

Child Labour: A Chronic Problem

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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT: Child labour is a widespread problem in the world, which is going on mainly in developing countries. Many studies conducted on child labour has raised the fact that in most of the cases children are not doing work willingly, rather due to pressure of their parents who are economically poor. Poverty is said to be the root cause of child labour. But along with that literacy and household effect are also responsible in the determination of child labour in a society. After so many efforts child labour is still a chronic problem in India. This paper presents the factors responsible for child labour by surveying in Rohtak district of Haryana based on 100 sample size. The paper then describes a set of reforms that can be taken to remove this problem to some extent.

Keywords: Child Labour, Poverty, Illiteracy, Agriculture, Employment

1. INTRODUCTION:

Problem of child labour is a matter of concern all over the world. Many steps have been taken by the authorities to combat with this problem which shows the seriousness of this matter. Constitution of India is also committed for the protection of child and in this concern there is ban on the employment of children under the age of 14. According to International Labour Organisation, the largest underage workforce in world is in India. Child labour is more prevalent in prosperous and industrialized economies than in poor economies. It is also estimated that there are 60 to 115 million working children in India- which was the highest in 1996 according to human rights watch. Not only this, child labour becomes more visible in rural areas than in urban areas. Nine out of ten children in rural areas are engaged in work in agriculture or household industries. Owing to urbanization, children are getting work in service and trading sectors. Factors that are responsible for this can be classified into three- economic, social and educational. There is no other option with the poor families and they are bound to send their child for work to keep hunger out of door. The shortcomings of present educational system, which may not fulfil the requirement of the type of education or training which the poor strata of society needs has been indicated by many (Jenson and Nielson, 1997, Cartwright,1999) as one of the major cause of prevalence of child labour.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 2.1 To analyse the factors that are responsible for child labour in Haryana.
- 2.2 To suggest measures to improve the welfare of children.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Swinnerton and Rogers (1999) show that the impact of inequalities on child labours. This is because, while redistributing the income will tend to reduce child labour participation amongst labouring households, it can, at the same time, increase child labour amongst the household paying taxes. Edmonds (2003) observes that child labour is the outcome of difficult household decisions. Parents weigh the cost of child labour against its return. Rao (2000) concludes that government should emphasis on quality rather than quantity. Most government initiatives towards education have focused primarily on the need to raise literacy rate, ignoring the vital quality aspect. Das, S and Mukherjee (2007) uses household data level from NSSO of India, the 55th round to show that for urban male children there exists significant wage incentive for schooling, though school dropout rate and child labour incidence are not small. According to Raheja (2015) children are one of the most vulnerable sections of society; by allowing child labour to flourish, the state administration has failed to protect this defenceless section. There are about 3.58 lakh children employed in cotton farms across the state. Cities in Haryana that are having major share of child labour are Fatehabad, Hissar, Jhajjar, Rohtak, Sirsa. The Pioneer (2015) stated that Haryana's three-point crusade to fight child labour includes 'strict enforcement' of Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, 'awareness' about the same and 'rehabilitation' of children rescued during the raids. According to the officials of State Labour Department, a large number of child labourers were reported from districts like Hisar, Sirsa, Fatehabad, Ambala in the past. While there is more than 90 per cent compliance to the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulations) Act in the industrial units, the unorganised sector including the construction sites, roadside dhabas etc continues to flout the child labour laws in Haryana.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Rohtak, an industrial and education city of Haryana is the locale of the study. Haryana, one of the most developed states of India, hereby provides more work opportunities not only to adult but also to child labour. Purposive cum random sampling technique has been opted for sample selection. 100 samples are selected from rural and urban area of city. Primary data has been collected through interview method based on pre tested questionnaire. Most of the samples have been selected from their worksites such as factories, dhabas, houses, hawkers and motor market. Statistical tool Chi square has been applied to assess the association of child labour with various socio economic and personal characteristics.

5. FINDINGS OF SURVEY:

Major findings from the field survey are as under:

- Majority of children belongs to age of 10 to 14 years of age.
- It has been found that after getting education up to initial classes, children are joining work and leaving school.
- Most of the respondents are from Schedule Cast category which shows besides of so many incentives by the government, this category is not availing it.
- Large size of family is much responsible for child labour as 58% child labour are from that family whose number of members are from 5 to 10.
- Economic compulsion is one of the major causes that bound poor parents to violate the rules and they put their child under the risky environment. Families with low income range are sending their children in early age as a source of income of family.
- Majority of children started doing work at the age of 6 to 9 years.

- In rural areas children work in various agricultural and allied activities. Bulk of the children are working as family labour in the family occupation with other family members or as hired wages labour and at some places as bonded labour in order to repay debts of parents.
- Most of the child labour belongs to backward a class which shows their economic backwardness.
- In urban areas, majority of children are working in small factories, shops, restaurants, dhaabas, motor garages, domestic servants etc.
- Most of them gives their income to parents and are keen to go to school but are compelled to work for others and under hazardous conditions.
- Children are not getting benefit of holidays, sick leave, security, medical help and their wages are low than market wages.

