

Research Article

Poverty Stricken: The Cause for Child Labour

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Abstract: The problem of child labour is the biggest issue in India. It is a complicated problem which is rooted in poverty. At the same time, our nation bears the severe consequences of this issue. Children under the age of fourteen are called a child. Nearly 65 percent were engaged in India's traditional work of agriculture. The main conditions in which children work are purely unregulated, and mostly they work without food, and with the lowest wages. The child labour prohibition and regulation act 1986 prohibits the work of children who are working in places where specific processes undertaken. To collect data from the child labourers, the researcher has prepared an Interview Schedule and has administered the same among fifty child labourers of Kovilpatti region through random sampling. The present study aims to probe the reasons underlying the children to take up the job. The result reveals that the children have come from different family backgrounds, work experiences and situations. The factor analysis applied to bring out the reasons for child labour reveals that it is the low-income family background which leads to Poverty Stricken, thereby finds it challenging to find the livelihood options. Though, there are number of Laws enacted to control and to eradicate the child labour, there are children who need to work for their livelihood and to look after the families out of some compelling factors.

Keywords: Child Labour, Components, Livelihood, Motivators, Poverty.

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INTRODUCTION

Child labour refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives them of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful. In villages, it is a common sight to see children of poor families working in fields or elsewhere to contribute to the family income. Such children are deprived of opportunities for education and are also prone to health risks. In a sense, child labour is open exploitation as it denies children of education and pushes them into exploitative situations. The side-effects of working at a young age are risks of contracting occupational diseases like skin diseases, diseases of the lungs, weak eyesight, TB, etc., vulnerability to sexual exploitation at the workplace, deprived of education. They grow up unable to avail of development opportunities and end up as unskilled workers for the rest of their lives. It is observed that in villages, especially, representatives of various industries lure children with promises of jobs and wealth and bring them to the city where they are employed as bonded labour in factories. Many children are also employed as household help where they are paid minimum wages and are made to do maximum physical

work. According to Article 23 of the Indian Constitution, any type of forced labour is prohibited. Article 24 states that a child under 14 years cannot be employed to perform any hazardous work. Similarly, Article 39 says that "the health and strength of workers, men, and women, and the tender age of children are not abused". In the same manner, Child Labour Act (Prohibition and Regulation) 1986 prohibits children under the age of 14 years from being working in hazardous industries and processes.

Global Scenario of Child Labour

- Worldwide 218 million children between 5 and 17 years are in employment. Among them, 152 million are victims of child labour; almost half of them, 73 million, work in hazardous child labour.
- In absolute terms, almost half of child labour (72.1 million) is to be found in Africa; 62.1 million in the Asia and the Pacific; 10.7 million in the Americas; 1.2 million in the Arab States and 5.5 million in Europe and Central Asia.
- In terms of prevalence, 1 in 5 children in Africa (19.6%) are in child labour, whilst prevalence in other regions is between 3% and 7%: 2.9% in the Arab States (1 in 35

children); 4.1% in Europe and Central Asia (1 in 25); 5.3% in the Americas (1 in 19) and 7.4% in Asia and the Pacific region (1 in 14).

- Almost half of all 152 million children victims of child labour are aged 5-11 years.
- 42 million (28%) are 12-14 years old; and 37 million (24%) are 15-17 years old.
- Hazardous child labour is most prevalent among the 15-17 years old. Nevertheless up to a fourth of all hazardous child labour (19 million) is done by children less than 12 years old.
- Among 152 million children in child labour, 88 million are boys and 64 million are girls.
- 58% of all children in child labour and 62% of all children in hazardous work are boys. Boys appear to face a greater risk of child labour than girls, but this may also be a reflection of an under-reporting of girls' work, particularly in domestic child labour.
- Child labour is concentrated primarily in agriculture (71%), which includes fishing, forestry, livestock herding and aquaculture, and comprises both subsistence and commercial farming; 17% in Services; and 12% in the Industrial sector, including mining.

