

**EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF SUGARCANE OUT-GROWING ECONOMY
ON CHILDREN'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: A CASE STUDY OF NAMALEMBA
SUB COUNTY, BUGWERI DISTRICT**

BY

KIBUBULI FAIZAL

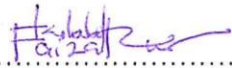
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
AND SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK
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DECLARATION

I, KIBUBULI FAIZAL, declare that this work is my own piece of work and has never been submitted to any institution for any academic gain. This work has also been compiled with different literature that was reviewed and with guidance from my supervisor thus it contains references and citations.

SIGNATURE.......... DATE..... 20/09/2025

KIBUBULI FAIZAL

APPROVAL

This dissertation on the influence of sugarcane outgrowing economy on children's school attendance, a case study of Namalembe sub-county, Bugweri district has been submitted with the approval of the research supervisor.

Signature.......... Date..... 20th September 2025

Ms KAFUKO AGATHA

SUPERVISOR

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear parents and my family, whose unwavering support, love, encouragement and trust have been the core foundation for my academic journey. Kyebalyenda Betty, my generous sister in Busembatia whose financial and psychological support have enabled me to pursue my ambitions. Dr. Kafuko Agatha, my supervisor, for the expertise, support, parenthood love given shaped my dissertation and inspired me to strive for success.

Indeed, your combined and concurrent support has been key in my excellence, I am indebted and truly grateful to you forever.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A Level:	Advanced Level
BDLG:	Bugweri District Local Government
CAO:	Chief Administrative Officer
DLG:	District Local Government
DOS:	Director of Studies
LC1:	Local Council One
O level:	Ordinary Level
PDM:	Parish Development Model
SAGE:	Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment
SCG:	Senior Citizenship Grant
S/C:	Sub-County
UNICEF:	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development

ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance of Namalemba Sub-County, Bugweri district. It set out to: a) describe the nature of children's involvement in sugarcane growing activities; b) assess the influence of sugarcane growing activities on children's school attendance.

The study adopted a qualitative study design. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with seven students who participate in the sugarcane out-growing economy and two key informants. Data was analysed systematically manually.

It highlighted the activities such as land clearing and preparing, planting and sugarcane cutting which employ children instead of attending to school. It reveals the influence of sugarcane activities on children's school attendance; money from sugarcane activities, forced labour, lack of scholastic materials, financial constraints and hunger, financial constraints and hunger, fatigue and work overload, health challenges, irregularities and absenteeism, and lack of domestic requirements on school attendance in Namalemba sub-county. To address school attendance, the study recommends for set up and implementation of strict laws against those who are employing children, establish direct services to children such as scholarships, policymakers should aim at uplifting the financial statuses of the households, community at large should traditionally take care of their children, and parents and distinguished caretakers should put their children in boarding sections.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study introduces how the sugarcane out-growing economy influences children's school attendance in Namalemba Sub-County. The sugarcane out-growing economy is a significant contributor to rural economies in many developing countries Uganda inclusive, where it presents a paradox. On one hand, it offers a vital source of income for households; on the other hand, it often relies on family labor, inclusive are children. This chapter examines the intricate relationship between the sugarcane out-growing economy and children's school attendance, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities that arise from this dynamic. The different debates on child labor by distinguished scholars, activities that children involve in the sugarcane out-growing economy and how these activities influence children' school attendance in Namalemba Sub-County.

1.1 Background

Child labour affects about 160 million children globally, with half 87 million of children engaged in child labour reside in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kembou et al., 2023). The agricultural sector employs a majority of child laborers of about 70%, who often work in small-scale family farming plantations.

Violence against children is common globally and is a risk factor for long-term adverse outcomes including poor physical and cognitive development and mental health, substance abuse, suicidal behaviour, and reproductive and sexual ill-health (Emerson & Souza, 2008).

Globally according to the Bureau of Statistics of the International Labour Organization, in 1995, it showed that 120 million of the world's children between the ages of five and fourteen years did full-time, paid work (Som-ard et al., 2021). The world over, every community acknowledges the role of education in the development process. Children's school attendance in areas with booming economic businesses is hampered because many children engage in these activities instead of enrolling for and remaining in school (Kembou et al., 2023). Many of the poor households engage children in child labour related activities as a means of raising income to mitigate the impact of poverty on households (Basu & Van, 1998; Krauss, 2017; Ray, 2002). In addition to cultural beliefs, children have social, psychological, emotional and

financial impacts of child labour that makes children's school attendance affected (Mwavu et al., 2018).

In Africa, child labour is a recurrent problem. It is estimated that about 72.1 million children in Africa are engaged in child labour, of which 31.5 million are involved in hazardous work.

The ILO, (2017) Global Estimates on Child Labour indicate that sub-Saharan Africa is ranked with the highest incidences of child labour in the world (Njieassam, 2023).

Child labour is associated with work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development (Ahmed et al., 2019). Moreover, child labour deprives children the opportunity to attend school or requiring children to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work or activities. Child labour could have consequences for children by affecting their mental, physical, and social or moral development (ILO, 2017). The agricultural sector employs a majority of child laborers of an estimated 70%, who often work in small-scale family farming plantations (Njieassam, 2023). Child labour has been linked to lower human capital outcomes, such as reduced school attendance, learning, and health Mbago et al. (2023).

Child labour in the sugarcane growing project refers to the engagement or participation of children below eighteen years of age in the production of sugar (Mbago et al., 2023).

Sugarcane growing is on an increase and it negatively affects children's school attendance (Njieassam, 2023). Sugarcane growing is the largest and one of the most complex agricultural commodities in the world and Uganda inclusive Kembou et al. (2023).

Child labour has been employed as the cheapest method of production in the sugarcane growing communities Mwavu et al. (2018), hence affecting children's school attendance as most school-going children get engaged in the sugarcane planting and harvesting processes thereby devoting more of their time and energy to this income generating venture at the expense of their academics. Child labour is associated with sugarcane plantations where children are hired to cut and load sugarcane on Lorries in Uganda (Prudence et al., 2024).

In Uganda, the expansion of the sugarcane out-growing economy has significantly influenced rural livelihoods in many parts of Uganda, including Namalemba Sub-County. While sugarcane farming has become a major source of income for many households, its effects on various aspects of social development, particularly children's school attendance, remain a subject of concern Kabwigu, (2022).

In Namalemba Sub-County, many families rely on sugarcane farming either as direct growers or laborers to generate income to sustain households. While this economic activity provides financial benefits, it also presents challenges such as child labour, high dropout rates, and limited parental supervision on children's education Mbago et al. (2023). Some children are engaged in plantation work to supplement household income, while others face long school commutes due to land-use changes that prioritize sugarcane farming over food production and infrastructure development Ahmed et al. (2019).

In addition, child labour has increased children's psychological challenges such as trauma, fear, low self-esteem, anxieties, stress and many more Mwavu et al. (2018). The already mentioned and other that are unveiled have influenced children's school attendance in Uganda (Ahmed et al., 2019). These consequences zero down to the different parts of the country depending, thus Namalemba sub-county in particular, is the poor school attendance of children in both primary and secondary schools thus the need for a study on the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance (Mwavu et al., 2018).

A child worker in a sugarcane growing project is not engaged in the entire flow of the production process which goes through three stages, namely, the cane growing stage, the sugar milling stage and the sugar refining stage (Hum, 2012). They majorly take part in the first stage; sugarcane growing which includes; clearing of gardens, planting sugarcane, weeding plantations, cutting sugarcane, loading sugarcane onto trucks. This is where they spend more time instead of attending to school (Mwavu et al., 2018). Therefore, sugarcane growing has brought more harm to the academic world of children in Namalemba Sub-County in particular and Bugweri district in general than good (Mbago et al., 2023).

While the Government of Uganda has strong capacity in policy making, the implementation of the development agenda continued to be inadequate, overburdened by a large public administration, inefficiencies in fund utilization and corruption, weakening Uganda's otherwise favourable economic growth prospects (UNICEF, 2022).

This study therefore aimed at examining the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance in Namalemba Sub-County. It investigated issues such as economic pressures on families, labour demands in sugarcane farming, and the accessibility of education within sugarcane-growing in Namalemba Sub-County. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for policymakers, educators and scholars, and local leaders to develop strategies that balance economic growth with sustainable education for children in the region.

1.2 Problem statement

In Uganda, child labour is prevalent in the agriculture sector such as sugarcane growing, particularly in Eastern Uganda, within the Busoga sub region and in specifically Bugweri district. This practice has significantly influenced children's school attendance due to physical, emotional, psychological and social effects, ultimately causing more harmful effects to education (Kabwigu, 2022). Despite the evident impact of child labour on school attendance, there are significant gaps in the existing literature. While some studies have focused on child labour in gold mines, looking at the effects of child labour on children (Njieassam, 2023), the specific influences of sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance have often been overlooked. Furthermore, previous research has not examined Namalemba Sub County, neglecting the unique challenges faced by children in this area (Mbago et al., 2023). This study aimed to investigate how the sugarcane out-growing economy influences children's school attendance in Namalemba sub-county.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General objective:

To investigate the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance of Namalemba sub-county.

1.3.2 Specific objectives:

1. To describe the nature of children's involvement in sugar cane growing activities.
2. To assess the influence of sugarcane growing activities on children's school attendance.

1.4 Research Questions

1. In which activities do children that involved in the sugar cane growing value chain in Namalemba Sub County engage in?
2. How does the involvement of children in sugar cane activities influence their school attendance?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study on influence Sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance in Namalemba sub county, Bugweri district is significant because It can contribute to the academic discourse on sugarcane growing on children's school attendance, a relatively

understudied phenomenon in Uganda. This can inform strategies aimed at uplifting the living standards of children and households at large.

It provides an in-depth understanding on how sugarcane activities influence children's school attendance and to improvise strategies to mitigate and curb child labour and its effects on children's psychological, emotional, physical, social and academically thus promoting positive results.

The study aimed to create knowledge, inform practice, and contribute to the socio-economic development of the community. This can help the government to improve on school' finance to suit children' needs to improve on their school attendance.

