to their pay. Those who received in kind were mostly females. Those who received assistance in kind constitute 89 per cent of females and 11 per cent of males (Figure 5.17). The assistance in
kind included incentives in terms of clothes (old and new), food (root crops and canned foods) as well as a trip to town from relatives who sought their help.

**Figure 5.17 Payment in Kind to Working Children by Gender**

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

* The number of sample represents children who at times were paid in kind.

### 5.5.4 Problems of Working Children and the Impacts on their Lives

Of the total 35 per cent of working children who responded they were not enjoying the work, the gross exploitation, especially of male child workers was found among those who were employed in the farms as casual labourers. Their work included menial, semi-skilled and casual or short-term work.

For most school drop-outs in Macuata who were employed as casual labourers in a Yaqona plantation, the standard allowance of forty to sixty dollars was given by the farm owner only when a whole field of Yaqona plantation was cleared. Boys either helped their parents to complete a whole field as a target or worked with other individuals. The experience was the same in the Cakaudrove and Bua provinces, particularly in copra production. The study found that in some cases children strained themselves and used more energy to finish a given task at hand in the desire to earn quick cash. They often forget how this would affect them physically or their health later on in life.
For the 83 per cent of the working girls, who are involved in domestic duties, the capacity for a holistic development can not be strengthened as they try to cope with everyday chores, which for most girls, require a great effort.

5.6 Survey Analysis of Working Children’s Parents’ Responses

To gauge a comprehensive understanding of why children drop-out of school early in the rural settings, the survey also examined the working children’s family background in terms of their educational status, occupation earnings and their perceptions regarding their ward’s education and work and their views on their children dropping out of school.

5.6.1 Household Demography

The findings of the study revealed that around 90 per cent of the households were large extended families. The highest number of people living in a household was found in the province of Macuata, with sixteen people living in one household. This was followed by Cakaudrove with eleven and Bua with ten individuals living together. The lowest number of people living in a household was three.

5.6.1.1 Child Labors’ Parental Status

From the total number of parents interviewed nearly 85 per cent of the parents of the school drop-out are both alive, another 13 per cent were single parents and 3 per cent of respondents had both parents deceased (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12 Status of Parents of Working Children in Rural Vanua Levu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of sample n=40*</th>
<th>Both alive</th>
<th>Both deceased</th>
<th>Mother alive</th>
<th>Father alive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.
* The number of sample represents only the parents and guardians who were consulted during the study.
5.6.1.2 Parents’ Level of Schooling

An attempt was made to find out what relationship existed between the educational level of parents and the level of schooling of their wards. There is a close link between parental education and the incidence of child labour. Generally, the higher the parental education level, the lower the incidence of child labour.

The study found that the majority of the parents (around 62 per cent) had primary level education and 37 per cent reached secondary level of education (Figure 5.18). In the Cakaudrove province, 42 per cent of parents entered secondary level and 58 per cent had primary education. In contrast, in Bua province only 18 per cent of parents had some secondary education, though a majority (about 82 per cent) had primary education (Figure 5.5).

In contrast, Figure 5.18 illustrates that a large proportion of parents of working children in Macuata reached secondary level education compared to the other two provinces. In Macuata 44 per cent of parents had some secondary schooling, 52 per cent had education up to primary level and 4 per cent had no education.

**Figure 5.18 Parents Level of Education**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of parents' level of education across Cakaudrove, Bua, and Macuata provinces.]

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.
* The number of sample captures all parents of working children who are still alive.
5.6.2 Household Economy

5.6.2.1 Parents Occupation

The study found that the number of adults working in an average family is two to three. The majority of respondents (41 per cent) said they were involved in agriculture. Most of the individuals who involved themselves in agriculture worked mainly on the family land. Another 29 per cent, particularly women, were engaged in domestic duties, with around 16 per cent involved also in weaving activity. Around 6 per cent of parents go fishing and 8 per cent are employed in the formal sector (Figure 5.19).

Figure 5.19 Occupations of Parents of Working Children in Rural Vanua Levu

![Occupations of Parents of Working Children in Rural Vanua Levu](image)

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

* The number of sample includes all parents that live together who are able to work as well as single parents and guardians.

** Weaving includes largely mats and baskets.

Figure 5.20 shows the occupation of parents of child labour province-wise. In Macuata province 53 per cent of sample parents were involved in farming. The corresponding figures for Bua and Cakaudrove were 44 per cent and 25 per cent. The figures revealed that majority of parents from Macuata were occupied with farming while 20 per cent were formally employed and received a salary.
Parents from Bua on the other hand were predominantly engaged in weaving and fishing. The parents of working children in Cakaudrove were involved in farming, weaving and employment in the formal sector. The study noted that even though the women were mainly involved with domestic duties, the majority of them also accompanied their husbands to the farm.