Prevalence of Child Labour in India

According to data from Census 2011, the number of child labourers in India is 10.1 million of which 5.6 million are boys and 4.5 million are girls. A total of 152 million children, 64 million girls and 88 million boys are estimated to be in child labour globally, accounting for almost one in ten of all children worldwide. The total child population in India in the age group (5-14) years is 259.6 million. Of these, 10.1 million (3.9% of total child population) are working, either as 'main worker' or as 'marginal worker'. In addition, more than 42.7 million children in India are out of school.

Statement of the Problem

Every child has a legitimate right to an environment favourable to his/her physical, mental, emotional, and intellectual growth and development. But child labour is harmful to the growth and development of a child. It affects not only the child labours but also the family, the society, and the nation. In India, the problem of child labour is more complicated because of the presence of a substantial unorganized labour market in all the sectors of the economy. The Governments of India and Tamilnadu, with their social partners, including international organizations, have undertaken significant efforts to understand the magnitude of child labour as well as to combat the problem. In Kovilpatti a large number of child labourers are employed in hazardous industries like match and fireworks industries. In this context, the researcher has developed an interest in studying the reasons for the kids to be employed at an earlier stage.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To collect data from the child labourers, the researcher has prepared an Interview Schedule and has administered the same among fifty child labours of Kovilpatti region through random sampling. The data collected were processed and analysed with the help of SPSS. After conducting the reliability test, the statistical tools Percent analysis, and Factor analysis were applied.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sampath Kumar R.D, (2007) in his book 'Urban Child Labour: Abuse and Neglect' covers wide range of issues pertaining to the nature and extent of Child Labour in India and various forms of abuse and neglect in family and work settings. Children engaged in urban work settings such as construction, hotel, and tea stalls, two-wheeler motorized service units and domestic service in the city of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India are covered in the study. Three hundred child labourers, three hundred employers and 210 parents/caretakers were interviewed and data were analyzed and interpreted using large sample tests and other statistical measurements. The book discusses the implications of social policy and social work education.

Ghosh (2008) examined the geographical review of Child Labour between the periods of 2005 to 2008. The major variables or indicators used in income, poverty, unemployment, dependency load etc. the method is used in the 2001 census of Child Labour. He found that economic growth leads to an increase in Child Labour rather than a decrease.

Mohapatra and Dash (2011) examined the Socio-Economic problem of Child Labour between the periods (2009-2010). The major variables used in poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, low wages, ignorance, social prejudice, regressive tradition, poor standard of living, backwardness, superstition, low status of women have combined to give birth to the terrible practice of Child Labour. The method used in growth rate sample data through investigation or interview, they found that the migrant's family form various district of Odisha their social-economic condition is impoverished, which make them go for Labour.

Massauda, D (2013). examined the Situation analysis of The Suffering of Children in Ouargla, between the periods 2012-2013. The primary variable used in education, income, the mentality of family member, backwardness, over population, unemployment etc. They found that lack of basic education of parents, norms and culture, large family size and physical and verbal abuse by family members were the significant factors identified to send their children to work.

RESEARCH GAP

From the views of the above studies, it is understood that the previous researchers have examined the abuses of child labour, geographical location, problems from different perspectives and the

sufferings of children. In contrast, this study concentrates and analyses the forcing reasons behind the child labour to take up the job in Kovilpatti region along with the demographic profile.

