

Poverty in Rural Area: The Main Factor of School Desertion in the Sub Prefecture of Lamé in Southwest Chad

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Abstract:

Like other southern countries, the sous-prefecture of Lamé in Chad is not an exception in terms of school desertion. However, this situation is the outcome of various heterogeneous difficulties. Processes by which it is carried out are numerous and favored by several interconnected factors of which the main link is poverty. Closely linked to parent statuses, some differences are noticed under socio-demographic conditions. Household forms are the distinctive features of differing types of the abandon in terms of the figures. The explaining reasons of these distinctions are the result of socio-ethno-religious marks. School left-outs are not observed in the same way as in the multiple, monogamous, muslim, and christian families.

Keywords: Factors, Left-outs, Risks, Lamé, Poverty.

Introduction:

Although school desertion has many causes, several studies has established that childhood poverty and the persistent one in the family are the main risky factors (Audas et Bushnik B-T., et al., 2004). Many UNESCO reports show that Saharan and Asian countries are the most affected by that phenomenon. The analysis of the report not only points out the risk factor but also highlights that those factors are found in vulnerable regions (Khalid G., 2015).

Like countries all over the world, Chad has prioritized the human resources valorization since the 1990s. This continued with The National Sovereign Conference of N'Djamena (from January 15, 1993 to April 6, 1993) that suggested the implementation of triple strategic program that is Education – Training – Employment. It is enforced in the constitution adopted on March 31, 1996. The articles 35 and 38 of that constitution recommend that all citizens have right to education and teachings at government schools are free and compulsory. Despite these texts, the schooling rate

Is low (39.8% for boys and 18.4% for girls) at secondary school according to the 2015 Education Ministry report. The low schooling rate is partly caused by the school desertion.

Despite the recommendation of the law and the effort made by the government in the last two decades regarding the free access to education, the educational system still has problems. The big challenge is the school desertion at secondary school in rural areas. In Lamé local subdivision (Sub – prefecture of Lamé), for example, the secondary schools annually register a total number of 26 to 62%. This makes us to make the hypothesis according to which the high desertion rate at secondary school in rural area in Chad may result in many interconnected causes the main factor of which is poverty. The school and family environment factors include the characteristics of curriculum, lack of material and moral support of parents and psychological factors. The objective of this article is to explain the various causes that

predict school desertion in Lamé local Subdivision. School desertion means the expulsion of a learner out of school (Esterle H-M et Guide A., 2006), an act by which an authority expel from a position and precisely, according to Bloch G., and Gerde B. (1998), the case of abandonment, first used to denote the learners that leave voluntarily the school system.