Figure 5.20 Occupation of Parents of Child Labour by Province

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

5.6.2.2 Household Weekly Earnings

The study found that weekly earnings of working children’s parents vary greatly from one family to another and from one province to another. Table 5.13 shows an average weekly wages for a family in the three provinces in rural Vanua Levu.

Table 5.13 Weekly Wages for the Family of Working Children in Rural Vanua Levu by Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of Sample n=40</th>
<th>Average weekly wages* of family (F$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>50.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>156.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>102.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>90.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

* The wages include wages of all those working in a family in a week.
An average of F$90 was earned per family in a week in the Vanua Levu area. Parents in Bua earned the highest, around $157, followed by Macuata and Cakaudrove. Cakaudrove had the least earnings of around $51 dollars for a family in a week (Table 5.13). Weekly wages for parents were often found highest among those who own some form of livestock farming. The study noted that household income was contributed by individuals in a family notably the father, mother and son. The daughter’s contributions are reflected in how she managed the household chores and helped out whenever her labour was needed.

5.6.2.3 Government’s Social Welfare Assistance

The study also posed questions to parents on whether they were receiving any form of social welfare assistance from government or any other organisation. Only 10 per cent of respondents mentioned they were receiving social welfare assistance from the Department of Social Welfare. In other words a vast majority (90 per cent) did not receive any welfare assistance from government.

Figure 5.21 Social Welfare Assistance Recipients of Working Children’s Parents in Rural Vanua Levu

Of the small total of parents who reported receiving government’s social welfare assistance, nearly 11 per cent each were from Cakaudrove and Bua and 8 per cent from Macuata (Table 5.14).
Table 5.14 Social Welfare Assistance of Recipient Parents by Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of sample n=40</th>
<th>Assistance received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.

5.6.3 Parents’ Reasons for Sending Children to Work

The study found that even though parents eagerly enrol their children in the first year of schooling, not all of them can afford to continue sending them to school due to the family’s financial hardship.

The reasons in Figure 5.22 as gathered from the parents’ interview revealed that about 63 per cent are facing economic hardships which leave no alternative for them but to send their children to work. Most parents responded that financial constraint is a harsh reality in rural areas.

Figure 5.22 Parents’ Reasons for Sending Children to Work

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.
Given this, the study noted that 43 per cent of parents sent their children to work for extra money and to help support the family. Another 15 per cent of parents stated they were themselves too old to continue the intensive labour necessary for running the farm. Another 18 per cent of parents revealed they were facing the hardships of being single parents so they preferred their children to work. The study also noted that 18 per cent of children were culturally obliged to contribute when they were requested to help. Other reasons include, village obligations, parental disability, extra labour in the farm, unproductiveness of having a child in school and to help in family business (Figure 5.22).

5.6.4 Parents’ Awareness of Physical Hazards to Child Labour

The study revealed a general lack of awareness within the village communities under study on the nature of child labour itself. All the parents were aware of the physical hazard of their working children. The study noted that even though parents were receptive in discussing the physical impact of work on children, the questions raised regarding the social, emotional and educational impact were evasively answered. Further, the study noted a cultural acceptance that children should work to help their families after school hours.

5.6.5 Parents’ Response on Whether Work Affected Children’s Schooling

The parents were also asked whether their children’s performance while schooling was affected as they engage them at times with family work. A majority (98 per cent) responded that their children’s performance in school was affected. This was reflected in the children’s grade for each subsequent school term.

5.6.5.1 School Environment in Rural Vanua Levu

The study found that school environment was not conducive for the enhancement of children’s interest to be retained in the schools. As mentioned earlier, in rural settings poor access to school, greater distance between home and school, road conditions and lack of infrastructure greatly affect the school drop-outs.
5.6.5.2 Parents’ Views Regarding the School Environment

To gauge a more comprehensive understanding on other factors that cause children to leave school early and work, questions were raised to parents regarding the teaching and learning environments in schools. Of the 40 respondents, about half said the school environment in rural Vanua Levu was not conducive to formal school learning. A total of 21 per cent who responded negatively were from the province of Cakaudrove, 67 per cent were from Bua and 83 per cent from Macuata (Primary research by Researcher, 2010).

5.6.5.3 Parents’ Perceptions on Facilities of Rural Schools in Vanua Levu.

Table 5.15 shows a total of 30 per cent of parents in their response complained that facilities in Vanua Levu schools are poor or absent. Another 30 per cent said the school infrastructure was old. To quote a parent’s response from Macuata:

“some of the classrooms have weathered. The toads enter in the night and soil the floors and the children suffer in the morning cleaning up. It is better they stay home and clean up” (Primary research by Researcher, 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of sample n=20*</th>
<th>Poor and lack of facilities (%)</th>
<th>Lack of electricity and water (%)</th>
<th>Old infrastructure (%)</th>
<th>Lack of public service (%)</th>
<th>Poor road conditions (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bua</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary research by Researcher, 2010.
* The number of sample represents only those who responded negatively.