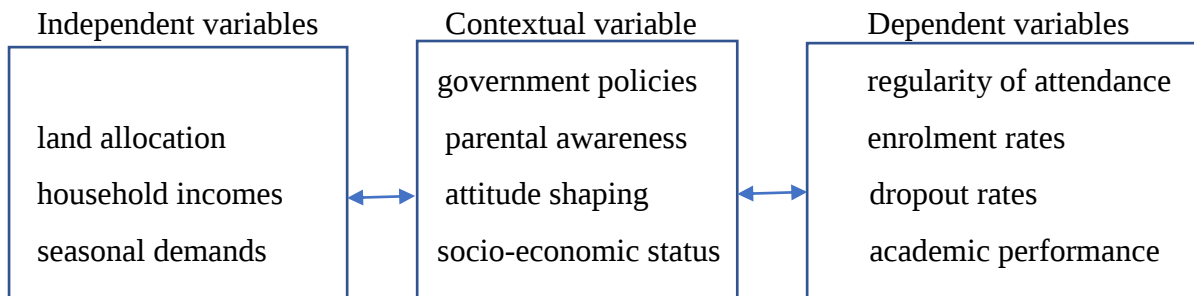
1.6 Scope of the study

This study was conducted in Namalembe Sub County, Bugweri district, located in the Eastern Region, Busoga sub-region of Uganda. Namalembe Sub-County is a diverse and vibrant area that serves as the geographical scope for this study, it's made up of 4 parishes. It has 3 government secondary schools. It has 12,774 children between 0-14years. Anahadah Islamic Institute where the study was conducted is situated only 1.2km from Mbale-Tirinyi high way on the left hand to Mbale. It has a total population of 756 students, with 510 girls and 246 boys. About 80% population engage in child labor both for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Of the 80% who are engaged in child labor, 70% are engaged in the sugarcane out-growing economy activities. This study therefore; sought to examine the influence of sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance.

1.7 Conceptual Frame Work

Independent variables; like land allocation, household income from sugarcane farming, Seasonal demands lead to reduced enrollment in schools, household food security, employment opportunities at sugarcane fields reduces daily school attendance that causes school dropouts and all the activities that take place at the sugarcane plantations influences children's school attendance.

Contextual factors



The above illustration demonstrates the cycle of influence around the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance in Namalemba Sub County. Using the ecological systems theory, independent variables, land allocation, seasonal demands, household incomes are shaped by the contextual variables, policies, awareness, attitudes, soci-economic status and they both determine the dependent variables, dropout, performance, attendance, and enrolment rates but the reverse is true that the dependent variables influence the contextual and independent variables. The environment is shaped with education by the elites who are the policy makers therefore, all the three variables are in a cycle being influenced by each other as illustrated above.

Conclusively, independent variables influence the contextual variables but also influenced by contextual variables, the two influence the dependent variables but also the dependent variables influence the two as government policies that inform every sector in the environment are formed by educated people. Its important to note that this is a cycle which is interconnected and interdependent for a homeostasis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of what has been written on the subject of the child labor and education in the world. This literature review aims to synthesize existing interplay between sugarcane growing activities and children's school attendance. By examining these factors, this review seeks to identify key themes, trends and gaps in the literature, justifying methodology and ultimately informing strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of child labor on school attendance in the sugarcane out-growing economy. The literature reviewed was obtained from journal articles and books that were deemed relevant and was reviewed basing on the study objectives. The different literature was grouped into themes as follows;

2.1 Nature of the involvement of children in Sugarcane growing activities.

Child labour affects over 160 million children worldwide, with a staggering 87 million of these cases found in Sub-Saharan Africa. Kembou et al. (2023) argues that the agricultural sector employs a majority of child laborers which mounts up to a 70%, who often work in small-scale family farming plantations. Child labour is when a person below the age of 18 years work for payment or no payment well as the Government of Uganda (2021) defines Child labour as children aged 5-11 years engages in any economic activity, children 12-13 years doing work other than light work beyond 14 hours a week; or children 14-17 years involved in hazardous work. Sugarcane plantations are associated with child labour where children are hired to cut, carrying sugarcane to destinations where Lorries can reach, and load sugarcane onto trucks.

Mbago et al. (2023) highlights the role of education over the World in the development process being widely acknowledged but he also gives the activities that children engage in sugarcane growing that affects their school attendance such activities are, planting, weeding and cutting sugarcane. Ahmed et al. (2019) argues that with the advent of sugarcane growing, a lot of activities come along that attract vulnerable children in search for income due to the effects of poverty, such activities include; clearing bushes, charcoal burning, planting sugarcane, weeding, cutting sugarcane during harvest. Prudence et al. (2024) stresses that Children's school attendance is hampered in the sugarcane-outgrowing economy because

children engage in activities such as sugarcane plantation preparing, sugarcane cutting, loading sugarcane onto trucks instead of enrolling and remaining in school.

The scholars agreed that with the advent of sugarcane growing, many activities have come a long that children engage in hence hampering with their education.

2.2 Sugarcane growing and poor performance.

Garden work consists of a variety of activities including garden clearing, clearing bush, and cutting and digging trees, involves digging plough, planting sugarcane, cutting it into peace for proper germination and covering the plough with soil to complete the germination process Ahmed et al. (2019). Mbago et al. (2023) stresses a variety of activities that take place at sugarcane plantations where children participate at the expense of their education and thus influencing their school attendance, the cultivation of plantations, weeding, through harvesting which includes cutting and lading on tucks. Child labour is a recurrent problem in Africa. It is estimated that about 72.1 million children in Africa are engaged in child labour, of which 31.5 million are involved in hazardous work (Njieassam, 2023). The 2017 International Labour Organization's (ILO) Global Estimates on Child Labour indicate that sub-Saharan Africa is ranked with the highest incidences of child labour in the world. However, Kembou et al. (2023) suggests and disagrees with other scholars that child labour is caused in part by increasing poverty rates, cultural beliefs, corruption, family conditions and urban migration, including a decrease in educational standards.

Additionally, Njieassam, (2023) on the other hand, observes that the absence of large-scale holdings and labour markets are contributing factors to child labour, especially as a number of African countries are still predominantly rural and depend on household production for daily subsistence that is why children are exposed to exploitation that hinders their school attendance in areas where child labor is on a hype. While Mbago et al. (2023) critiques the presence of child rights' movements that though the problem has declined with the emergence of children's rights movements from 1989, the establishment of schools and improvements in household incomes, child labour remains a problem with immense social, economic and environmental costs and with poor health and safety consequences of some magnitude in developing countries, including Uganda.

2.3 Sugarcane harvesting and absenteeism in schools.

El Chami et al. (2020) defines sugarcane harvesting and explains how it influences children's school attendance as a stage where children take part in the cutting of sugarcane, loading on trucks and they tend to take more time engaging in such activities than attending school. Supplementary, Ruths et al. (2018) argued that in both manual and mechanized harvesting, workers who are children can be subjected to long work shifts in environments in which they are potentially exposed to risks which make it hard for children to attend school because most of the time is spent in sugarcane plantations. Mbago et al. (2023) added strongly that children may also be induced to exert themselves excessively by production-based payment systems and by implication therefore, it means that the more and longer you work, the higher the pay. It thus leaves children spending all their hours and days on plantations harvesting sugarcane as Ahmed et al. (2019) also added. Njieassam, (2023) critiqued the fact that in Uganda, some scholars have focused on some particular sectors as explained, some activities defined as child labour in Uganda take place in the mining sector. This includes working underground or under water, working with harmful equipment and tools, carrying heavy loads and work that expose miners who are children in most times children, to hazardous substances. But Prudence et al. (2024) argues that children's school attendance is hampered in the sugarcane growing areas. However, Kabwigu, (2022) found that absenteeism is caused due to the early pregnancies and forced and premature marriages that leaves children as child mothers and fathers.

2.4 The influence of sugar cane growing activities on children's school attendance.

2.4.1 School irregularity;

Child labour is being employed as the cheapest means of production which has attracted a huge number of children as it has no academic qualification required from them but leaving them with less or no time for academics hence affecting negatively the school attendance of children as Njieassam, (2023) explains. Mbago et al. (2023) found that most school-going children engage sugarcane planting and harvesting. Thereby sacrificing more time and energy to this income generating activity at the expense of their academics.

Prudence et al. (2024) highlights school irregularities are witnessed at sugarcane plantations where children are hired to cut and load sugarcane on trucks and instead of attending to school, they are always at plantations. But Mbago et al. (2023) discovered that the role of education in the progress is key but rather, children's enrolment in areas with booming

businesses is interrupted because many children engaging in such activities ignoring school. El Chami et al. (2020) noted that during the early 1980s, the education system in Uganda had not gained momentum because parents mainly preferred taking their children in socio-economic activities like agriculture, sugarcane growing industry compared to taking them into schools. This is because they looked at education as a money demanding institution therefore affecting their enrolment.

2.4.2 Prolonged poverty

Children from poor families and disadvantaged areas have a difficulty in accessing education. In the same vein, it indicated that the illusion of who will be educated and how much schooling should be provided depends on the cost of schooling El Chami et al. (2020). Mwanika et al. (2021) argues that the ultimate discussion must be based upon priorities for schooling relative to its cost in light of overall resources constraints just like the case of Namalemba sub-county where there are other priorities like sugarcane growing, where children have an alternative than attending to school.

Ahmed et al. (2019) however, found that children are sometimes hindered by limited funds given the plight of rural parents, higher fees aimed at improving quality and teachers' pay is bound to eliminate majority of the children from low-income families therefore becoming unable to enrol in, attend school regularly and they thus resort to sugarcane growing acting as servants on the plantation for a small payoff, in consideration of the case of Namalemba sub-county.

2.5 The strategies to improve on children' school attendance.

It's important to note that there is a positive relationship between parents' attitude towards their children's education and their levels of enrolment and academic achievement, thus school attendance even putting aside all other factors constant Mwanika et al. (2021). Ahmed et al. (2019) alleged that some children are engaging in sugarcane cutting because of the parents' attitudes towards education and they hence waste a lot of time on plantations on the expense of school attendance and thus suggests that parents need awareness on the importance of their children' education.

