

Child Working Population in India: A Study

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Abstract

The numbers of child working population are increasing very rapidly. In India, the children are engaged mostly in various low-key jobs of the unorganized sectors. They are working in hazardous situation. The Census shows an increase in the number of child labourers from 11.28 million in 1991 to 12.66 million in 2001 and 21.39 million in 2011. Moreover, about 85 per cent of child labourers in India are hard-to-reach, invisible and excluded, as they work largely in the unorganized sector, both rural and urban, within the family or in household-based units in the country.

Key Words: Child labour, Hazardous jobs, Discrimination, Poverty

Introduction:

Child labour refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school. Child working people are unequal in India. They are also called child labour. Any child out of school is a child labour. According to International Labour Organization (ILO); the term "child labour" is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children. It has become a serious and burning social problem in India. Children, under age 14 are often forced to work for as many as 18 hours a day. They are subject to malnutrition, impaired vision, deformities from sitting long hours in cramped over crowded work places; they become easy preys to deadly diseases like serious respiratory diseases, T.B., and Cancer. They are often forced to lead solitary lives away from their families.

Kinds of Child Labour

Child Labour: This group has children who are doing paid or unpaid work in factories, workshops, establishment, mines and in the service sector such as domestic labour. The ministry of Labour, Government of India has employed the term 'child labour' only in the context of children doing 'hazardous' work. By implication, children who are not doing 'hazardous' work are not considered to be child labourers and are said to be doing child work.

Street Children: Street children are the children living on and off the streets, such as shoeshine boys, rag pickers, newspaper vendors, beggars etc. are called street children. They are completely alone and are at the mercy of their employers. They live on the pavements, in the bus stations and railway stations.

Bonded Children: Bonded children are those children who have either been pledged by their parents or those working to pay off the inherited debts of their fathers. Bonded children are in many ways the most difficult to assist because they are inaccessible.

Working Children: Working children are the children who are working as part of family labour in agriculture and in home-based work. If children are working 12-14 hours a day along with their parents at the cost of their education, their situation is similar to that of children working for other employers. In fact children, particularly girls, are expected to take on work burdens by parents in complete disproportion to their strengths and abilities. This is the largest category of children who are out-of-school and are working full time. A large number of the girls are working at the cost of education.

Migrant Children: “Distress seasonal migration” is a serious problem in India. To get work million of families are being forced to leave their homes and villages for several months every year in search of livelihoods. These migrations mean that families are forced to drop out of schools, something that closes up the only available opportunity to break the vicious cycle generation after generation.

Children engage in household activities:- There are a large number of children (especially girls) who are working in their own houses, engage in what is not normally seen as “economic activity”.

Socio-Economic Factors Related To Child Labour

There are some socio-economic factors that causes child labour-

1. Poverty: The child labour has been affected by different circumstances. Studies have demonstrated that the most notable reason is poverty (Bhat &

Rather, 2009). Decisions about child labour and schooling are generally made by parents. If the family’s income below the poverty line, parents think that children should also contribute in their family income. Basu (1998) used a theoretical model of child labour, where he showed the only reason parents send children to labour is because of their low income. Hence, poor parents cannot afford schooling for their children. Thus, mainly poor households are to send forced their children to labour instead of sending to school.

2. Family size: Obviously, the involvement of children in large poor households usually more rather than smaller households which demonstrates family size has an effect on child labour. Parents oblige their children to work because they are not able to manage the demands of a large size family. There are also gender differences among household size.
3. Family condition: There are many growing children who have either lost one or both the parents and those impacted by HIV/AIDS in the family, are forced to work in order to support themselves and their siblings.
4. Cultural factors: Culture is another factor which forces children into labour market. Different cultures of many societies make children start work at very young age which are related to traditions and cultural factors. They assumed that children need to learn skills that can be good for their future.
5. Corruption: Corruption is one of the chief causes for abusing resources,

wherever there is poverty; there is also corruption (Murphy, 2005). According to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2012) "Corruption exacerbates poverty and inequality, undermines human development and stability and sustains conflict, violates human rights, and erodes the democratic functioning of countries".

6. Civil war: The civil war is another factor contributing to child labour. The war destroys the economy of the country, people become much poor and all resources go to the war. Wars burn all good things that any country could have.
7. Urban migration: Many rural families migrate to urban areas because of rural push and urban pull factors. Hence, they are often forced to live and work in the street as they lack access to basic requirements such as food; shelter etc. and these children become street workers as vendors.
8. Globalization: Globalization is a sharp cause of child labour. Globalization has positive and negative impacts, nevertheless; globalization might give developing countries the opportunity to increase their gross domesticS production (GDP) per capita via new trade possibilities and ascend their foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows. Globalization also has brought adverse impacts on child labour in developing countries.

Effects of Child Worker:

Child labour is a socio-economic phenomenon. The socio-economic

backwardness followed by poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, demographic expansion, deep soul prejudices etc. According to I.L.O it has some impacts in our society, these are; a) Sexual abuse, b) Emotional neglect such as deprivation of family loves and affection, resulting in loneliness and hopelessness, d) Physical neglect and d) Lack of schooling results in missing educational qualifications.

CHILD LABOUR ACT:

Without any shadow of doubts, children are blooming flowers of the garden of society and valuable asset of a nation. The child labour Act, 1986, was the culmination of efforts and ideas that emerged from deliberations and recommendations of various committees child labour. Significant among them are National Commission on Labour (1966-69), Gurupadaswamy committee on child labour (1979) and Sanat Mehta Committee (1984). The basic objectives of the Act, 1986, are to ban employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines and hazardous employments, and regulate the working conditions of children in other employments.

Recommendations:

- 1 To make the society poverty free
- 2 To help BPL families economically as well as morally.
- 3 Need different Government programmes as well as NGOs programmes.
- 4 The hazardous sectors should be identified and proper action should be taken

Conclusion:

Agriculture in India is the largest sector where many children work at early ages to help support their family. Many of these children are work at young ages due to many

family factors such as unemployment, a large number of family members, poverty, and lack of parental education. This is often the major cause of the high rate of child labour in India. To eliminate child labour compulsory education is the need of hour.

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