1. Spatial and temporal framework of the study:

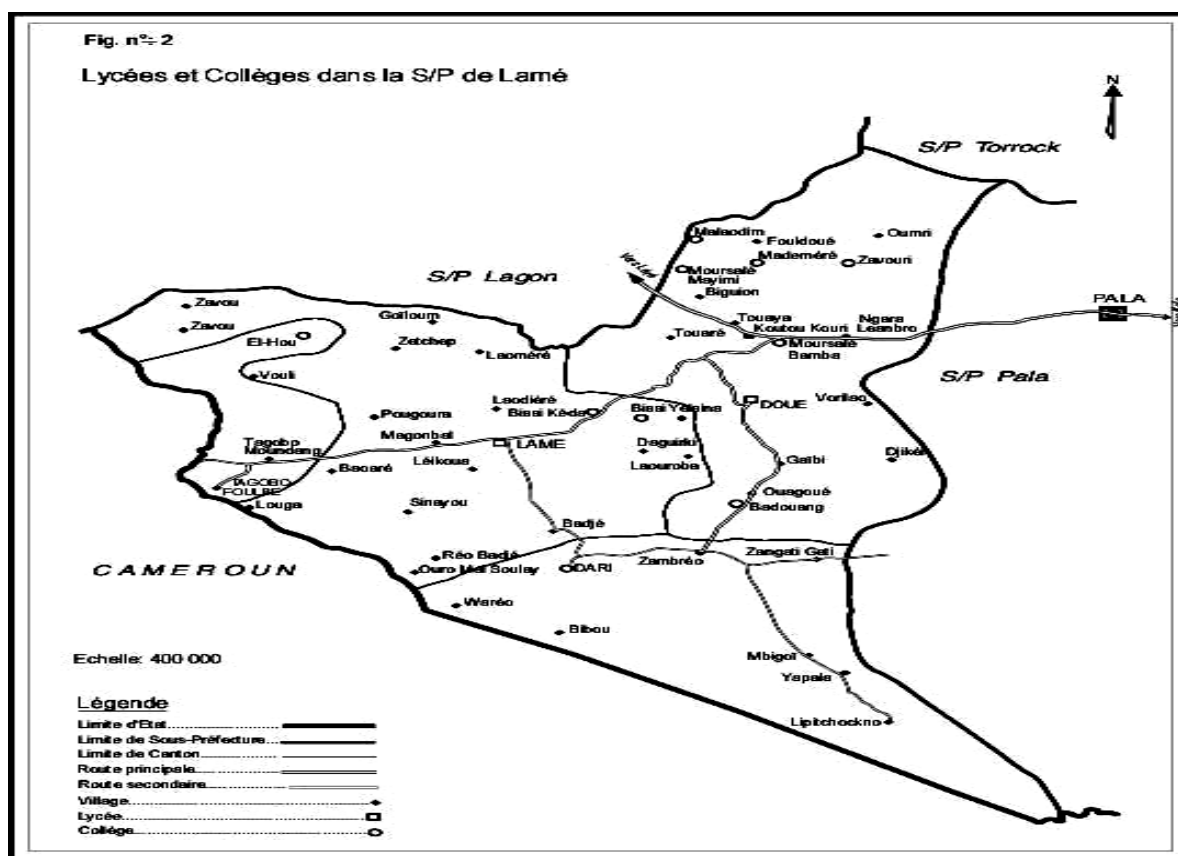
The spatial framework of this study is the Sub-Prefecture of Lamé in Mayo-Dallah located in the Southwest of Chad. It has the surface area of 1614sq miles and is limited in the north by Torrock subdivision, in the south by Gagal, in the West by Lagon and Cameroon and in the East by Pala. Lamé has four cantons which are Doué, Dari, Lamé and Togobo-Foulbé. A tremendous number of languages are spoken throughout the Sub-prefecture. The majority of Zimé-Pévé is found in Lamé canton, Pévé in Dari canton, Peuhls, Moundangs and Zimé-pévé in Togobo-Foulbé. Zimé-pévé and Moundangs are also spoken in Doué. In the locality, there are three religions including Christianity, Islam and

Animism. Agriculture is the main source of income apart from that generated by the Cement factory of Baoré.

The study is circumscribed on the temporal scale of seven years (from 2006 to 2013). The research is focused on twelve secondary schools out of fourteen that Lamé has.

2. Methods:

We have adopted a methods focused on documents reading and interviews with the target groups including the traditional leaders, the staff of the associations of learners' parents, the reports of various general assemblies of village associations, the local teachers and head of schools' opinions and those of the inspectors of the locality. In addition, we have issued the questionnaires for learners that have left school and for parents according to their ethnics and religion. The analysis of the diverse opinions and the results of questionnaires allowed us to explain the causes that predict the school desertion in the locality.



3. Results interpretations:

Learners of the targeted secondary and high schools are subject to annually school desertion. Many causes may be identified: the level of learners that are low, the social condition of parents that does not allow learners to continue their study, the socio-economic factors where learners devote themselves to lucrative activities, and other factors related to tradition that forbids some practices such as early marriage noticed in most of girls that go to school, etc.