Ruths et al. (2018) found that the rural opportunities for girls as per African traditions are limited as compared to the boys. Many believed that educating a girl child is a waste of time and money and they could spend more money on the boys but the case of Namalemba Sub County which differs and it's the boys to work for their father's homes thus missing classes

and called up fathers to take on their roles of providing for their families such that children enjoy their rights including the one to education.

2.6 Lack of scholastics and poor school attendance

An important aspect to note is that the overall children in rural areas where parents are poor experience hard conditions resulting into poor feeding which leads to malnutrition (El Chami et al., 2020). This determines the retention rates at school especially those schools which are not on the school feeding program (Ahmed et al., 2019). Som-ard et al. (2021) found that in areas like Kamuli, Iganga, Buyende, Namayingo, Mayuge, Bugiri and Namutumba the socio-economic status of parents determines retention rates of children hence they end up serving as cooks, maids and prostitutes. While Ruths et al. (2018) argues that many children miss school because they don't have school requirements because an underprivileged African woman is probably the most under privileged human being; illiterate, with limited access to resources hence many homes are single-mother headed families which expose children to scarce resources and thus affecting their school attendance. Ruths et al. (2018) critiqued that at the moment, adult women get less education, lower pay even when they lack funds to support their children's education with single headed families.

Bahati et al. (2022) found that Sugarcane growing brings about cutting down trees, clearing land and it does not entertain crop rotation. By implication, food crops have been replaced with a cash crop which facilitates commercialization process of smallholder agriculture through sugarcane growing and the implications on land rights, labour relations, and rural livelihoods in the Busoga sub-region of Uganda. This encourages hunger in reference to the land which does not support the crop growing and this entices children to go for sugarcane cutting and other industry related activities to get income to purchase food thus spending more time on plantations than attending school regularly thus poor school attendance (Bahati et al., 2022).

2.7 Emerging Gaps in the literature

While existing literature offers insights into the general child labor in various sectors like cocoa growing, goldmines, tobacco schemes in West Nile, brick making, meat roasting and in the general sugarcane growing regarding their education, significant gaps remain, particularly regarding children in the sugarcane out-growing economy. There is a notable lack of research that focuses specifically on the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance who are the primary participants in the sugarcane growing activities and

who the most vulnerable group. Most scholarly work has predominantly focused on child labor in goldmines, cocoa growing, tobacco growing, brick making and others but overlooking the unique and complex influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance (Ahmed et al., 2019).

In the Ugandan case, research has extensively exposed the general effects of child labor on children's education, yet the complex challenges, unique effects and consequences that children in the sugarcane out-growing economy face that influence their school attendance, specifically those residing in Namalemba Sub-County, remain broadly underexplored. Additionally, current research falls short in providing a comprehensive analysis of the unique influence that children face due to the influence of sugarcane growing on their education. While some studies look at these issues, they often do so in a fragmented form, lacking depth and conceptual specificity. This study sought to provide more detailed understanding of the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance.

This gap mounts up the need for a focused, thorough and context research that only highlights the lived influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance but also informs the development of targeted policies and support systems to uplift their well-being and enhance their school attendance.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the methodology that was adopted in order to answer the research questions. It focuses on the research design, description of the study area, study population, sample size determination and selection procedure, methods of data collection, data management and analysis and ethical consideration.

3.1 Research design

Research design is a plan that specifies how data should be collected and analysed. According to (Creswell., 2018), Case study research design involves trying to understand the universal experience through interviews with the subjects and examining their views about their experiences. This helped to better understand the different activities that children involve in the sugarcane out-growing economy. It offers an in-depth, holistic understanding of a child' challenges, strengths, thereby providing rich context tat larger studies often miss out. It helped to deeply obtain data on the influence of the sugarcane activities on children' school attendance. Thus, the researcher preferred case study design to other research designs to study the influence of sugarcane growing on children' school attendance in Namalemba Sub County.

3.2 Research approaches

Qualitative approach is the use of words to explain and describe research findings. The researcher therefore collected, described, analysed and presented the findings by words (Bryman, 2016). The study included a few samples to deeply and explicitly correct data from participants which disqualified for the use of a quantitative approach. The study employed a qualitative approach because it accommodates emerging themes and issues during data collection and analysis making it relevant for this study. This approach was appropriate for the study because it emphasises participants' needs, fosters trust and open communication, and allows for the use of child-friendly methods to capture their unique perspectives but also allows for flexibility to answer how and why questions. This is because the study examined the influence of sugarcane out-growing economy on children' school attendance in Namalemba Sub County.

3.3 Study area

This study was conducted in Namalemba Sub-County, Bugweri district, a case study of Anahadah Islamic Institute. The area is surrounded with a huge Naigombwa swamp from the east that supports sugarcane growing which has increased child labor in the area. A variety of activities came along with the advent of sugarcane growing, such activities have elevated some households, but on the opposite hand caused more harm than good to the academia as they influence children's school attendance. This is because sugarcane growing is from home-to-home resulting into increased absenteeism that arose the curiosity of the researcher to conduct a study there. To gain more in-depth insights on the phenomenon, a study was inevitable in Namalemba Sub-County.

3.4 Study population

The study population of the research was the students and teachers of Anahadah Islamic institute. This was to gain more detailed and in-depth insights that would make the study fertile with data. The choice of a single school allowed for extensive exploration of children's experiences within a bounded context making a case study fit for the study. This was also resource sensitive following the fact that the researcher had scarce resources, thus choosing one school as it had all what the study needed was inevitable. Therefore, choosing one school was also that it had samples that could fit the study thus the researcher used one school. School going children who engage in sugarcane growing and attend school at the same time were the primary participants. It comprised of both girls and boys aged between 13-15years who directly engage in sugarcane growing activities. This was because this age bracket is considered highly to be child laborers but could provide reasonable in-depth insights that the study sought for. The school has a total population of 756 students, with 510 girls and 246 boys. About 80% population of the school engage in child labor, both for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Of the 80% who are engaged in child labor, 70% participate in the sugarcane out-growing economy activities.

Teachers including the HM and the DOS were the key informants of the study. These were used as key informants because they have information about children's school attendance. This was to help to ensure triangulation.

3.5 Sample size determination

Sample size is the number of participants included in a study. According to Greenwood's (1950) recommendation, only 20 participants are enough in sample. According to Richy, a

good qualitative research should not have more than 50 interviews. Considering the information power, the sample size was made up of 9 participants. This was justified due to the exploratory nature of the study, the need for in-depth insights and the goal of achieving a saturation point. The sample size allows for a comprehensive understanding of the influence of sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance in Namalemba Sub-County.

3.6 Sampling technique/ procedure

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to recruit participants from Anahadah Islamic Institute who engage in sugarcane growing activities and attend school. This was because the study population was readily available, participants were students who engage in sugarcane growing activities in the sugarcane out-growing economy and at the same time attending school at Anahadah Islamic Institute. This was achieved with the help of the local council 1 member and supportive school administration.

I had organised to interview 12 participants, relating to Guest et al. (2006) recommendations, who suggest that a sample of 10-20 participants is sufficient to achieve a point of data saturation in qualitative research. Nevertheless, during data collection, it became scientifically evident that saturation had been reached by the ninth participant. Data saturation refers to the point at which no new themes or codes emerge from data which indicated that further data collection was meaningless (Clarke & Braun, 2021).

For key informants, the researcher included the top two administrators, head teacher, and director of studies (DOS) respectively because they are well defined with their roles and responsibilities in the school.

The inclusion criteria of primary participants included students who participate in sugarcane growing activities and attending school at the same time. They were boys and girls aged 13-15 years from senior three to senior six only.

And on the other hand, the exclusion criteria were the remaining portion of student either engage in other child labor activities other than sugarcane growing or those than neither participate in sugarcane growing activities nor other activities.

For the key informants' exclusion criteria were based on the position that one holds. The research only wanted the DOS and H/M thus all the remaining staff was excluded from participating to the research.

3.7 Data collection methods

In-depth interviews were conducted with 7 students and 2 teachers summing up to a total of 9 participants at Anahadah Islamic Institute using semi-structured questions to examine the influence of sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance of Namalemba Sub County. It also included interview guides which helped to ask and dig information using open ended questions (Snyder, 2019). Open ended questions help to allow participants to fully express themselves and it implies therefore, it was possible to get rich information about the phenomenon (Bryman, 2016).

In-depth interviews were held at Anahadah Islamic Institute. Here, a hall was used as place where participants felt free and safe. Each interview with the primary participants took 25-30 minutes with the key informants. A hall was used as a safe space to ensure for privacy and it was a one-on-one interview, this implies therefore, that the researcher engaged one participant at a time to provide privacy and application of confidentiality principle.

The researcher clearly explained the study participants the importance of the research and asked for permission to record and recorded using a phone. So, after recording the voices of the participants, the researcher later transcribed data collected, analyzed it and a thesis was developed.

3.8 Tools

The study employed in-depth interviews with 7 students and 2 teachers respectively who participate in sugarcane growing activities. Semi-structured question guides were generated to guide the in-depth interviews. The researcher ensured the principle of confidentiality and consent forms were read vertically first. These helped the researcher to remain on track. Semi-structured questions provided a detailed focus on unique issues around sugarcane out-growing economy's influence on children's school attendance.

3.9 Data quality control.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the interview guide, a pilot test was conducted with a small sample of students at Anahadah Islamic Institute in Namalemba sub-county. This process allowed for the identification and modification unclear questions. It also provided an opportunity to observe participants' comprehension and reactions, which offered valuable insights into the clarity and effectiveness of the questions, as well as potential challenges participants might face during the interview process. Additionally, to the pilot test, expert reviews were sought from academic peers and the research supervisor. These experts

evaluated the content, structure, and relevance of the interview guide. Upon all the feedback, exposure during the pretests, the interview guide was revised to come up with a well vast final version of the interview guide that was well-structured, comprehensible, and aligned with the study's objectives.

3.10 Data management and analysis

Thematic analysis is the digesting of data to extract core themes that can be distinguished both between and within transcripts to form codes. Coding is a process whereby data is broken down into their component parts and those parts are then given labels called codes.