Another 20 per cent of respondents complained about the lack of public services and 15 per cent reported the issue of poor road conditions. The study found that lack of electricity and water supply is also a setback in some schools under study.
The Cakaudrove province was worse in terms of the availability of infrastructure and facilities compared to the other two provinces. Poor road conditions and lack of public services and old infrastructure were the main concerns in Bua and Macuata province (Table 5.15).

5.6.5.4 Parents’ Views on Education

Education is highly regarded by most of the parents. What is gathered from the study is that a major gap exists in public policy regarding education and its integration into rural communities. According to the parents’ views students’ education draws from the family resources and family network. The findings reveal that in all the rural communities of Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata there is no support from government for young people to help them make their way through the education system until they enter the workforce.

The lack of outside support also falls on the failure to build on initial help at primary level for those that really need help in sending their children to school, particularly in very remote areas. A poignant feature of children dropping out of school at an early age was also attributed to financial support being needed for other siblings in the family too.

In other cases children stay at home without attending school for a period because of financial constraints and this is experienced mainly in large extended families. For example, the study found a village in Macuata had a family of five children who were staying at home and not attending school. The eldest had left school at Form four because of financial hardship. In addition, two teenage relatives who had left school early were living with them.

5.6.5.5 Parents’ Response on why Education is Important

The parents’ response regarding the importance of education falls on three main categories (Figure 5.23). The first and the highest of all reasoning was for the child’s own benefit, which accounted for about one-third of the total response. Another 25 per cent responded for enhancing children’s knowledge, and 20 per cent voiced the belief that education will increase work opportunity (Figure 5.23).
5.6.5.6 Parents’ Suggestions Regarding School Dropouts

The parents’ suggestive ways to help children who had dropped out of school include: (1) setting up of youth projects to help facilitate income; (2) workshops to educate the community on the importance of education and youth related problems; (3) government’s intervention to prevent children leaving school early; and (4) community support in sending all children to school.

Photograph 5.7 School Drop-outs and Parents (Cakaudrove and Bua)

5.7 Linkages between Poverty, School Drop-outs and Child Labour in the Rural Settings in Vanua Levu

The study identified a critical linkage between poverty, school drop-out and child labour in rural Vanua Levu. The predominant push factor for a child to leave school and enter into any economic activity was poverty and family hardship. In most of the cases children fail to attend school due to parents’ inability to meet the cost of education.

Though poverty is seen as a major cause of child labour, family breakdown or special casualty within the family plunges a household into destitution, which precipitates a child’s entry into work for cash. In addition, a lack of inadequacy of schooling in some parents’ and teachers’ attitudes are contributing factors in the increasing incidence of school drop-outs and child labour. The parent’s and teacher’s attitudes also deter children’s motivation to attend school on a regular basis. In some cases, the absence of the father in the family due to death or separation causes the eldest child to leave school early and find means of supporting family members, especially younger siblings.

The connections with rural poverty and family distress were cited as major factors in most of the households. The other factors include disablement of parent or other situations such as teenage pregnancy. In traditional rural settings, this is handled within the extended family or networks of kin. Where there is no support, the alternative for the child is to leave school and get recruited into some form of employment. This usually comes about through the help of a friend or a relative.

Most of the villagers have no access to basic services such as health services and in some cases take few hours to reach health centres either by foot or other means of transport. The remoteness of some villages is a hindrance to some children to continue schooling. Some children had echoed that they began their working lives at an early age as a helper in the farm as well as at home. Figure 5.24 presents the linkages of poverty, school drop-outs and child labour through critical social-cultural and economic factors in the study area.
The primary impetus the study found is meeting the family’s need, or cultural perception of role of children in a family. Traditionally, boys are obliged to help the family through farm work. Girls on the other hand are obliged to help through domestic duties. Alternative economic activities for most of these young people may be non-existent. They may be confined to helping parents on their farm, out at fishing, for which they receive little or no financial reward. In this connection, the failure itself of investing in children entrenches poverty for most of these households as children do not progress in education and finding useful employment.
5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an analysis of school drop-outs and child labour in the rural settings of Vanua Levu through the three provinces. It has identified the various constraints faced by the households. The findings have also focused on the problems of working children and the impacts on their lives. The attitudes of both the children and parents towards education were discussed.

Overall, the varied reasons of children leaving school early and involving themselves in various work to help support their families signified the linkage between school drop-outs and child labour in relation to child labour.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

Poverty, school drop-outs and child labour are inextricably linked. Poverty at the household level is embedded within the context of the unequal division of social and economic space accompanied by deteriorating economic conditions. Children leaving school early are entrenched within the economic stress of individuals accompanied by standards of personal responsibility towards other family members. This is intensified with the breakdown of a family unit. Consequently, the concept of child labour is sustained when a child’s work provides an important supplement to the incomes of poor and dysfunctional families.