3.1. Household characteristics, distinctive basis of school desertion

The analysis reveals that the school desertion is often seen in polygamous households. These families are less willing to value school and are not ready to support their children at school. They are popular families, social cheeriness of the village. The children of those families may have been educated in the social way, different from that of school. That education is shown by the fact that the parents have no control on children compared to that of monogamous households, especially the Christian ones. The latter differs from the two other households in that it allows children to understand their future through school because of the fact that some of the parents or relatives lived with missionaries or priests. The Christian families are mostly well-educated in the southern rural area of the country. They are taught how to read and write.

Furthermore, the school experience of the learners from those families reflects the attitudes of their parents. Those parents consider the white people's schools as something positive (Deniger M-A., Anne A., et al., (2009-15). They try to control the school activities of their children and strongly invest in it. In addition, the good functioning of schools depends on the opinion, material and financial support of those kinds of parents. 85% of them pay the whole school fees of their children before the end of the school year.

3.1.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of school desertion.

The sample analysis shows that learners that abandon schools are between 14 and 30 years old on average and are all from secondary school. It is noticed that those who abandon school represent more than 75%. Most of the cases are found in polygamous families and/or from poor families. Poor families denote families that do not have yoking and some agricultural tools, and the families whose agricultural productions are low and cannot allow taking care of their member until the next season. These types of families are regarded, in the rural area of Lamé, as those belonging to lower social class.

The learners (more than 68%) living in poor families maintain that the poverty of their parents does not allow them to carry on their studies as it should be. This condition makes them leave school. As a result, some of these learners (25% of them) go from one weekly market to another, helping merchants in selling their goods or hawking. Others (10%) become motorbike riders commonly called 'Clandomen'. 23% of them migrate in big town to look for job and 16% of them find it better to practice gold washing. Others again (18%) abandon school for poaching. For the remainder 13% of them, it's the long distance, lack of support and means that may allow them to live in town that make them abandon school.

3.1.2. Gender and religion in the process of school desertion in Lamé rural area.

In the socio-demographic level, girls are more in the precarious social situation than boys. Indeed, there is no significant difference regarding the socio-professional status of parents. Nevertheless, girls are mostly brought up by their mothers that guide them towards marital life than towards the school one. However, some differences occur in some socio-religious conditions. For example, it is noticed that girls from Peuhls Muslim religion abandon school earlier than girls from polygamous and Christian families.

Muslim (Peuhls) families consider Islamic education as the one they get right with. This

conception does not cope with the current conception of modern public school (Khayar I-H 1976). For this reason, Muslim Peuhls resist public school and encourage their children to learn Koran that is more generous and turned towards past values.

Hence, the social slowness effects that are against sending girls to school are mostly found in Muslim families. They fear that those girls acquire some values at western school that may be against their cultural value. Therefore, they would rather send their daughter to Islamic schools to learn Koran. Boys think of getting ready financially to go on pilgrimage in Mecca, after abandoning school, to get the title as El-Hadj. This religious duty is seen as honorary title, a symbol of wealth and a high social value status in the Peuhl community.

As for girls, they get married early, between 14 and 15 years old where their school level is roughly equivalent to form 1 and form 3. In the polygamous families, this kind of marriage happens when the girls are between 16 and 17 years old. 78% of those girls often abandon school when they reach form 3 or form 5. One of the fundamental reasons is that parents look forward to getting dowry in kind (oxen) which are regarded as a wealth. Another reason is connected with the social status of the future husband directed towards the future (a student, a graduated looking for employment or even a civil servant).

However, more than 25% of girls from Christian families get their Baccalaureate and 67% of them abandon school in form 6 to get married. 10% of them end in forced marriage that makes them abandon school. Boys are obsessed by early marriage under the pressure of parents.

4. Economic factors:

There are many economic factors that make learners of the locality abandon school. The cement factory established in Boaré, the increased numbers of weekly markets in and around the sub prefecture of Lamé are some of the factors that allow people to generate incomes.