Data analysis was used to help in bringing meaning to research world or write up (Bryman, 2016). The qualitative data collected in this study was analysed using thematic analysis, an extensively used method for identification, analysis, and reporting themes (patterns) in the data.

This approach, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), offers an adjustable and thorough framework for qualitative inquiry, particularly suitable for researchers seeking to examine experiences, meanings, and realities. Its versatility also makes it appropriate for novice researchers (Javadi & Zarea, 2016), allowing for both inductive and deductive approaches to analysis and thus I also applied the process. The thematic analysis in this study followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework:

- i) Familiarising with the data; Initially in a series, all audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. This transcription process was followed by repeated readings of the transcripts to immerse myself in the data and gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' narratives. Notes and initial impressions were recorded in a reflective journal to capture emerging thoughts, experiences and insights.
- ii) Generating themes; the researcher consistently coded the transcripts. This allowed for effective management and organization of huge volumes of qualitative data. Segments of text relevant to the research questions were highlighted and assigned labels (codes). Both semantic and latent meanings were considered during coding to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the data collected.
- iii) Searching for themes; After coding the entire dataset, the researcher examined the codes to identify patterns and aggregated corresponding codes together to form preliminary themes.

- iv) Reviewing Themes; The preliminary themes were then examined against the coded data extracts and the entire dataset to determine whether they accurately captured the participants' experiences. Some themes were refined, others were merged, and some were discarded if they lacked sufficient supporting data.
- v) Defining and naming themes; upon the finalizing of the thematic structure, the researcher described core meaning of each theme, ensuring that each captured a noticeable and significant feature of the data.
- vi) Produce the write-up report; The ultimate step included integrating the themes into a coherent narrative that addressed the study's objectives and research questions. Significant extracts from the interviews were integrated into the findings to support interpretations and ensure that participants' voices were authentically represented. This analytical approach provided rich and sophisticated insights into the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance.

3.11 Ethical considerations

The researcher informed the Sub-County authority before carrying out any research, protected study participants from physical, emotional, social, and psychological harm by not exposing their parents and or guardians to imprisonment as a result of information provided. The researcher asked for consent from students following well approved consent forms from the research supervisor and teachers before engaging them in research. The researcher fully informed the students and the authorities about the participation that they could withdraw at any point. The importance of the research being purely academics and not to be shared anywhere beyond the academic sphere (Department of social work and social administration) and it implies therefore it would not be shared anywhere else to insight turmoil or any political instability. The research was purely social thus it respected all the principles, such confidentiality, controlled emotion involvement, individuality, and mutual respect. This is to give a good environment to the participants.

Informed Consent: The researcher ensured informed consent through verbal information. The researcher read the consent form which was approved by the academic research supervisor. For the primary participants, consent was sought from their parents before the interview. This was to ensure that participants provide voluntary consent to participate in the study after being informed about its purpose, risks, and benefits.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The researcher protected the privacy of participants by keeping their responses confidential and ensuring that personal identities were kept anonymous and not disclosed in the research findings.

Principle of do no harm: The researcher made sure that the study will not negatively impact the livelihoods of farmers, children, teachers and or community members. I avoided questions that could cause psychological or emotional distress to the study participants.

Cultural sensitivity: I respected local customs, traditions, and community dynamics while conducting interviews or observations.

Honesty and integrity: Findings were reported truthfully without manipulation or bias to support a specific agenda.

Ethical approval: Obtained ethical clearance from relevant academic and local governmental institutions to ensure compliance with research ethics.

3.12 Limitations to study

Limited generalizability: The findings may be specific to Namalemba Sub-County and may not necessarily apply to other regions with different economic and social dynamics.

Data reliability: Responses from participants may be biased or influenced by personal opinions. This was witnessed when respondents had different perceptions towards different issues of concern which made generalizability hard.

Influence of other factors: School attendance can be affected by multiple factors beyond the sugarcane out-growing economy, such as government policies, weather conditions, and cultural practices, making it hard to isolate the specific influence of sugarcane farming.

Limited resources: Conducting a thorough study may require significant resources and time, limiting the scope of data collection and analysis. It needed more time but had little, also had limited resources as it costed transport to and from the study area.

Biases: Teachers were somehow biased upon the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy activities on children's school attendance.

Fear associated with the law: Discussions around child labour and school attendance was a bit sensitive, and some respondents hesitated to provide accurate information because of fear associated with the legal authorities such as imprisonment of people employing children, parents or guardians who expose children to child labor.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is made up of the findings on the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance in Namalemba Sub-County. The findings are presented following the study objectives that include; a) describe the nature of children's involvement in sugarcane growing activities; b) assess the influence of sugarcane growing activities on children's school attendance. Findings are presented along key thematic areas using participants' voices and experiences through verbatim quotes. The results are therefore presented using verbatim descriptions and quotations to show up the themes and patterns that have emerged from the data.

4.1 Profile of participants

A total 9 in-depth interviews were conducted with 7 primary participants and 2 key informant interviews were conducted. Pen names are used to hide and protect their identities and ensure confidentiality of participants. Their profiles are as below;

Participant 1: Rahuma 14 years old female student of senior three student at Anahadah Islamic Institute. Rahuma has spent three years since she joined the school in 2022 for her senior one up to date. She claimed to share her experiences upon sugarcane growing. She personally participates in sugarcane weeding at plantations which is family owned. She explained about her good relationship with her family. She appreciates her nuclear family and her siblings for being supportive; financially, emotionally, guidance and counselling. Her biological parents are the ones who pays for her school fees. But her family depends partially on sugarcane growing for financial base.

Participant 2: Zubran is 14 years old male student currently in senior three at Anahadah Islamic Institute, in Namalemba sub-county. Originally, from Bugiri district, he resides at school during term time. He lives in a supportive nuclear family comprising his two biological parents and his young siblings, from whom he is the oldest. He describes his family as being very supportive, emphasizing their consistent emotional and motivational support. He appreciates the guidance, encouragement, and counselling provided by his parents, especially around the importance of staying in school and maintaining focus on his education.

Participant 3: Fata a male student at Anahadah Islamic Institute. He is a 15years old semi-candidate of Senior Three. He lives originally in Namalemba village but currently at school in boarding section. He lives in an extended family; with his biological parents, siblings and other family relatives. That is to say, grandsons and granddaughters, nephews and nieces. Though, the family he appreciates is supportive, economically, psychologically, emotionally, guidance and counselling. On the other hand, due to the size and nature of the family being extended, the family is able to provide school fees and not able to provide personal items for Fata. Thus, laying a fertile ground for his engagement in the sugarcane growing activities in the out-growing economy.

Participant 4: Charles is a 15-years-old and a semi-candidate of senior three Anahadah Islamic Secondary School. He lives in an extended family with his biological parents, his siblings and other family relatives just like most of other family settings in rural areas. The family depends on agriculture for family consumption and surplus for financial gains. His father though owns a small-scale business that helps to finance the family on the other hand. Basing on small business owned by is Charles's father and the agricultural activities, the huge size and structure of the family (being extended); it lays a basis for the inadequate provision of other basic needs to him and his siblings and that is why he is engaged in the sugarcane growing activities in the sugarcane out-growing economy.

Participant 5: Salima, an 14years-old female senior Four candidate student of Anahadah Islamic Institute. She originally lives with her biological parents in Luuka district but currently staying around school. Salima lives in a nuclear family with her biological parents and her siblings. She appreciates the fact that her family as been supportive that is to say; financial support, emotional, guidance and counselling laying a fertile ground for her self-esteem. Her engagement in the sugarcane growing activities is because it is a family-owned agri-business that provides income to her household.

key informant 1: Robert is 43 years by age and a professional teacher at Anahadah Islamic Institute. His journey into the sugarcane out-growing economy was when he was transferred there by which sugarcane is the leading economic activity in the community. He has worked in different parts of the country but being in that school has registered significant new experiences to his career. He has encountered new issues pertaining children's school attendance as being influenced with sugarcane out-growing economy.

Key informant 2: Jude is a 56 years old and a teacher while serving as the DOS at Anahadah Islamic Institute. He resides within Namalemba village. He was very glad to meet the researcher and he shared his experience upon child labor in the sugarcane out-growing economy. Additionally, he called the situation alarming and that it caused more harm than good to the education of children where they lack time to attend to school.

4.2 Nature of children's involvement in sugarcane growing activities;

This section introduces the different activities in which children get engaged in the sugarcane out-growing economy. It examines how the involvement in these activities influence children's school attendance in Namalemba Sub-County.

4.2.1 Land clearing and preparing

Study participants mentioned that they work a lot when it comes to garden preparation whereby children work intensively. This involves digging up trees and burn charcoal or produce other fuel, like wood fuel, slashing the bushes and burning it, digging hills to make the land flat and allow machinery. It's after all the above-mentioned activities that the tractors will dig or oxen ploughing and or use of hand-hoes for smaller plantations. They work for the whole day, without rest and they engage in a variety of activities to earn money for school fees. Some of the participants work at family-owned sugarcane plantations. As reflected in this study, participants emphasised the variety of activities where they are engaged. Such activities take a lot of their time and energy thus the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance. For instance, one the participants, Salima a senior four candidate illustrated the different activities that occur during land clearing and preparing.

I engage in sugarcane in the starting phase; there are many activities. There is ploughing, but I participate in digging ploughs, covering them, and applying insecticides and pesticides which it leaves me very tired with little energy to go to school.

Study Participants continued to stress the point of the range of activities that consume their time because some of them are forced to participate in such activities. On the same vein, one of the participants; Fata a male student of Senior three.

The preparatory phase comprises the following intense activities that employ a huge number of children doing it as a domestic work and or direct and indirect income earning job. I personally participate in the harvesting stage which includes sugarcane cutting and I earn money for my upkeep and buying personal items.

The findings underscore the variety of activities that children engage in. Such activities earn money to them but rather on the other hand, it takes a lot of time which hinders their school attendance. Many households participate in such activities to earn a living leaving children exposed to child labor through heavy work and long working hours.