The central objective of the study was to bring out the link between school drop-outs and child labour in the rural settings of Vanua Levu in Fiji. The challenge for the study was to find answers to key research questions such as: the factors that cause children to leave school and work, the impacts on their lives, the attitudes of parents towards their children’s dropping out from school and work, whether rural schools have stimulating teaching and learning environments for children and what needs to be done to reduce problems that cause children to drop-out of school and work.

The study looked into the social, economic, cultural, physical and political aspects of child labour. The context of both the macro and micro levels were analysed. The concept of child labour at a global level was the focus of study at the macro level. The household survey was a focus at the micro level. It examined the social and economic factors, the characteristics and attitudes of respondents under study regarding education, the economic activities of parents/guardians and especially the children and the impacts on their lives. The study also looked into the existence of protection mechanisms targeted at children at the global level as well as in Fiji.
Fiji’s education system and infrastructure was also examined in the study as well as an analysis on the government’s expenditure on education. Educational developments in the study area together with an overview of rural education characteristics were also discussed.

A triangulation approach using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies was adopted when doing the research. The study was, however, more oriented towards a qualitative methodology. The quantitative approach was designed to give numerical results reported through tables and graphs in the findings. The qualitative approach was designed to capture the impression of the individuals under study. The snowballing technique was adopted to gain further access to particular individuals needed for questioning.

Methods of obtaining data included the use of questionnaires, interviews, observations, focus group and informal discussions. The research tools were used in three provinces of Vanua Levu–Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata–covering twelve villages, and altogether a total sample of forty child workers, of which thirty–nine had dropped-out. Key informant interviews were also conducted through various individuals to acknowledge the existence of procedures, policies, laws and social protection mechanisms that promote the rights of children and their development.

6.1.1 Linkages of Theoretical Approaches to Findings

The main objectives of this study were to (a) examine the child labour in Fiji together with the extent and nature of the problem, (b) discuss the strategies that deal with the issue of school drop-out and child labour and their limitations and (c) integrate the study findings of a rural context in Fiji regarding school drop-outs and child labour and all that it encompasses.

The theoretical context within which the concept of school drop-outs and child labour had been examined shed light on the diversity of approaches, models, frameworks, conventions, policies and laws regarding children. Accordingly, consideration is given the different individuals, organisations and stakeholders involved in the study of working children in trying to address and resolve issues regarding children’s development, in particular through education.
The theory of cumulative causation appeared to surpass other approaches in contextualising child labour from earlier centuries by exploring in depth the economic and social causes of child labour. The theory incorporates social factors such as changes, the persistence of attitudes and beliefs in explaining economic growth and decline. Government intervention is integrated through equal distribution of resources and the provision of proper infrastructure.

Expansions of the theory by other writers discuss economic growth in developing countries through the growth of urban areas and the implications. A significant characteristic is the aspect of unemployment in urban areas among young individuals, which coexists with the growth of squatter settlements. Two key features of exploitative child labour come to light through parents exploiting children for material gains and firms who choose to exploit children for profit maximisation.

Concurrent to these theories is the human rights approach. This is manifested through the recognition everyone’s right to education and children’s rights in particular. The attention to education is through the commitment to achieve ‘education for all’, especially the marginalised. The importance of children’s right is given priority regarding their development. This is noted through the strategies that have evolved over the years from setting up conventions and basic frameworks to the implementation of policies and laws in different countries.

It is also evident that the practice of child labour is not confined to developing nations only but exists in all countries. From the analysis of the theoretical approaches and models it became evident that child labour is inextricably linked to poverty. Poverty in turn obstructs children from attending their full years of education and consequently, is causative in their dropping out of school.

The context of child labour in the Asia and the Pacific region found direct linkages between the issues of poverty, school drop-outs, urbanisation (rural to urban migration), unemployment and slow economic growth. Problems were manifested in the growth of urban centres through the intensification of squatter settlements, inadequate formal job opportunities and absorption in informal sector activities.
From the development point of view the findings stipulate that a country can not move forward until it gets its educational infrastructure in order in accommodating all entering and exiting the education system. Various aspects in this perspective should be considered such as providing youths with other avenues to earn a living. Rural communities in turn can better achieve their developmental goals by upgrading the quality and standards of education for their children. Consequently, the transition of youths from school to work is not so difficult given an adjustment processes.

The study found that in developing countries the transition to full-time work for youths exiting the education system can be more challenging given the context of a weak job market and can often take much longer with many opting for informal or self employment. The context of a weak job market also heightens the risk of the unemployed young resorting to violence and petty criminality. Violence as noted is related to alcohol abuse, the pressure of unemployment, cramped living conditions, child abuse and neglect.

Youth unemployment as highlighted in the study is now at a high level in most Pacific Island countries, especially in their urban centres. Job shortages may very well become intensified in the future as the supply of young workers will increase because of a growing youthful population. The most important issue gathered from the literature is whether school drop-outs in the Pacific have jobs which allow them to develop mentally and physically, enabling them to become substantial contributors to the economic wealth of the community or remain unskilled and undisciplined teenagers.