4.1. The attraction of the budding Baoré cement factory.

Since its establishment in 2008, the Baoré cement factory has attracted young people from the rural sub prefecture of Lamé. Many learners have abandoned school to look for job in the factory. At that time, that's from 2008 to 2010, a high rate of school desertion was seen in secondary schools of the cement site. In 2008, 47.36% abandoned school in Lamé secondary school, 55.11% in Doué secondary school and 56.32% and 24.12% in Bissi Kada and Moursalé secondary school respectively. In 2009, 62%, 52% and 28.45% of the total numbers of Doué, Lamé and El-Hou secondary schools respectively abandoned school during the same school year.

The majority of learners that abandon school (65.78%), the 18 to 30 years old persons, come from deprived families. 58.45% of them have to care for families either as a married or as an heir. The highest rates of school desertion are noticed from form 4 to A-level. The statistics has shown that those learners reach the secondary school in higher ages.

4.2. Trading

Trading is one of the activities that make learners from the sub prefecture of Lamé abandon school because of the weekly markets every day of the week in the locality. Girls are attracted by the selling of local drinks, food and clothes at those markets. In the end, they abandon school to continue those activities. According to those girls, the parents do not financially support them at school, they are forced to get married and sometimes frustrated when they get undesired pregnancy. According to the local authorities, other consequences are the increased number of secret abortion, unmarried mothers and of infected girls.

Trading remains attractive for boys (especially for Peuhls, Pévé and Moundangs). This is mostly seen in Peuhl boys than in other ethnic groups. They often go to the local markets around and in their villages, in Cameroon or in Nigeria to sell things. In addition to hawking, they help traders to sell goods, hoping to get a wage of about 5% of sale of the day.

Others leave school the day of market to ride motorbike. This may happen every day of markets that make them be absent at school. The average amount that they earn varies from 15,000 to 30,000 FCFA, which is great for rural households.

4.2.1. Parents are responsible for the gaining of the motorbike

According to some authors, the investment and support of parents for the school of their children are very important for the success or failure of learners at school (Zenerou Z. 1988) et Bautier E. et al., (2002). Motorbike riding for money is sometimes encouraged by some parents. They use the incomes from cotton or cattle to get that motorbike for their progeny. As it generates financial means for parents, the latter think they may overcome financial problems they face in the family. They don't care about whether their children have gone to school or not. Those motorbike riders help other people in bringing goods to the market or lifting people to hospital and markets. In the end, they abandon school for ever, devoting themselves to that activity.

Some learners (+23%) think that parents are responsible for that and others (30%) think they have been forced to get married by their parents and it is difficult now for them to take care of their family. Others again (nearly 47%), say that they have decided by themselves to look for money. These learners do not perceive school as a means to have a good future, but think that it's a long term future because of the difficulties that the rural families face. This is sustained by the presence of many markets in and around the sub prefecture of Lamé.

4.2.2. Forerunner role of weekly market in the school desertion

Baikwa and Adoumri markets in the north of Cameroon (in the Southwest of Lamé) and those of local villages constitute a very important exchange link between traders from Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria. Traders from Chad often come from Lamé, Pala and Léré; those from Cameroon come from the far north of Adamaoua region (Garoua, Maroua,

Lagdo, Rey-Bouba, Adoumri, Ngong and Ngaoudéré).

The desertion is noticed mostly in the learners of schools near those markets including Dari, El-Hou and Lamé secondary schools where many learners are often absent the days of the markets. More than 20% of the total number of learners is absent those days. They are absent without any permission from school administration. As a result, they fail.

5. Low level as an eminent factor of school desertion:

In Chad and particularly in the sub prefecture of Lamé, the fall in the level of learners has many causes precisely the lack of qualified teachers and lack of objective in testing. The consequence is that learners go from one school to another and abandon school in the end.