TABLE NO. 1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS RELATED TO CHILD LABOUR

Variable	Category	Frequency
Age	6- 9yrs	25
	10-12 yrs	34
	13-14 yrs	41
Literacy	Illiterate	12
	Below Primary	45
	Primary	21
	Above Primary	22
Cast	General	23
	OBC	32
	SC/ST	45
Family size	4 or less than 4	16
	>5 < 10	58
	More than10	26
Parents	Alive	94
	Not Alive	6
Family Annual Income	Less than 10000	67
	10000-20000	28
	More than 20000	5
Age of start working	6-9 yrs	53

	9-12 yrs	23
	12-14 yrs	24
Sex	Male	55
	Female	45
Reasons for Child Labour	Large Family Size	34
	Insufficient Family Income	46
	Lack of Interest in Studies	5
	Poor quality education in schools	15

PRIMARY DATA

- In rural areas, it was observed children are going to school for half day and for taking mid day meal. After that they go for work and parents are taking it as more convenient.
- It is observed that there is great demand for labour during the sowing and harvesting seasons. A rural household tries to gain maximum possible income during this time by engaging not only themselves but entire family including children.
- Another reason for child labour is population. Employment of children is positively correlated with increase in population. Poor country like India faces more employment of children with the increase in population as most of the parents are not able to provide basic needs to their children.
- It has been noticed that trend of migration from rural to urban in search of work are also engaging children as more opportunities are available for this category.

6. ASSOCIATION OF REASONS FOR DOING CHILD LABOUR

The association of reasons for doing child labour with age, sex, family size, Family Income, cast, literacy has been analysed in detail in table no.2.

TABLE NO.2 ASSOCIATION OF REASONS FOR DOING CHILD LABOUR

Variable	Reasons for doing child labour				Chi square	d.f.
	Large Family Size	Insufficient Family Income	Lack of Interest in Studies	Poor quality education in schools	2.0328	3
Male (55)	20 (36.3)	22 (40)	3 (5.45)	10 (18.18)	NS	
Female (45)	14 (31.11)	27 (53.33)	2 (4.45)	5 (11.12)		
6-9 yrs (53)	17 (33.9)	21(37.73)	12 (18.86)	3 (9.43)	9.43	6
9-12 yrs (23)	7 (30.43)	11 (52.17)	3 (17.39)	2	NS	

12-14 yrs (24)	10 (37.5)	14 (60.86)	0	0		
<10000 (67)	24 (35.82)	28 (41.79)	5 (3.45)	10 (10.05)	5.1208	6
10000-20000 (28)	8 (28.57)	17 (60.71)	- (0)	3 (10.71)	NS	
>20000 (5)	2 (40)	1 (20)	- (0)	2 (40)		
4 or less than 4 (16)	2 (12.5)	14 (87.5)	-(0)	-(0)	17.17	6
>5 < 10 (58)	21 (36.2)	23 (39.65)	2 (3.44)	12 (20.68)	S	
More than10 (26)	11 (42.3)	9 (34.61)	3 (11.53)	3 (11.53)		

➤ It is clearly shown that most common reason to come in labour market both for male and female is insufficient income. Second main reason is large family size that has pushed child labour to labour market. The differences are non significant as shown in table by non significant value of chi square i.e. 2.03.

➤ Child labour of different age has different reasons to join labour market. Economic reasons are increasing with age while family size is cause for all groups. Difference is not significant as chi square value is 9.43.

➤ Children belonging to low income level category are more in number in comparison to that group whose income level is more than 20000 annually. There seems no association between reasons for doing labour and annual income.

➤ It is clear that as family member increases number of child labour also increases and there seems association between reasons of doing child labour and number of family members as chi square value is significant at 17.17.

7. SUGGESTIONS:

Following are the suggestions that can be helpful in removing this problem to some extent-

- Government should generate more employment opportunities with handsome income so that parents need not to send their child for work.
- Although government has generated lot of poverty alleviation programmes but implication should be proper.
- Education system should be job oriented and training based rather theoretical. More over government should not feel free after allocating separate budget on education department. It should be evaluative for the outcome from expenditure on education.
- Awareness must be generated among such parents with the help of local stakeholders through workshops, banners, skit, and seminars. NGO's can play major role in generating social awareness.
- Government has generated various laws to prevent child labour but generation is not sufficient. Any law is meaningful only and only when it becomes operative.
- We can see so many children working but we ignore them. It's not the duty of government only but it is also the duty of people and neither we should be part of this nor should be allowed to others.

CONCLUSION:

Poverty, illiteracy and child labour are correlated. If we want to remove one then we will have to remove others also. It is noticed that working children have to work beyond their capacity and it negatively affects their health. Government

should improve economic condition of people which is said to be root cause of this problem and also it should improve education system also.

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