The constructive and inspired methods of bringing the concept of child labour into the public sphere include the work of international and non-government organisations. The findings from these organisations reveal that decent work is central to people’s well-being. The global social climate as noted is shaped by employment as it provides, among other things, income, while paving the way for broader social and economic development. The study found that children who do not have the opportunity to go to school grow up to be unskilled adults and remain in poorly paid work. In this context, the ‘cycle of poverty’ continues.
The perspectives of theoretical models and frameworks also highlight the complex but necessary interactions needed regarding the education policies in Fiji and non-government interventions. The roles of non-governmental organisations are essential as they provide an organisational focus for social movements. Characteristics of these organisations as gathered from this study make them particularly suited to effecting sustainable development interventions.

The study also reveals that Fiji’s social climate is influenced by the breadth and quality of the jobs. Of particular concern is the growth in unemployment, especially in the informal sector of the economy. The study also noted that young people achieving higher levels of education are finding it hard to secure formal employment when entering the labour market. This is a result of inadequate job opportunities.

Growth in urban centres cannot be underrated as the study revealed it is occurring at an accelerating rate. The growth of statistics in most of the urban centres is attributed to people moving in from the rural areas, in particular from the rural settings of Vanua Levu. Indeed, this has been growing since 1996. This as the study found leads to the burgeoning of informal and or squatter settlements in the urban sector. The implications for children are also noted. Children in such a context drop-out of school early and involve themselves in money making activities such as scrap metal and bottle collection, casual work in garages and supermarkets, sex work and as wheel barrow and shoe shining boys.

In particular, the study found that the nature and causes of child labour in Fiji are inclined more to the immediate needs of individuals at the household level. This is manifested through a number of varied reasons such as dysfunctional families, the burden of living in large extended households, daily basic needs (food, water and clothing), neglect and the wants for material things considered standard in a modern family.

The gloomy socio-economic conditions in the rural sector as the study found are associated with a poor degree of socio-economic development at both the national and household levels. The capacity of rural developments and insufficient income at the household level denote this. Some forms of government interventions and development projects only exist on a small scale and in
some places offer no support at all for the young. This lessens their progress through the education system and finding employment. Most of the young people under study are in situations of finding no other avenues but to drop-out of school completely.

6.1.2 Summary of Broad Findings

The findings of the study have brought out an integrated approach by exposing child labour and school drop-out issues within a rural context to develop an awareness, relate it to other findings within the country and compare it with child labour aspects at a global level. Most importantly, light is shone on the link between school drop-outs and child labour within various rural settings in Vanua Levu, in Fiji.

The growth and progress of Fiji owed its genesis from a period of colonialism. The influences of colonialism are still evident throughout the economy and polity, even though the country has adopted new systems regarding its administrative structures. With a history of mobility and settlement thousands of years ago, Fiji today is a multicultural society with different ethnic backgrounds. The changes in the population distribution and density can be explained through series of events. These include both international and internal migration, the political changes in the country, land issues, developments in certain areas and the prospect of environmental concerns.

The existence of child labour in Fiji is rooted in poverty. What is apparent in the findings is the link between poverty, school drop-outs and child labour within the country. Of great concern is the number of students who do not complete their full years of education in a year. At this stage, the government, non-government organisations and communities have limited capacities to address the issue. The task of policy development could also be challenging given the social and economic background of the country.

The concepts of school drop-outs and child labour can not be studied in isolation. The study found an inadequacy of formal analysis regarding working children in the rural settings in Fiji. In the context of impact on child education, the cost of dropping out of school in reality for these
individuals is that they will never create a successful pathway into adulthood unless there are accommodating interventions. For example, the study found that community stigmas towards pregnant teenagers lead to social exclusion. In some cases, such social disintegration stimulates repeated pregnancies among girls. This leads to girls remaining single mothers until adulthood.

Prescribing effective cures to eliminate the practice is fundamental as child exploitation is both a social and a moral issue. Child labour needs to be sufficiently manifested through awareness at all levels so everyone is conscious of the situation. Education at early levels and completion should also be given priority as its failure contributes substantially to other social and economic problems.

The study of school drop-outs and child labour in the rural settings of Vanua Levu found the following:

1. Children either work or leave school completely to help support the family. Out of the 40 sample of child workers interviewed, about 98 per cent had attended school while 3 per cent never attended school.

2. The evidence of the findings suggests that the pattern of consumption in the three provinces is often at the expense of children, who are obliged to make contributions whether it is in kind or money. Work for the respondents’ involved, agricultural work at the family farm, casual work in other farms, some form of formal employment, helping other relatives, helping to gather produce for the market and domestic duties.

