

CAUSES BEHIND CHILD LABOUR AND MEASURES TO ELIMINATE

Dr. Sandhya Madhukar Rotkar

Associate Professor, Vice Principal and Head of Home Science Department,

JES College,

Jalna, Maharashtra, India

Introduction

Child Labor is a curse on civilized society. This menace of Child labour is not only prevailing in India, but also globally, particularly in developing Countries. The factors that contribute to child labour include the poverty and illiteracy of a child’s parents, the family’s social& economic circumstances, a lack of awareness about the harmful effects of child labour, lack of access to basic and meaningful quality education and skills training, high rates of adult unemployment, under-employment, and the cultural values of the family and surrounding society.

As per the act “The Child Labour (Provision and Regulation) Act, 1986”, child is termed as person below the age 14 years.

Often children are also bonded to labour due to a family indebtedness. Out of school children (OOSC) or those children at risk of dropping out can easily be drawn into work and a more vulnerable to exploitation. Girls, especially those from socially disadvantaged groups, tend to be at a higher risk of being forced into work. Other factors, which influence child to drag to works, are

- a. Displacement of the family due to draught and other natural calamities, and,
- b. Rural poverty and urban migration, often exposes children to being trafficked for work.

As per UNISEF, India and as per 2011 census, almost one core children are engaged in work, out of which, 45 lakhs are girls and 56 lakhs are boys. A child engaged in work contributes to almost 13% of the total workforce. This shows how the situation is serious and needs immediate steps to curb this curse. Further, since 2001 to 2011, child labour engaged in rural areas have reduced drastically, while the one engaged at urban areas have increased.

Area	Labour engaged as per 2001 census(in Lakhs)	Labour engaged as per 2011 census (in Lakhs)	% difference
Rural	113	81	-29%
Urban	13	20	53 %

Also, States with maximum child labour are as

	Uttar Pradesh	Bihar	Rajasthan	Madhya Pradesh	Maharashtra
Child Labour in Lakhs	21	10	8.4	7	7.2

Objectives

1. To identify age and the reason behind employing child for work,
2. To find out education level of child labour,
3. To identify the areas they are working in, and
4. To understand problems of child Labor, along with the treatment given by the employer.

Methodology

Selected 50 child labours, each from girls and boys, of the age 10 to 17 years and employed on various activities, from Jalna city and interviewed them for the analysis. Data collected was collated to understand the child labour status.

Details of samples selected is as below,

A. Boys

Age of Child	Sample Size	Particulars of works, Child labour employed at (in nos.)							
		Tea Stall		Pan Shop		Restaurants		Garage	
		Nos	% to Sample	Nos	% to Sample	Nos	% to Sample	Nos	% to Sample
08 to 10	12	04	33.33	02	16.67	04	33.33	02	16.67
10 to 12	18	03	16.67	05	27.78	04	22.22	06	33.33
12 to 14	20	03	15.00	04	20.00	06	30.00	07	35.00

B. Girls

Age of Child	Sample Size	Particulars of works, Child labour employed at (in nos.)							
		Household activities		Baby Sitting		Washing cloths & utensils		Selling vegetables	
		Nos	% to Sample	Nos	% to Sample	Nos	% to Sample	Nos	% to Sample
08 to 10	10	05	50.00	02	20.00	02	20.00	01	10.00
10 to 12	20	05	25.00	02	10.00	06	30.00	07	35.00
12 to 14	20	04	20.00	04	20.00	05	25.00	07	35.00

Hypothesis

1. Children who lost their parents draws to work,
2. To remain an earning member, their parents/guardians do not send them to school,
3. Bad habits and illiteracy of guardians been the major reason to be a child labour, and
4. Learnt, within them, select the occupation, best suited to them for future prospects.h

Findings

Data collected through interviews and surveys indicated that the child draws to work at early age due to his family issues, particularly, poverty, as child lost is father or mother at early age, father has bad habits and only earning member is mother, child lost parents and guardians want him or her to earn, to learn to start the business and unable to learn due to poverty.

Table 1 : Major reasons, child to work at early age

Age Group	Gender	Sample size	Poverty	%	Illiterate Parents	%	Either Father or mother survived	%	Parents death at early age	%	Learn and earn	%
08 to 10	Girls	10	10	100	10	100	06	60	01	10	-	-
	Boys	12	12	100	12	100	08	66.67	03	25	-	-
10 to 12	Girls	20	20	100	20	100	12	60.00	02	10	-	-
	Boys	18	18	100	18	100	08	44.44	02	09	04	22.22
12 to 14	Girls	20	20	100	20	100	12	60.00	01	05	-	-
	Boys	20	20	100	20	100	09	45.00	03	15	06	30.00

Table 1 shows that, barring poverty and illiteracy, either Father’s or mother death and death of parents made them to work at early age. Astonishingly, boys with learning up to 4th standard (which observed to be maximum level of education amongst the child surveyed), have opted to join Garage to learn the skill and to start their own at later stage of life.

Also observed, gender discrimination, more girls are being forced to work at an early age and are more in numbers than their counterparts.

During interrogation, it was observed that child labours are working almost from 3 to 10 hours depends on nature of job they are doing, as the employer do not have any fix working times and are paid very nominal remuneration as compare to the time spent by the child. Further treatment meted out by the employer is very rude.

Table 2 : Remuneration Paid to the child Labour

Age Group	Gender	Remuneration paid per month (in Rs)
08 to 10	Girl	400 to 500
	Boy	500 to 600
10 to 12	Girl	500 to 600
	Boy	600 to 700
12 to 14	Girl	600 to 700
	Boy	700 to 900

Table 2 indicates, as remuneration increases with the age and the highest amount is paid at Garage and Tea stall.

Limitations

1. We presume that all the information provided by the respondents is true & factual,
2. Data collected from sample size 50 each (Boys and Girls), which is miniscule to generalize the trend as found.
3. The data collection has been done from a limited geographical area. Hence the findings & conclusions have got their own limitations.

Conclusion

The Right to Education Act 2009 ensures all children 6-14 years have the right to free and compulsory education, however, illiteracy prevailing in the families and no knowledge about such schemes, deprived their children from getting the education. Also poverty calls for earning by every member of the family once him or her become 8 years old.

Even though the Child Labour Act 1986 is in place and having stringent punishment with the provision of imprisonment and monetary penalty, employing of child is growing day by day. This is possible due to illiteracy, no complaint being lodged against the employer, fear of losing the job and treatment being meted out at home after remains unemployed.

UNICEF is since long engaged in working against child labour and upliftment of underprivileged children, however, their efforts remained ineffective, families hide their identity in fear of losing hard earned money by their children.

UNICEF has long experience in working against child labour in India and are working towards bringing reform of existing legislation, for example setting a minimum age for child labour, that brings policy coherence, also working on

- Law enforcement to ensure the implementation of the Child labour Act,
- Expanding education access, improving quality and relevance of education, addressing Violence in schools,
- Awareness-raising and mobilization of families and communities against the exploitation of children,

- Social protection programmes and cash transfers to improve the economic situation of families and to reduce the “need” to send children to work,
- Strengthening child protection systems, including the Integrated Child Protection Scheme and implementation of Juvenile Justice Act,
- Working towards convergence between government departments to prevent child labour and rehabilitate existing child laborers.

Similarly, Government to ensure that every child to be given free & quality education along with medical facilities. For such underprivileged children, Government to provide skill improvement program in their field of liking, which shall help them to earn on their own at the later period of their lives.

References

1. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000
2. The Child Labour (Provision and Regulation) Act, 1986
3. UNICEF, India
4. The Right to Education Act 2009