4.3.2 Planting

This phase employs a lot of people but the biggest percentage is for children. This is because children are vulnerable whereby most of the children who involve in sugarcane activities are from humble backgrounds therefore their economic statuses are low. On the other, some children are just forced into such sugarcane growing activities by their biological parents, guardian and or caregivers. Such activities during this stage that influence children's school attendance in Namalemba sub-county. Zubran a male study participant, originally from Bugiri district but currently in hostel at school in Namalemba Sub-County.

I plant and I just get seeds and put them in my pockets. After I spread them all over the prepared tilled land. So, where it stopped, it's where you start from as you spread until the whole garden is covered up with seeds.

Planting also employs a huge labour force because it has a lot of activities that mostly attracts children because are vulnerable following their education levels, their age. Children also have little needs just because they have desire for money in their pockets.

One of the key informants, the headteacher also talked about the planting of sugarcane as;

Most of them want to get money especially for school fees in most cases they drop out of school to go and work in those sugarcane shambas. they love to have money than going to school given the nature of the school and because it's in a rural setting.

This reflection highlights a recurring dilemma among children resulting from a pool of activities at the Vidant fields of sugarcane plantations that affect children's school attendance. It shows how these activities affect children's well-being.

4.3.3 Sugarcane harvesting

This activity marks the start of sugarcane harvesting which attracts the biggest percentage of people and they are children. Many children participate in sugarcane cutting where they use sharp pangas and this activity is done for the whole day and they cut down sugarcane, and by this, they cut sugarcane, remove sugarcane leave leaving the stem clear, they use the leaves to tie it together for easy transportation. There is high labour force and intense work that attracts

child labour to participate which pays daily and immediately after work. Because of this, it attracts a lot of children, it leaves them with little or no time to go to school and this influences children's school attendance, some times they dropout of school.

One of the participants Charles narrates,

Sugarcane cutting, it's the most preferred activity by children because they think it's not tiresome and also its on equity meaning you earn what you deserve. there is also weeding though a few prefer this activity because when weeding through some grown plantation, the leaves will cut you on exposed parts of the body that's to say, face, hands. children are also engaged in the planting phase to do activities like digging contours, applying fertilizers if needed, applying pesticides, covering sugarcane.

It's evident that many children dodge school during the harvesting season following the intense work at plantations where they cut sugarcane and get money per day. They work the whole day leaving limited and sometimes or no time for school. When children cut sugarcane and get money, they lose the morale to remain in school consistently. They rather start missing and some withdraw from school. One of the participants talked about children and cutting sugarcane.

4.3 Influence of sugarcane growing activities on children's school attendance.

4.3.1 Money from sugarcane activities

All participants agreed upon children's much need for money in their pockets. The sugarcane sector, is one the sectors that pays immediately after work. It attracts many children because its always in rural settings and where there is a lot of poverty in most of the homes. Many children are involved in sugarcane growing activities that's to say, cutting and loading onto trucks to get money for school fees. Others just want money to buy personal items like clothing because parents can't afford to provide because of their economic capacities. Most of the children that participate in such activities to get money its because they are fully and partially the breadwinners for their families thereby earning money for family consumption for instance buying food, treatment for other family members. So, because of desire to earn cash, many children are engaged in sugarcane growing activities and as a result they have limited time for school thus the influence of sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance in Namalemba Sub-County.

The headteacher explained why some of the children need money, which results in absence from classes and sometimes escapes from school for sugarcane activities as he says,

Most of them want to get money especially for school fees in most cases they drop out of school to go and work in those sugarcane shambas. They love to have money than going to school given the nature of the school and because it's in a rural setting.

He also added but still stressing the point of love for money children and why is easy for them to access sugarcane plantations. As he continues narrating,

The setting of the school, it's in a rural setting whereby children have access to sugarcane sambas(plantations) and they lack having money in their pockets, so studying half way, half a day is very impossible for these children due to love for money.

In the same angle, one of the participants explained why they have the love for money which encourages them to work at sugarcane plantations. They work on plantations because they need to have access to some items that parents can't afford as Zubran, a male student explains.

To fulfil my needs that my parents can't provide for me. My family can provide for me school fees but they can't provide for everything like my personal items because some of them like shavers I cannot ask for them from my parents because am shy. I also do it to improve on my economic status and earn some money for pocket money. So, because sometimes my personal items that I need I feel shy to ask for them like underpants so I plant sugarcane to get money for myself.

The participant also explained how dangerous is when you have much love for which entices for involvement in the sugarcane growing activities. It consumes a lot of time making children unable to attend school regularly thus the influence of the sugarcane outgrowing economy on children' school attendance. He Fata explains below;

Even if it's in the midweek, I just leave school that's to say in mid-week and come back on weekend and even parents will be aware because they don't provide everything for me. Because the parents cannot buy me a phone, airtime, internet bundles for research because of their economic status.

It highlights that participants can miss school at any time because they have some needs that are unmet by their parents because of their economic statuses. This exposes them to sugarcane activities to earn and afford such commodities which on the other hand affects their school attendance.

4.3.2 Forced labour

It is when the biological parents, guardians, caregivers and or relatives force these children to work on plantations to earn money to cater for the family and pay for their school fees. Given

the fact that Namalemba sub-county is a rural area, there is a lot of poverty whereby children are turned into slaves to work for their masters. Many children are found onto plantations engaged in any activity, be it planting, weeding, sugarcane cutting and name it but because they work as a family, work as an individual but directly forced. This is where they are told to go and work on plantations to earn something for their family. They can also be indirectly forced where children themselves look at their families being in alarming conditions and they engage in sugarcane activities to save the situation. This is how the availability of these activities influence children's school attendance as the DOS explains

It helps them to earn some money because they send these children go and work, they get some money. A child brings money to the parents; we have got this let's go and buy posho. But also, to buy themselves personal items that's to say, clothes, phones, shoes.

Similarly, Rahuma a female senior three semi-candidate student one of the participants explained about forced labour as she explains

On the other hand, others are just forced by either their guardians or parents to engage in sugarcane growing activities. Such activities include, planting, spraying and applying fertilizers, weeding, harvesting. and the fore leaders of forced labour are their biological parents who force them into such activities to get money to sustain their families that is to say buying food and other basic needs. but there should be laws and regulations that govern labourers on sugarcane plantations because for those companies have regulations on laborers.

The above state seconds some scholar's argument where they explained; Children's school attendance is hampered in the sugarcane-outgrowing economy because children engage in activities such as sugarcane plantation preparing, sugarcane cutting, loading sugarcane onto trucks instead of enrolling and remaining in school (Prudence et al., 2024).

Findings disagree with one of the scholars who calls sugarcane as an alternative, the ultimate discussion must be based upon priorities for schooling relative to its cost in light of overall resources constraints of the case of Namalemba sub-county where there are other priorities like sugarcane growing, where children have an alternative (Mwanika et al., 2021). Its rather left as the only option because people cannot afford what to eat. As one of the participants explains

Parents normally discourage their children from cutting sugarcane but because due to lack of money, they sometimes allow them to go and cut in search for their school fees. There are some students who go and cut sugarcane to get money for home consumption.

Some authors have focused on different things thus attracting attention for policy formulation leaving the torture, slavery, mistreatment and inhuman behaviours that are manifested in sugarcane activities.

Zubran explains how the conditions that children go through the whole day, week and every day.

So harsh because they spend the whole day working standing under sunshine and so on. We even sometimes drink swamp water resulting from over working under sunshine and unsafe water at a plantation.

It employs a lot of people but as you know it pays little wages per a day and sometimes, they will say we don't have money today come back tomorrow. At times you will be demanding for a pay for a bout seven days and they will pay you a wage for three days and the plantation owners will say you even see we are not selling off, what can we give you. So, you work while being exploited.

Though authors have focused on small scale establishments forgetting sugarcane that has spread all-over the country as here they narrate.

Some activities defined as child labour in Uganda take place in the mining sector. This includes working underground or under water, working with harmful equipment and tools, carrying heavy loads and work that expose miners who are children in most times children, to hazardous substances (Njieassam, 2023).

The harsh conditions and long working hours at plantations have significantly affected children's school attendance following the exposure. Children' health conditions are affected which makes it hard for them to attend to school regularly.

4.3.3 Lack of scholastic materials

There is steadily a big number of children who engage in sugarcane growing activities to afford money and get scholastic materials that's to say, pens, books, reems. This is because some parents can only afford school fees and this implies that as a student you will find means to get them. Just as Fata narrates

Need some personal items that my parents do not provide for me that is to say, clothes, for example, new t-shirts, jean trousers, under-shirts, and under-wears. I come from a humble background and if they provide school fees, I participate in sugarcane activities to provide for myself.

Findings challenge some scholars because when children fail to get scholastic materials, they go for sugarcane cutting to earn money and buy them but as one of the participants narrates how the sugarcane out-growing economy influences children's school attendance through its activities. Charles a male semi-candidate of senior three from Anahadah Islamic Institute.

I have some personal needs that my parents cannot afford to provide so, that is why I participate in sugarcane growing activities to earn for myself and afford personal items such as; clothes, shoes, wallet, pens, books, mathematical sets, belts, jerry, school bag just.

Though (Mbago, 2020) provide other reasons behind children's engagement in sugarcane growing activities because of search for scholastics as a result of poverty as they explain here; Many children miss school because they don't have school requirements. Underprivileged African woman is probably the most under privileged human being; illiterate, with limited access to resources. She only faces discrimination and informal sector employment but even has different legal rights as far as inheritance of land and credit which would have helped them to access education. At the moment, adult women get less education, lower pay even when they lack funds to support their children's education with single headed families Mwanika et al. (2021). And what worsens the situation is that some families' single mothers because of neglect by the husband, divorce, or death.

The need scholastics attracts households into sugarcane growing activities such that they can afford to get them for their children. This exposes many children to child labor in the sugarcane economy that affects their school attendance. It affects their general well-being as children and their rights are hampered.