3. Several factors compel children to leave school and work. About one-third of respondents’ reveal hardship (poverty) at home the common cause of dropping out of school. Other factors include having to travel long distances to reach school and the mode of travelling. As a whole, the majority of the children (46 per cent) in the areas under study responded that they walked to school.
Thirty-nine of the 40 in the sample were school drop-outs. Nearly 97 per cent of them viewed education to be important. Overall, 59 per cent responded they were doing well before they dropped-out. About 83 per cent of school drop-outs expressed their interest and preferences to stay in school while around 18 per cent stated they had no interest to continue their education. About 54 per cent responded that the teachers were harsh in school. Only 21 per cent said teachers’ attitudes were good. Another 15 per cent responded they had no parental support to continue schooling.

4. Around 28 per cent of working children said their school did not have a good environment while 72 per cent said it was good. The study found that girls spent little time on studies and school work compared to boys. About 67 per cent of males professed they were given ample time to study between one to three hours while 33 per cent of females responded they were only able to spend thirty minutes to 1 hour a day. The children, the study revealed, had to compromise their study time to help out in the family.

5. The study found that a crucial point where the respondents (school drop-outs) start facing challenges and difficulties is when they drop-out of school completely. The transition of adapting to the work environment is where hardship is experienced the most. This was not conducive to their full development.

6. The study found that girl child labour and teenage pregnancy were prevalent in the study areas. The total amount of work hours females spent in a day was 10 but they were paid less ($7.42) compared to males. An average of $32.32 was paid to boys in a week yet they worked only 6 hours. The majority (89 per cent) of females were paid in kind compared to 11 per cent of males. The study also captured a generational persistence of teenage pregnancy in all the three provinces.

7. From a total sample of 24 children who were employed outside their homes, about 71 per cent of child workers responded that they were not treated well by their employers. Only 29 per cent said they were treated well. The gross exploitation the research uncovered was among children who were employed in the farms as casual labourers. Children often
strained themselves and used more energy to finish a given task at hand in the desire to earn quick cash.

8. The facts of exploitation faced by these school-drop-outs are seen in the pay they receive, which is consistently lower for girls. This suggests strongly that children should receive formal education for their development and the development of their communities.

9. The majority of the surveyed households (90 per cent) under study in the rural areas of Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata province lived in large extended families. Most of the household economy involved subsistence farming (41 per cent). Others were involved in formal work, livestock farming and casual work in copra production, fishing and weaving. On an average, about F$90 was earned per family of working children in a week in the whole Vanua Levu area. Families in Bua earned the highest, around $160, while Cakaudrove had the least earnings of around $51 dollars for a family in a week. Children’s earnings also contributed to the household income.

10. The study found that the majority of the parents of the working children, around 62 per cent, had reached primary level and a total of 37 per cent had a secondary level of education. The findings reflected a relationship between the level of education of parents and the level of education for children. To note, for example, the majority (44 per cent) of parents in Macuata province had secondary schooling. A total 80 per cent of female and 57 per cent male working children from Macuata had secondary education as well. On the contrary, the level of education of both parents and working children for both Cakaudrove and Bua provinces were low. The study thus found that there is a close bearing of parental education level and incidence of school drop-outs.

11. It was found that poverty does exist in the rural areas under study. The 2008–2009 household income and expenditure survey reveals that in three provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata, more than 50 per cent of their population live in poverty. The facts of the study revealed a relationship between poverty and child labour. The incidence of poverty between the three provinces showed relatively little difference considering the
constraints parents face in supporting their families. A vast majority (90 per cent) do not receive outside assistance. Only 10 per cent of respondents mentioned they were receiving social welfare assistance from government.

12. The most common form of hardship families interviewed identified was not enough cash (63 per cent) to meet their daily needs. Around 43 per cent of parents use their children to work for extra money to help support the family. Another 15 per cent stated they were too old to do intensive labour in the farms, while 18 per cent of parents revealed they were facing the hardships of being single parents. The study also noted that 18 per cent of children were culturally obliged to contribute when they were requested to help. Other reasons for why parents sent children to work included village obligations, parental disability, extra labour in the farm, child not productive in school and to run the family business.

13. The findings of the research revealed that even though parents acknowledged the physical implications of work on children they were less aware of the psychological, educational and social effects on their children.

14. Half of the parents interviewed said the school environment in rural Vanua Levu was not conducive to learning. A total of 30 per cent of parents complained that facilities in schools are poor or non-existent. Another 30 per cent said the school infrastructure was old, 20 per cent complained about lack of public services and another 15 per cent noted the issue of poor road conditions. Cakaudrove province was worse in terms of the availability of infrastructure facilities while poor road conditions, lack of public services and old infrastructure were the main concerns of families in Bua and Macuata province. The study found that lack of electricity and water supply was also a setback in some schools.

15. The overall response of the parents together with the forty working children interviewed regarded education as a significant process in life. However, the hardships faced by these rural communities were a major contributing factor to children’s leaving school early and
working. About one-third of the total response from parents echoed education as important for the child’s own benefit. About 25 per cent said education was important for enhancing children’s knowledge, and another 20 per cent responded that it would increase work opportunity.