5.1.1. Lack of qualified teachers: pedagogical imbalance

More the 75% of the teachers in schools of the sub prefecture of Lamé are contract public servants and are paid by the Pupils' Parents Association. The work condition and the wage of these teachers cannot favor determination in what they do. This is the indication that learners are not taught as it should be. As a result, they get bad marks and are sometimes excluded from the school; which discourage them. Others repeat the same level twice or three times. More than 83% of the learners that repeat their class have abandoned the school.

5.2. Bad testing as a cause of school desertion

The fact the children are not interested in school in early ages affects their notes in the classroom. As a result, they repeat their classes, are excluded or abandon the school by themselves. These factors favor make the learners think that the future is out of school. Therefore, they start giving up at the beginning of school or after the first term.

5.3. School nomadic, one of the consequences of school failure.

For one reason or the other, some learners decide to spend a blank school year; others abandon school because of poor school performances or personal

reasons. They do not want to be excluded or to repeat the same level twice or three times. Those learners come back to the headmasters so that they can start school again. While those who are excluded negotiate to come back again, those who repeat their class negotiate to continue in the next class. So they go from one school to another, with the help of parents, to corrupt the school administration. This school nomadic is often the cause of school desertion for more than 10% of learners of the rural sub prefecture of Lamé after they fail to negotiate with school administration.

Learners that succeed in corrupting the administration are registered in the next class without any solid basis. Consequently, they find that they are less intelligent than others. The

increased number of school desertion in form 5 is explained by this factor. During the school year 2010 – 2011, 15.50% of the total number of learners in form 5 deserted school in Lamé secondary school, 10% of learners of from the same level in Doué secondary school.

These problems negatively influence the success in Baccalaureate. The learners that have not followed normally the school sit for baccalaureate many times. They abandon school, as a result, after many failures to devote themselves for other activities. The failure during the year 2009 – 2010 in the two secondary schools of the Sub prefecture of Lamé explains that. This is summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Baccalaureate results in two secondary schools of the Sub prefecture of Lamé:

Schools	Years	Success rate according to year and secondary school	Success rate of learners that repeated the A-level according to times, schools and years			
			1 year	2 years	3 years	Sum
Doué secondary school	2009	24.06%	28.75%	31.78%	37.47%	100%
	2010	26.53%	23.17%	35.18%	42.65%	100%
Lame secondary school	2009	26.47%	32.25%	37.90%	29.85%	100%
	2010	22.09%	13.60%	41.15%	42.45%	100%

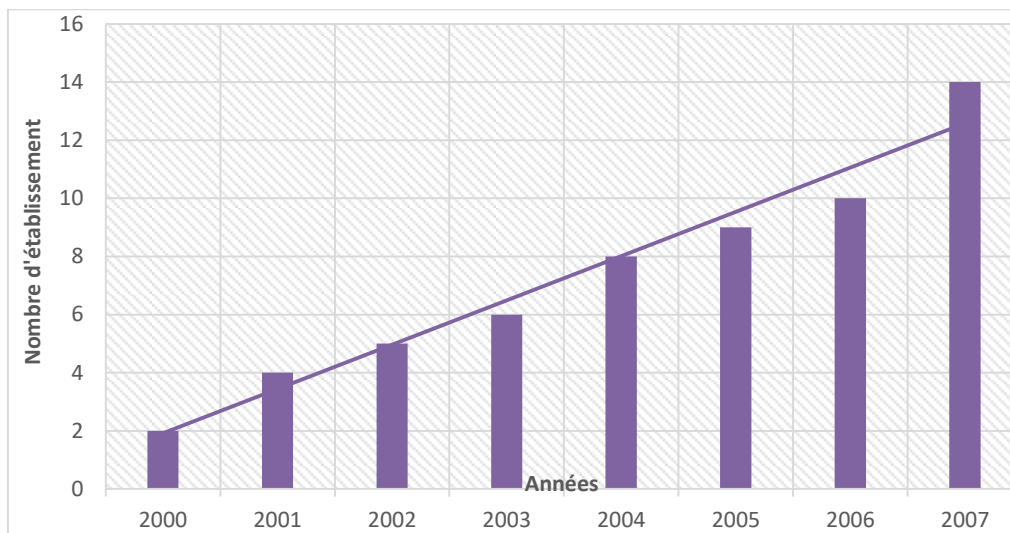
Source: 2009 and 2010 reports of Lamé and Doué headmasters.