4.3.4 Financial constraints and hunger

This is resulting from the activities before planting sugarcane which destroys everything on that land leaving it bear. Prior the outbreak of sugarcane, villages had their fruits that's to say; jackfruit, papaws, oranges, mangoes that could feed the population in presence of little food due to poor harvests but with the coming of sugarcane, these fruits that used to feed children and thus mitigating hunger following the losses in seasons due to natural causes like drought and excess rainfall that caused low harvests. Children now have nothing to eat like fruits and also parents are influenced by conmen to rent-off their land which is taken for about 4-7years leaving them starving with market foods regardless of the geographic location. This entices and forces children to go for sugarcane activities to get food for their selves and their families. Therefore, children are peacefully to join the activities thus the influence of the

sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance because they spend a lot of time at plantations than being in school.

Robert narrates whereby children have access to sugarcane shambas(plantation) and they lack having money in their pockets, so studying half way, half a day is very impossible for these children due to love for money.

Zubran explains how hunger is caused in the fore first place because they first destroy everything apparently on that piece of land.

Activities such as clearing land for plantations, this is most of the times done using machinery that's to say tractors and oxen but before, there is uprooting and cutting of trees, slashing bushes and digging hills to make the surface flat such it supports machinery. Children clear land by burning charcoal, burning other remaining material trees and other plant remains to allow tractors or oxen to plough the land to be ready for planting sugarcane.

Similarly, he explains how it takes long to be harvested and it allows nothing to on that same piece of land.

Sugarcane reaches maturity at one and a half years (11/2) which is equivalent to eighteen months(18months), its harvested; this is where they gather laborers who are willing to work which includes cutting down sugarcane.

This perspective highlights incidents that makes it hard for children to attend to school regularly following the financial constraints resulting from the advent of sugarcane. With sugarcane growing, all food crops are cleared to allow it grow and it also takes long to mature of eighteen months. Land has also been lent to few people for about 4-7 years which has increased food shortage and poverty finally thus influencing children' school attendance.

4.3.5 Fatigue and work overload

One of the primary participant Salima explained that long ago, sugarcane growing activities used to work for slaves just because a free and normal person couldn't risk their life not until the economic constrains came to place. This is witnessed during the reign of Kabaka Muteesa and King Mwanga of Buganda kingdom used to trade and sale off able-bodied men to the Arabs and the whites to work on sugarcane plantations in Arabia and in America thus the formation of the currently Latin America. It implies therefore; that it was strong and slave men that worked at sugarcane plantations because the working conditions and heavy work. As Rahuma a girl who also works at a family-owned plantation and a student in senior three sharing her self-experience.

So harsh because they spend the whole day working, standing under sunshine and so on. They workers even sometimes drink swamp water resulting from over working under sunshine and sometimes they just bring one jerry can of water to serve for about or over a hundred labours at a plantation which is not enough.

On the other hand, though, its not only sugarcane activities that affects children's school attendance but there are also other factors just like the way Rahuma explains,

Participate in sugarcane cutting during holidays to get personal items such as, shoes, clothes, upkeep and my parents provide the scholastic materials evenly and school fees is paid on time most especially when the term has just started. Sugarcane is sold and my school fees is cleared.

But also, Zubran explains how sugarcane growing activities causes fatigue that affects their school attendance in the sugarcane out-growing economy.

Fatigue resulting from heavy works and long working hours that is to say for a full day, at times you won't attend because of fatigue. I miss school especially on Mondays and Tuesdays as you are from weekends. As a result, I miss classes and just copy notes but it affects performance following the research-based curriculum.

It's evident that fatigue resulting the heavy work that students miss classes because they are always tired which make them doze during lessons(classes) and sometimes they just opt to stay in hostels most especially during the morning lessons. And this finally affects the grades of students which may influence their attendance as the fear for punishments arise and feel out-spaced due to poor performances.

4.3.6 Health challenges

These are unwellness of the physical body, mental and psychological disfunction. Both diseases and injuries cause harm to the general physical body and mental well-being. As a result of over work, poor working conditions, and many more associated with sugarcane production, children end up contracting both short- and long-term diseases and injuries. This is either concurrently or one at a time that's to say resulting from cuts, fractures, car accidents, both insect and animal bites that causes missing school and others die due to failure to access high quality health services.

Fata explains according to his experience;

General body weakness, headaches, backaches, and others resulting from sugarcane growing activities but most especially, cutting sugarcane, and loading onto the trucks. This process involves cutting, tallying, and loading

onto trucks which includes: picking tallies, bending and lolling onto the earlier mentioned trucks. It's too tiresome and also time consuming which takes all the time that would be for academics for sugarcane growing.

Salima a senior four candidate, originally from Luuka district explains how fatigue caused due to heavy work at sugarcane plantations influence children's school attendance.

According to personal experience, children get injured such as bites, wounds, they have risks of side effects from insecticides, pesticides because they lack protective gears. It results into causes child multination where by even people with small pieces of land grow sugarcane which doesn't support crop rotation leaving households with insufficient foods and causes malnutrition.

Something that brings a disagreement with the authors is that they focused on out side layer forgetting the deep part of it like Garden work consists of a variety of activities including garden clearing, clearing the bush, and cutting down tress and digging contours, involves digging plough, planting sugarcane, cutting it into peace for proper germination and covering the plough with soil to complete the germination process. The cultivation of plantations, weeding, through harvesting which includes cutting and lading on tucks (Mbago et al., 2023). These people didn't focus on the in-depth effects of sugarcane growing activities on children's lives thus affecting their school attendance within the sugarcane out-growing economy.

Fata explains;

It negatively causes headaches, fatigue that results into diseases, stomach disorders and aches that result into intestinal diseases. As of overwork, it leads to stunted growths. It's also associated with injuries that causes diseases.

4.3.7 Irregularities and absenteeism

Children's school attendance is hampered following the linear activities from garden preparations through harvesting. Many children are swallowed because there is work everyday and which is payable everyday. When children start work, they never think about school because they assume they can access all what they want that's to say, buying phones, clothes, beddings and other stuffs. Because of the sugarcane out-growing economy, many children are always irregular at school, in school programs and also the rate of being absent has increased gradually.

Jude explains how children go for sugarcane; and thus, this the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance.

They don't have any program for that, once they hear so and so is cutting his/her sugarcane plantation. In the same vein when one taps on them, "Tomorrow we go the other village and we cut, they just like that".

Because Sugarcane plantations are in rural areas, these children are not exposed in other words, they lack morale and motivation whereby they need role models but with sugarcane, the best they can admire is becoming sugarcane trucks driver for the boys and girls just marrying to those drivers who some of them are infected putting young children at health risks. They lose confidence and self esteem.

Charles narrates how it causes selflessness;

They lose confidence and feel out-spaced and think cannot fit in the students' sphere. There are also confusing ideas where they over relate with old people. During plantation activities most especially when cutting they speak a lot of obscene words which disturbs children's minds. When they come to school, they hardly relate with their peers which affects their relationship with the school environments.

As Fata says depending on his very life experience all because of the sugarcane out-growing economy and that affecting children's school attendance,

It's hard to take part in extra-curricular activities with the peers which affects my performance and future gains like bursaries and scholarships, sports sponsorships at higher institution level tertiary/university levels.

DOS one of the key informants stressed this point on how it make the sugarcane out-growing economy influence children's school attendance.

It has discouraged most children to go to school because they are getting small money especially during harvesting stage. It has made little children have grown-wild and you wonder how the generation will be because at least everyone owns a panga.

Robert explains

While talking about the irregularities due to the influence of the out-growing economy on children' school attendance. It affects the attendance so much because we can't get them throughout the week, they normally escape and go for sugarcane cutting and it affects their performance because they miss a lot of concepts.

4.3.8 Lack of domestic requirements

Following the activities done includes; clearing the whole land, cutting down all trees on that piece of land destroying fruits and doesn't support mixed crop cultivation. It therefore, causes hunger at home. Some men have neglected their homes leaving them into hands of women and some who are not able to sustain their families. Children hence go for sugarcane to get money for home consumption.

Similarly, findings confirm with some others on this point as they explained Sugarcane growing brings about cutting down trees, clearing land and it does not entertain crop rotation. It means that food crops have been replaced with a cash crop that lasts for 18month to maturity which facilitates commercialization process of smallholder agriculture through sugarcane growing and the implications on land rights, labour relations, and rural livelihoods in the Busoga sub-region of Uganda (Bahati et al., 2022). One of the key informants Mr. Jude narrates about how the sugarcane out-growing economy has influenced children's school attendance of Namalemba Sub-County as follows; Growing sugarcane has really done a lot of harm than good. In addition to that, we see that sugarcane has also out-of-the blue made parents start telling children, wake up go and cut sugarcane and bring money here instead of encouraging them to go to school, they are encouraging them to go cut sugarcane in a bid to get what to eat because today, much as we are in a rural setting, we are buying everything so we use these children to go and get money else where so after cutting sugarcane, they buy food at home.

But however, following a variety of activities that take place at sugarcane plantations that have been mentioned, cutting down trees, clearing land, cutting down sugarcane by both scholars and study participants describes and gives evidence to the nature of involvement in sugarcane growing.

These activities that happen at sugarcane plantations, as they are mentioned by the authors; They majorly take part in the first stage; sugarcane growing which includes; clearing of gardens, planting sugarcane, weeding plantations, cutting sugarcane, loading sugarcane onto trucks. This is where they spend more time instead of attending to school (Mwavu et al., 2018). The study participants also mentioned some of the activities; The preparatory phase comprises the following intense activities that employ a huge number of children doing it as a domestic work and or direct and indirect income earning job. Activities such as clearing land for plantations, this is most of the times done using machinery that's to say tractors and oxen

but before, there is uprooting and cutting of trees, slashing bushes and digging hills to make the surface flat such it supports machinery. Children clear land by burning charcoal, burning other remaining material trees and other plant remains to allow tractors or oxen to plough the land to be ready for planting sugarcane. They all fall in the line of the first objective, the nature of involvement in sugarcane growing.