16. The study found that the importance of rural development as a major variable in national development plans requires, a far greater concentration on skill and capacity building projects for rural dwellers. As long as the ‘cycle of poverty’ and child labour are not interfered with by policy measures, children will drop-out of school to work.

17. The study found that there needs to be more independent research in order to capture the size, scale and dimensions of school drop-outs and child labour problems in the other rural settings of Fiji.

6.2 Recommendations

The suggestions outlined are based on the findings of the study. They address the challenges of school drop-outs and child labour in Fiji and in particular those faced by the rural communities of Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata provinces in Vanua Levu. The following are some recommendations in order to combat or circumvent school drop-out and child labour issues.

1. Educational interventions from the ministry that address the socio-economic factors affecting education should include programs such as development of quality teachers to meet and be effective and responsive to: the learning needs of all children, especially in the rural areas; women’s empowerment; involvement of village communities into the school system; and the promotion of education as an agent of social transformation in particular.

2. Awareness programs should be aimed at addressing child labour issues. Such programs should include strengthening of legal frameworks and policies. In addition, capacity development should include improved implementation of child labour and
education interventions. A further step would be to enhance the knowledge base and networks on child labour and education.

3. The facts of the findings regarding the hardships children face in rural areas demand the provision of an education service that is viable in the rural areas, with suitable alternatives or modifications as necessary.

4. The study noted that amid the government’s effort to provide a free and compulsory education together with making primary education a fundamental right, there needs to be commitment from parents in assuring that education is not compromised when there are no alternatives for individuals to commit and continue.

5. Community participation is a critical component in collaborative efforts to resolve the child labour problem. Involving the communities will increase public commitment through shared visions. Significantly, public consultation will not only increase awareness but also develop common orientation in planning and managing policy alternatives that are acceptable to everyone. Promotion of community participation will help to introduce flexible and innovative approaches and consequently extend project reach to the poorest.

6. Rural development should expand rural education as appropriate to satisfy the requirements of those who have exited the education system. This should include vocational training and workshops in the villages to educate the community on the importance of education, for people to become self reliant and break out from generational poverty.

7. Most children in the rural communities still see education as a process confined within the classroom. Nor do they question what is traditionally regarded as their rights. There needs to be an increase in the awareness programs such as workshops directed at the community and the children in particular regarding children’s rights and the importance of completing education.
8. Despite the constitutional protection given to protect children, child labour can always interfere with their education and development. The focus here is on rural children who are both working and still schooling and those who have dropped out of school. Support for these children should be directed at parents and the community at large through capacity-building projects. Emphasis should be placed on the holistic development of children.

9. The general suggestion is to foster self-reliance. Alternative development measures at the community level of any scale that stress the employment of local resources should involve grassroots participation. Principal merits should consider sensitivity of local conditions and cooperation from individuals. There is a need to create more avenues for adult employment in the rural areas. Such a step enhances capacity building and is a key concept in participatory development.

10. Primary education in Fiji is compulsory yet a good number of students exit the education system before they even reach higher secondary classes. The number of children enrolled in the first stage of schooling needs monitoring in all schools so as to capture those that drop-out of school at primary level.

11. The question of education for rural development needs to be raised and discussed at considerable length. In this view, education should be expanded to support the additional burden of families whose children leave school early. An education system that is not designed to function in a multifaceted manner, and the expectation that it will meet the needs of the rural areas, is unlikely to function satisfactorily from the perspective of both the users and of those responsible for establishing and monitoring the program.

12. Any government of the day needs to establish and enforce policies that conform to the core conventions of ILO. It should not just cover child labour but other labour rights as well. Not all regulatory approaches can be adopted by the government. As such
civil society organisations should be promoted not only as an alternative to reduce state expenditure but to fill in gaps where state can not reach.

13. From the perspective of public policies the government, before implementing any measure, should consult all stakeholders involved and re-evaluate all actions if any to be effective in reducing the incidence of child labour. The findings of the study reveal that at this stage there is a need for public awareness programs to help individuals to understand the concept of child labour and the significance of education, particularly in the rural areas. More resources should also be devoted to young people up to the stage where they enter the labour market so as to set up their own livelihood and lessen the entrenchment of poverty.

14. The idea is to decentralise approaches to Non-Government organisations to enable productive management and capacity building. With respect to different activities and roles already played by certain organisations and individuals, what needs to be done for future activities is an area of new standards and instruments, dissemination of information and undertaking action oriented research and increased collaboration with different stakeholders at the community level. This would ensure that the views of the local people are taken into account.