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Items	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age-wise Classification			
Below 8 years	13	26.0	26.0
9-11 years	16	32.0	58.0
12-14 years	21	42.0	100
Total	50	100.0	
Gender wise classification			
Male	23	46.0	46.0
Female	27	54.0	100
Total	50	100.0	
Residential Status			
Rural	16	32.0	32.0
Semi-urban	21	42.0	74.0
Urban	13	26.0	100
Total	50	100.0	
Education			
Illiterate	10	20.0	20.0
3-5	16	32.0	52.0
6-7	24	48.0	100
Total	50	100.0	
Experience			
Below two years	26	52.0	52.0
3-4 years	14	28.0	80.0
5-6 years	8	16.0	96.0
Above six years	2	4.0	100
Total	50	100.0	
Mode of wage payment			
Daily	29	58	58.0
Weekly	6	12	70.0
Monthly	15	30	100
Total	50	100.0	
Information on Employment			
Through own efforts	7	14.0	14.0
Through parents	16	32.0	46.0
Through relatives	12	24.0	70.0
Through others	15	30.0	100
Total	50	100.0	
No. of family members			
Below 3	7	14.0	14.0
4-6	30	60.0	74.0
Above 6	13	26.0	100
Total	50	100.0	100.0
No. of working hours			
8 hours	31	62.0	62.0
10 hours	12	24.0	86.0
12 hours	7	14.0	100
Total	50	100	
No. of day's work in a week			
5 days	4	8.0	8.0
6 days	30	60.0	68.0
7 days	16	32.0	100
Total	50	100	
Satisfied with the job			
Yes	18	36.0	36.0
No	32	64.0	100
Total	50	100	

Source: Primary Survey

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the selected respondents. Most of the respondents belong to the age of 12-14 years. Most of the respondents are female and the area they situated is semi-urban, 48 percent of respondents are having the education knowledge of 6th to 7th standard. The highest percents of respondents are having experience of below two years in their field; 58 percent of labours are the daily wagers. Most of the respondents are having 4-6 members in their family, and the highest percent of labours become labour through their parents. Approximately 60 percent of respondents are working six days and 8 hours/day in a week. Most of the child labours are not satisfied with their job.

Motivators for Child Labour

As compared to other countries, India is having the highest population and the poverty level is also high in our country. Due to this main reason, most of the children are not able to continue their studies. In some families, there are more children, so the parents are not able to educate all their children. Due to the high population and lack of education, employers exploit these children for their work because they can get comfortable and cheap labour. Poor people are unaware of the rules and regulations of government schemes, so they send their children to work. Children in villages and rural areas find urban areas very fascinating and they don't understand the pros and cons of future problems. For these reasons, children are becoming as labourers.

Table 2 Reliability Test for the Motivators for Child Labour

		ANOVA				
Items		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between People		798.58	49	16.30		
Within People	Between Items	161.24	19	8.49	6.007	.000
	Residual	1315.26	931	1.41		
	Total	1476.50	950	1.55		
Total		2275.08	999	2.28		
Grand Mean = 2.45						
Reliability Statistics						
Cronbach's Alpha		.913				
N of Items		20				

Source: **Derived**

The reliability test is conducted for the Children going to labour and it is found that the Sum of Squares between People is 798.58 and Sum of Squares between items is 161.24. The Mean Square between People is 16.30 and Sum of Squares between Items is 8.49. The grand mean is 22.45, which crossed the

average. The value of F is 6.007 and is statistically significant as the p value of 0.000, which is below 0.05. As far as the reliability is concerned, the value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.913, which is just sufficient for 20 statements to proceed with further analysis.

Table 3. Test of sample Adequacy for the Motivators for Child Labour

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.799
	Approx. Chi-Square	500.719
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	190
	Sig.	.000

Source: **Derived**

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy substantiates the result of sample accuracy to the tune of .799. The Chi-Square value is 500.719 for degrees of freedom of 190 and is statistically significant

as the p-value is 0.000, which is below 0.05. This test allows the researcher to go further in the analytical part with factor analysis.