In regard to the study objective; that is to assess influence of sugarcane growing activities on children' school attendance, scholars have documented comparatively about how the consequences of engaging in sugarcane growing activities affect children' school attendance as; Most school-going children engage sugarcane planting and harvesting. Thereby sacrificing more time and energy to this income generating activity at the expense of their academics (Mbago et al., 2023). It's noted that during the early 1980s, the education system in Uganda had not gained momentum because parents mainly preferred taking their children in socio-economic activities like agriculture, sugarcane growing industry compared to taking them into schools. This is because they looked at education as a money demanding institution therefore affecting their enrolment Mwanika et al. (2021). Some study participants also added that; So harsh because they spend the whole day working, standing under sunshine and so on. They even sometimes drink swamp water resulting from over working under sunshine and some times they just bring one jerrycan of water to serve for about or over a hundred laborers at a plantation which is not enough. These activities waste children' energy and time that influence their school attendance, thus the findings approved the influence of sugarcane growing activities in children' school attendance. Subsequently, children' school attendance is also hampered with other aside-falling activities as scholars documented here; nevertheless, apart from agricultural production, the people in the area also practice hunting, particularly those drawn from the low-income category. Hunting is mainly practiced in order to supplement food supply and safeguard crops against wild animals, and as a result take the form of combing the sugarcane fields seasonally in search of the animals which takes time, attention of parents and children in opportune costing it with education thus poor school attendance in Namalemba sub county Emerson. (2008). The case of West Nile, the case of Tobacco Schemes has created jobs for brick makers builders to build barns, water bankers, the beer for brewers, and for beer sellers. Young boys thread pieces of meat and fat onto sticks and cook them over an open fire, roasting meat to sell to customers in the bar (Ahmed et al., 2019).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study on influence of the sugarcane outgrowing economy on children school attendance in Namalemba sub-county. The study's objectives were to describe the nature of children's involvement in sugar cane growing activities and to assess the influence of sugar cane growing activities on children's school attendance.

The study's findings highlight the different activities that children engage in during school time, the consequences after engaging, economic challenges, health challenges, social challenges, academic challenges following for the provision of the sugarcane out-growing economy.

The study's limitation and scope are also discussed and suggestions paving way for further research are here. Reckoning on the findings, relevant recommendations are proposed for policymakers, stakeholders, and support systems to address the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance.

5.1 Discussion of findings

Activities that children involve in the sugarcane growing value chain in Namalemba Sub County. This section provides a deeper understanding of activities that children involve in the sugarcane out-growing economy. It provides detailed insights about the influence of such activities on children's school attendance with a unique conversation among scholars with findings and the interpretation of findings.

5.1.2 Sugarcane activities;

The findings correlate with the earlier research where it reveals Children's school attendance is hampered in the sugarcane-outgrowing economy because children engage in activities such as sugarcane plantation preparing, sugarcane cutting, loading sugarcane onto trucks instead of enrolling and remaining in school (Prudence et al., 2024). Also, other scholars explain what it takes to make a plantation garden work consists of a variety of activities including garden clearing, clearing bush, and cutting and digging trees, involves digging plough, planting sugarcane, cutting it into peace for proper germination and covering the plough with soil to

complete the germination process (Ahmed et al., 2019). While participants agreed upon the precious time and energy that children who involve in land clearing and preparing take rather than attending to school and explained activities that take place on plantations, digging ploughs, apply fertilizers, apply sugarcane stems, cut them into small pieces that allow for germination, cover them with soil. Ahmed et al. (2019) found that with the advent of sugarcane growing, a lot of activities come along that attract vulnerable children in search for income due to the effects of poverty, such activities include; clearing bushes, charcoal burning, planting sugarcane, weeding, cutting sugarcane during harvest. Which informs a better understanding as it relates to already existing research where they explained that most school-going children engage in sugarcane planting and harvesting. Thereby sacrificing more time and energy to this income generating activity at the expense of their academics (Mbago et al., 2023). Findings however, showed that its not only time that is sacrificed but also life where child laborers contract diseases as side effects from chemicals.

Findings provide a unique understanding of the phenomenon upon the use of machinery by Ruths et al. (2018) in the sugarcane harvesting, that, in the sugarcane out-growing economy, it is fully manual and as it exposes young children to child labor.

5.1.3 Influence of sugarcane growing activities on children's school attendance

5.1.3.1 Economic drivers

Findings revealed the desire for money is one of the core reasons behind children's involvement in sugarcane growing activities. Most of the literature also asserts that children are sometimes hindered by limited funds given the plight of rural parents, higher fees aimed at improving quality and teachers' pay is bound to eliminate majority of the children from low-income families therefore becoming unable to enrol in, attend school regularly and they thus resort to sugarcane growing acting as servants on the plantation for a small payoff, in consideration of the case of Namalemba sub-county (Ahmed et al., 2019).

Findings challenged that working is deliberate and therefore, it depends on an individual's capability to work for long hours. They also narrated that children lack motivation to remain in school since they are from rural settings and thus lack role models differing from the perception that children's enrolment in areas with booming businesses is interrupted because many children engaging in such activities ignore school (Mbago et al., 2023). Findings revealed that children are poorly paid because they are not educated aligns with the scholarly

work that child labour has been employed as the cheapest method of production in the sugarcane growing communities Mwavu et al. (2018).

Findings also confirmed that households usually rent-off their land which is taken for about 4-7 years and above leaving them starving with expensive food stuffs from the markets. This has left households without surplus food, malnourished, deep in poverty, hunger, early marriages resulting vulnerability caused by poverty. Literature supports findings that the ultimate discussion must be based upon priorities for schooling relative to its cost in light of overall resources constraints of the case of Namalemba sub-county where there are other priorities like sugarcane growing, where children have an alternative (Mwanika et al., 2021).

5.1.3.2 Social factors;

Findings revealed that many children are found onto plantations engaged in any activity, such as planting, weeding, sugarcane cutting and loading onto trucks but because they work as a family, sometimes work as an individual but directly forced by parents or guardians align with Emerson, (2008) who asserted that children's school attendance is hampered in the sugarcane-outgrowing economy because children engage in activities such as sugarcane plantation preparing, sugarcane cutting, loading sugarcane onto trucks instead of enrolling and remaining in school. Authors agree with the participants that fatigue and work overload following the advent of sugarcane growing influences children's school attendance. It thus leaves children spending all their hours and days on plantations harvesting sugarcane (Ahmed et al., 2019).

Many children are swallowed into the sugarcane growing industry due to daily work thus production-based payment, influenced by peers to join the industry, lack of examples and thus spend more time and energy at plantations than academics supplements scholarly work that most school-going children engage in sugarcane planting and harvesting. Thereby sacrificing more time and energy to this income generating activity at the expense of their academics (Mbago et al., 2023). But however, findings discovered that social constructions, beliefs and perceptions and social settings also force children into sugarcane growing activities that influence their school attendance they thus suggested for attitude shaping, school feeding programs.

Furthermore, findings challenged that lack of motivation, lack of awareness, poor attitudes towards education encourages children to take part in sugarcane growing activities thereby revealing that it's not just sugarcane activities differing from other authors who thought its

just sugarcane activities that block children's school attendance where children are hired to cut and load sugarcane on trucks in Uganda and thus children's school attendance is affected (Emerson. 2008). Additionally, Mbago, (2020) found that many children miss school because they don't have school requirements. But findings revealed that some children have requirements but instead want luxurious living thus engaging in sugarcane activities at the expense of attending to school. Participants narrated that the social stigma, loss of esteem, name-labelling while at school forces them to remain in villages where they are free differing from Prudence et al. (2024) found that children from poor families and disadvantaged areas have a difficulty in accessing education. In the same vein, it indicated that the illusion of who will be educated and how much schooling should be provided depends on the cost of schooling.

5.1.3.3 Educational barriers;

Findings revealed that sugarcane growing activities expose children to forced labour and poor working conditions which are harsh and characterised by heavy work and long working hours that make children exhausted thereby leading to fatigue extends Prudence et al. (2024) that in both manual and mechanized harvesting, workers who are children can be subjected to long work shifts in which they are potentially exposed to risks which make it hard for children to attend to school because most of the time is spent in sugarcane plantations. Well as Mbago et al. (2023) argues that children may also be induced to exert themselves excessively by production-based payment systems and by implication therefore, it means the more and long you work the high the pay.

Findings challenged that the engagement of children in sugarcane growing activities is due to the attitudes they have towards education as they compare it with sugarcane which earns daily rather than a long-term investment called education which is due to the influence of environmental factors in relation to the Ecological Systems theory. Some children are the breadwinners for their families thereby earning money for family consumption. They additionally explained that most of the households with low economic statuses have lend away their land to those with improved financial statuses which has shifted the origin of farming where initially people were growing food crops, it has resulted into hunger and poverty. This extends Mwanika et al. (2021) findings that thus it is hard for school going children to get scholastics and hence they resort to sugarcane growing activities to earn a living to get such materials exhibiting the survival for the fittest.

5.1.3.4 Health and Well-being impacts;

Following of work overload, poor and harsh working conditions, associated with sugarcane production, children end up contracting both short-term and long-term injuries that result into diseases resulting from cuts, fractures, car accidents, both insect and animal bites and (Njieassam, 2023) also adds how children contract diseases working with harmful equipment and tools, carrying heavy loads and work that expose children, to hazardous substances that harm their health. This aligns with a study conducted prior in both manual and mechanized harvesting, workers who are mostly children can be subjected to long work shifts that makes them potentially exposed to health risks which makes it hard for children to attend to school because most of the time, they at sugarcane plantations and being shepherded with diseases and injuries (Ruths et al. (2018).

Findings extended that sugarcane growing activities cause child malnutrition because even people with small pieces of land grow sugarcane which doesn't support crop rotation leaving them with insufficient foods that makes them vulnerable to malnutrition. They suggested that households with small pieces of land should stick to food crop farming to prevent food shortage which is the major cause of diseases and poverty to keep children in schools.

5.2 Limitations of the study

Data reliability: Responses from participants were somehow biased or influenced by personal opinions and hatred attached to sugarcane activities. This was witnessed when respondents had different perceptions towards different issues of concern which made generalizability hard.

Effect from other factors: School attendance can be affected by multiple factors beyond the sugarcane out-growing economy, such as government policies, weather conditions, and cultural practices, making it hard to isolate the specific influence of sugarcane farming.

Limited resources: It needed more resources as it costed transport to and from the study area but also, I could reach and told to come back another time. Conducting a thorough study may require significant resources and time, limiting the scope of data collection and analysis.