15. It is evident from the findings of this study that the growth of urban centres in the country reflects rural-to-urban migration. This mainly stems from the widespread existence of poverty, unemployment and deprivation in the rural areas. The perceived advantages of living in urban areas are of great importance to many of the respondents under study. This exacerbates youth unemployment for those leaving school early and not being able to find decent work in the urban centres. There is a need to foster more equitable principles of development for both the urban and rural areas.
6.3 Future Research

Few detailed studies and little documentation have yet produced a comprehensive picture of working children and the consequences for their well-being. However, the school drop-outs and child labour are both problematic and costs to the nation are substantial. The problems of early school leavers and working children are often diverse and plural regardless of whether they live in rural or urban areas. There is a need for more detailed study to understand the social, economic and political implications.

The level and quality of information of new studies could be critical ingredients for the provision of inputs in policy-making. Primary data that is to be collected in the future needs to look into aspects that constitute lives of the children socially and economically regardless of where they live and the type of work they involve themselves in. The relevance of information from studies could be used by various stakeholders or beneficiaries.

Given the evidence gathered on the lack of awareness and the limited time in conducting the survey, more in-depth study of this nature is needed for a thorough understanding on the characteristics of children in other rural areas of Fiji. Moreover, the roles of organisations, NGOs and government departments already involved in this research area needs to be scrutinised given the continuous large number of children still dropping out of school. This has been highlighted in the media through an alarming number of teen-age pregnancies in the Northern division especially in the Cakaudrove province. The age groups of these individuals and those committing the offences should call for concern. In addition, the continuity of sex crime (child rape) by family members is a depressing reflection of morals and values held at the household level and directly or indirectly linked to school drop-outs and forcing children to work.


APPENDICES
Appendix 1a: CHILDREN’S QUESTIONNAIRE

School drop-outs and Child labour in Fiji – A case Study of the Rural Settings in Vanua Levu

Confidentiality:  The opinions gathered will be kept confidential & will be used for study purpose only.

(a) Name of interviewee: ___________  (b) Province: ___________  (c) Village name: ___________

Status of child: (a) working & not in school   (b) working & studying

1. Age of child: _____ yr
2. Ethnicity:  1. Fijian 2. Indo Fijian 3. Others
4. Did you go to school:  1. Yes  2. No
5. Are you continuing schooling?  1. Yes  2. No
6. If no, at what age did you leave school: ___________
9. If yes, what type of work are you doing? : ______________________________________
10. How many hours a day do you work? __________________________________________
12. If no, why not? ______________________________________________________________
13. How much wages do you get per hour?:  __________ F$
15. If no, in what way does he treat you bad? _________________________________________
16. Do you get support from your parents to work?  
   1. Father supports  2. Mother supports  3. Both parents support
17. Would you prefer to continue your study? 1. Yes 2. No 


19. Does/ did your school have/ had a good environment? 1. Yes 2. No 

20. If no, why not? 

21. What are/ were the attitudes of your teacher in school? 

22. Were you getting enough support while/ or at school? 1. Yes 2. No 

23. If no, why not? 

24. How much time do/ did you devote for studying? 

25. How many days in a week do/ did you attend school? 

26. What is the approximate distance of school from home? (km) 


28. Do you think education is important? 1. Yes 2. No 

29. If yes, give reasons
   1. 
   2. 3. 

26. What are your suggestions regarding school drop-outs in Fiji? 


Appendix 1b: PARENTS’ QUESTIONNAIRE – Family Background

School drop-outs and Child labour in Fiji – A case Study of the Rural Settings in Vanua Levu

Confidentiality: The opinions gathered will be kept confidential & will be used for study purpose only.

(a) Name of interviewee: ___________ (b) Province: __________ (c) Village name: __________

1. Total no. of family members in the household? : _______


3. Age of parents: Father _________ yr. Mother: __________ yr.

4. Education of parents (up to class): Father: ____ Mother: _______

5. Occupation of parents: Father: _________ Mother: ___________


7. Children studying in schools: 1. No. of sons _____ 2. No. of daughters_____


9. Children working: 1. No. of sons ____ 2. No. of daughters_________

10. Weekly wages of family: (a) Father _________ F$ (b) Mother: _________ F$

   (c) Brother(s) _________ (d) sister(s) ___________ (e) Total _________ F$

11. Reasons for sending children to work? 1. ____________________________________________

   2. ____________________________________________

12. Are you aware of the hazards that affect children who work? 1. Yes 2. No □

13. If yes, what are they? ______________________________________________________________


15. If yes, how? ________________________________________________________________
16. Do you think the environment at school is comfortable enough for children?
   1. Yes  2. No

17. If no, why not? ________________________________________________________________

18. What obstacles do you face in trying to support your children?

19. Are you receiving any form of assistance? 1. Yes  2. No

20. If yes, mention the source. ______________________________________________________

21. What are the most common forms of work children in which children are involved in this area?

22. Do you think education is important? 1. Yes  2. No

23. If yes, give reasons 1. __________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________ 3. ____________________________________

24. What are your suggestions regarding school drop-outs and child labour in Fiji?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
Appendix 1c: PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES OF THE FIJI ISLANDS

Map 4.4 PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES OF THE FIJI ISLANDS