Table 4. Factor Analysis for the Motivators for Child Labour

Reasons	Components			Communalities
	Family Background	Poverty Stricken	Livelihood Options	
Family indebtedness	.831	.261	-.068	.461
Child trafficking	.708	.341	.138	.487
Illiteracy of parents	.681	.412	.187	.517
Lack of money	.680	.268	.357	.455
Unemployment	.649	.001	.042	.660
Considered nil importance of education	.620	.277	.234	.637
Poverty	.574	-.121	.342	.504
Child to look after family	.516	.239	.404	.668
Lack of awareness	.509	.463	.276	.550
Over population	.453	.253	.356	.423
Parents not alive	.128	.769	.170	.396
Lack of financial supporters	.179	.747	-.042	.664
Migration	.113	.682	.371	.592
Child not interested in education	.168	.653	.033	.558
Laws and enforcement are in adequate	.191	.420	.235	.452
Responsibility of managing siblings	.194	.031	.791	.537
Lack of livelihood options	-.006	.177	.649	.763
Lack of access to education	.450	.052	.594	.616
Family conflicts	.145	.478	.536	.637
Inaccessibility of schools	.393	.266	.529	.268
% of Variance	22.63	17.07	14.57	
Cumulative %	22.63	39.65	54.22	
% to total	42	31	27	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 Source: **Primary Survey**

The statements on the problems of child labour used in factor analysis are statistically significant as the p-value is less than 0.05 with the sample adequacy of 0.799

Family Background:

Family background is the main factor that everyone looks into while a child is going to labour. This factor consists of the statements, Family indebtedness(.831), Child trafficking(.708), Illiteracy of parents(.681), Lack of money(.680), Unemployment (.649), Considered nil importance of education(.620), Poverty (.574), Child to look after family (.516), Lack of awareness(.509), Overpopulation(.453).This component has a variance of 22.63, which forms 42 percent out of total.

Poverty Stricken:

Poverty plays an important role in a child going to labour. The filtered statements under this factor are the main reason for Parents not alive (.769), Lack of financial supporters (.747), Migration (.682), Child not interested in education (.653), Laws and enforcement are inadequate (.420). This component has a variance of 17.07, which forms 31 percent out of total.

Livelihood Options:

Livelihood is the basic criteria which everyone for living. The filtered statements here are the Responsibility of managing siblings (.791), Lack of livelihood options (.649), Lack of access to education (.594), Family conflicts (.536), Inaccessibility of schools (.529). This component has a variance of 14.57, which forms 27 percent out of total.

Table 5. Component Transformation Matrix for the Women Empowerment

Components	Component Transformation Matrix		
	Family Background	Poverty Stricken	Livelihood Options
Family Background	.694	.535	.482
Poverty Stricken	-.548	.827	-.129
Livelihood Options	-.468	-.175	.866

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The component Family Background has a positive association with Family Background (.694),

Poverty Stricken (.535), and Livelihood Options (.482). The component Poverty Stricken has a positive

association with Poverty Stricken (.535), and a negative association with Poverty Stricken (-.548) and Livelihood Options (-.129). The component Livelihood Options has a high positive association with Livelihood options (.866), negative association with the family background (-.468), and Poverty Stricken (-.175). Thus it is understood that it is the poor family background that leads to Poverty Stricken, thereby find it challenging to find the livelihood options.

CONCLUSION

Through this study, we found that poverty is one of the crucial factors to make the children as labour and most of the illiterate child labourers are unsatisfied in their work. They are facing a lot of problems such as slavery, exploitation, low salary, drug dependency, frustration, and so on. Children and adolescents have high rates of work-related injuries. For the most part, children and adolescents, their parents, and many of the other adults in their lives are unaware of the adverse consequences of work. The present study aims to probe the reasons underlying the children to take up the job. The result reveals that the children have come from different family backgrounds, work experiences, and situations. The factor analysis applied to bring out the reasons for child labour reveals that Thus it is understood that it is a poor family background, which leads to Poverty Stricken, thereby find it challenging to find the livelihood options. Though there are several Laws and Acts enacted to control and to eradicate child labour, there are children who need to work for their livelihood and to look after the families. Hence it is strongly recommended to enforce concrete laws for the eradication of labour and to ensure that proper care and counseling are given to the families to maintain the livelihood of the family. The legislation designed for compulsory education should also take care of the welfare of the children not to deviate from the school.

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