5.3 Suggestions for Further research

Comparative studies: Future research should consider diverse studies involving children in the sugarcane out-growing economies from different districts, sub-regions and regions to

bring a richer understanding of the influence of the out-growing economy on children's school attendance.

Psychological and physical: Studies should include investigations on psychological and physical impacts of the activities associated with sugarcane growing in the out-growing economy. After involvement in the sugarcane growing activities, they go through mental and physical hardships.

Diverse Sampling: Future researchers should focus on children and even focus on the youths because they also go through a lot and from different parts of the country who have diverse cultural aspects that will provide a huge understanding of the influence of the sugarcane outgrowing economy. They should as well focus on the protective measures put in place.

5.4 Conclusion

There was a thorough examination of the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance. It unveils the activities that take place in the sugarcane out-growing economy and their influence on children' school attendance. Therefore, understanding the different activities and their influence on children' school attendance and their general well-being and the support systems necessary to alleviate them was at the heart of the study. Through qualitative insights derived from interviews and narratives, this study highlighted the obstacles and efforts towards creating a supportive environment.

The findings highlighted three major activities that children are engaged in the sugarcane out-growing economy that include; Land clearing and preparing this is the genesis of sugarcane production chain which entails a lot of activities, digging trees, slashing bushes, charcoal burning and digging hills to, make the land flat. Planting this is the second activities in sugarcane growing phase that encompasses, digging of contours, applying fertilizers (depending on fertility), applying sugarcane into the ploughs, cutting them into pieces to allow for germination, and cover them with soil. Sugarcane cutting this marks the harvesting of mature sugarcane and taken for further processing to get other raw materials. This activity attracts the most population of child as per most study participants. All these activities result into; health risks, social stigma, academical, emotional and psychological challenges that hinder their school attendance. The experiences of children in Namalemba sub-county underscore the importance of institutional support, social services, and community involvement to help children thrive.

The findings also revealed how sugarcane growing activities influence children's school attendance; Fatigue and work overload following heavy work and long-working hours at sugarcane plantations which subsequently affect their health and school attendance. Health challenges come along resulting from the nature of activities such as land clearing and preparing, planting and sugarcane cutting where they sustain injuries that affect their mobility to schools thus influencing their school attendance. Irregularities and absenteeism due to the presence of sugarcane growing activities, findings revealed that many of the children spend a lot of their time and energy on plantations leaving little and sometimes no time for school hence the influence of sugarcane growing activities. Lack of domestic requirements findings revealed that the advent of sugarcane and its related activities resulted into poverty following the lending away of land for a long period of 4-7 and above years, long maturity period of one and a half years, the cash crop doesn't support other food crops. This is why households have turned children into laborers to provide for the families and at the expense of their education. Money from sugarcane activities resulting from the advent of sugarcane, it employs the entire interested informal population and thus, it attracts many children than attending to school regularly hence influencing their school attendance. Forced labour this is witnessed most especially around families with humble backgrounds where children are turned into employees to provide for the families which interrupts their school attendance. Lack of scholastic materials this is following the poverty which is caused to the biggest population resulting from lending their land to minorities with money that immerses them in total poverty which gives way for children's participation that at the end influences their school attendance. Financial constraints and hunger following the advent of sugarcane growing, during the initial activities of sugarcane production that's to say; land clearing which leave the land bare, all fruits destroyed. Secondly, it is the maturity period of 18 months and sadly is that this cash crop doesn't support crop rotation which results into hunger and economic breakdown which leave children in a sorry state and consequently influencing their school attendance.

Based on the findings, the independent variables; land allocation, household incomes, seasonal demands, which have laid a fertile ground for sugarcane growing that is to say, land clearing and preparing, planting and sugarcane cutting. These results into fatigue and work overload, health challenges, financial constraints and hunger, irregularities and absenteeism, are determined by the contextual factors like socio-economic status like the financial status of

households, government policies, attitude shaping which finally result into the dependent factors, regularities, enrolment rates, dropout rates, academic performance.

Therefore, based on the findings, it helps people to understand the different activities in which children are involved that take place at sugarcane plantations from the initial stage of land clearing and preparing, planting through harvesting that influences their school attendance. It reveals how sugarcane growing activities; fatigue and work overload, money from sugarcane activities, forced labor, irregularities and absenteeism, lack of scholastic materials, health challenges, financial constraints that result from sugarcane growing activities influence children's school attendance in the sugarcane out-growing economy of Namalemba sub-county.

Conclusively, the sugarcane out-growing economy has strongly influenced children's school attendance. Well as the journey for supporting children in Namalemba sub-county is complex and ongoing, the insights gained from this study offer a fertile ground for formulating more effective strategies and policies. By addressing the unique needs of children, communities and other support systems can create a conducive environment for children in the sugarcane out-growing economy to attend to school which will improve their well-being.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations were suggested to enhance the well-being and improve on school attendance of children in Namalemba subcounty.

5.5.1 To Policy makers

Direct services should be established to children before it worsens, for example, counselling services, providing scholarships to children basing on their economic backgrounds.

Support systems should aim at uplifting the financial statuses of the households to enable them afford to get domestic items and pay for their children's school fees rather than burdening children to work for the gain of their families.

5.5.2 To the community

Community members at large are asked to take on the role of looking after every child as it traditionally used to be. This is because some children are provided with scholastics but they just hide over sugarcane plantation to reduce irregularities and absenteeism.

5.5.3 The parents

Parents and distinguished caregivers of children are requested to put their children in hostel to prevent them from being influenced to join sugarcane growing activities.

5.5.4 The school

School administration is requested to adjust school schedules to suit students who engage in sugarcane growing activities.

Schools are requested to introduce feeding programs to curb up the problem of hunger among students that drive them into sugarcane activities.

While this study provides for qualitative insights, it is relevant to recognise its limitations. Because of its qualitative nature and small sample size, the findings may not be generalized to all children in sugarcane out-growing economy of Bugweri district or other parts. It implies that, future research should incorporate a mixed research approach to examine the wider influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance. It would provide for a more comprehensive understanding the issue and inform evidenced-based strategies and policies.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix 1: Consent form

I am **Kibubuli Faizal** a fourth year and a finalist student of Bachelors Degree of Social Work. I am carrying out research on the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children's school attendance of Namalemba S/C. This research is purely for academic gains and will only to be submitted to the department of social work and social administration Makerere University. Its voluntary and you have all rights reserved, would you please take part in my research and feel free to withdraw at any particular point.

Appendix 2: In-depth Interview guide for students;

Topic: Examine the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children' school attendance: A case study of Namalemba S/C, Bugweri district.

Objectives;

- To describe the nature of children's involvement in sugar cane growing activities.
- To assess the influence of sugar cane growing activities on children's school attendance.

Section 1

Demographic information

- Please tell me about yourself.

Probe (age, living arrangements, class)

Section 2: Nature of children's involvement in sugar cane growing activities.

- Please tell me about sugarcane growing in your community.

Probe

- How spread is it?
- What kinds of activities are associated with sugarcane growing?
- As an individual, what kind of activities do you normally participate In the sugarcane growing?
- Why do you engage in sugarcane growing activities?

Probe (Support family, earn money, buy scholastics, buy personal items?)

- What are the activities that children involve in the sugarcane out growing economy?
- Why do you engage in sugarcane growing activities?

Probe (support family, earn money, buy personal items, scholastics items?)

Section 3: Influence of sugarcane growing activities on children's school attendance.

Questions

- How are you able to manage your work in sugarcane growing and also your school obligation?
- What do you do when you have to attend school and also to do your work in sugarcane at the same time?

Probe (For the reasons by asking why?)

- When you compare the two (school attendance and sugarcane growing?)

- How has being a student impacted or affected your work in sugarcane growing?
- Please tell me how working in sugarcane has impacted your schooling?

Probe: (For missing school, fatigue at school, being late for school, performance at school)

- For positive impacts if any, school fees payment, lunch money, and scholastic materials?
- Please tell me how often you miss school in a week, month, term?
- What are your reasons why you miss school? When you consider your reasons for missing school?
- What are the effects of sugarcane growing activities on children' school attendance, how impactful is sugarcane growing?
- How was your school attendance prior joining sugarcane growing activities compared to these days when you work in sugarcane growing?
- What are the effects of your missing school on your learning experiences?

Probe

For impacts on academic performance, relationships at school, participation in extracurricular activities)

Thank you for your contribution to my research. Your insights carry a huge meaning to my academia. They are all protected with a high level of confidentiality and purely for academic gains only. It will be only submitted to the department of social work and social administration, Makerere University.

Appendix 3: In-depth interview guide for key informants;

Topic: Examine the influence of the sugarcane out-growing economy on children' school attendance: A case study of Namalemba S/C, Bugweri district.

Objectives;

- To describe the nature of children's involvement in sugar cane growing activities.
- To assess the influence of sugar cane growing activities on children's school attendance

Section 1

Demographic information

- May I know about you?

Probe What is your name, age, ethnicity, sex, role?

Section 1: Nature of children's involvement in sugar cane growing activities.

Questions

- What affects children' school attendance?
- Can you describe how children are involved in sugarcane growing in this area?
- What specific tasks do children usually perform in the sugarcane fields?
- How often do children participate in sugarcane activities (e.g., daily, weekends, and holidays)?
- What reasons do parents or guardians give for allowing or encouraging children to work in sugarcane farming?

Section 3: Influence of Sugarcane growing activities on children's school attendance

- What is your view about school attendance?
- How does the involvement in sugarcane activities affect children's punctuality and school performance?
- What is the performance of children who engage in sugarcane growing from those who don't engage?

Probe Why do you think children miss school?

- What measures, if any, have been taken by the community or schools to address this issue?
- What suggestions would you give to help balance children's education with household sugarcane activities?
- What measures should be taken to improve children' school attendance who engage in sugarcane growing activities?

Thank you for your insights, your contribution has added more value on my research and my academic backbone. Your insights will be protected with a high level of confidentiality and it will be for academic gains only submitted to the department of social work and social administration, Makerere University, Uganda.