As seen in the table, no school among the two has got the success rate of 30% during the two sessions of baccalaureate. In addition, learners that have sit for baccalaureate many times have got higher percentage. This is the indication that the learners come in a-level with low performances in their studies and catch up within two or three years.

5.4. The increased number of secondary schools

With the creation of other secondary schools (from 2000 up to now), Lamé has many secondary

schools. Before 2000, the Sub prefecture had only two secondary schools (in Lamé and Doué). Seven years later, the number of schools has increased from two to fourteen. This situation is encouraged by parents that compete to get secondary schools in each village regardless the quality of teachers or infrastructures.



Source: Mayo-Dallah Departmental Inspection of National Education

Fig 1: The evolution of secondary schools in the Sub prefecture of Lamé according to the year.

Teachers are recruited by learners' parents without any teaching training. These teachers teach without any reference to the national curriculum and other materials. As a result, they give notes that do not reflect the reality. The government only sends a headmaster who is supposed to be the only qualified teacher. It is noticed that some learners abandon school because the new headmaster is rigorous enough. When Doué secondary school was recognized by the government in 2003, 27.40% of the total number of learners abandoned school with 18.45% in Lamé secondary school.

6. Cattle farm social and economic activity that categorizes the society:

Cattle farm is also one of the causes of school desertion in the Sub prefecture of Lamé. It is very important in the culture and anthropology of the local population. Animals constitute means that allow to get married and have many children to be used as manpower in the agricultural activity and increase the number of descendents (Palou B-L., 2015). Among the learners that abandoned school from 2008 to 2011 (three school years), more 13% of them found it better to be shepherds (to take care of domestic animals of a particular person to get money). Most of those learners are from the Peuhl ethnic group even though it is noticed in other ethnic group.

Cattle farm is considered as a potential wealth; but mostly used as social categorization factor. In their adulthood, the learners from Peuhl ethnic group think that it is too long and loss of time to be at school. Therefore they abandon school for that activity where they earn a heifer every six months or a bull every five months. After many years of this activity, they get some oxen that constitute a wealth for them.

6.1. Hunting a cultural activity that has become lucrative nowadays.

Poaching is an important traditional activity in the anthropology of Pévé and Moundang society. Some learners have abandoned school to devote themselves for this activity. They look for big games such as elephants, antelopes, buffaloes, zebra, etc. According to the headmasters and parents, these learners start accompanying hunters in the bush. They learn the hunting rites, are accustomed with secret selling of the hunting products and become, in the end, the poachers. They start with continuing absences and then abandon school.

These kinds of learners are found in the villages like Yapala, Waréo, Mbibou (in Dari subdivision), Moursalé-Mayimi, Badouang, Djiké, Zavouri (in Doué subdivision) and in Tagobo-Foulbé. The selling of the wild meat in villages or in Pala is done secretly that forestry and wild life agents of

the area cannot control. The income from that poaching is very important for the households that practice it.

Conclusion:

This work deals with the process of school desertion and its causes in the secondary schools of the Lamé Sub Prefecture. The causes of that desertion are connected with various factors even though they vary. The socio-economic, socio-cultural, family and school factors are the main factors among others. They interconnect with a common link which is the poverty. In this work, the poverty of families and some socio-demographic features constitute the main factors of desertion of school by children.

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