



A Socio-Economic Analysis of Child Labour in Punjab

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ABSTRACT

This paper analysis the socio-economic conditions of child labour in Punjab. In this paper we show that the problem of child labour is quite alarming in the India. We observed that there are out of 5 children below the age of 14 years, one child is labourer which means 20 per cent children are labourers. Poverty was the main reason of child labour, an overcoming majority (74 per cent) of children belonged to lower caste poor families. These children not only supported himself but also other member of their families.

KEYWORDS : Child labour, Socio-Economic condition, Poverty.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in child labour among academics, professionals and the media. This increased attention is due to the fact that child labour has serious social, moral, economics and demographic implication for children, household, societies and the world. Therefore, the removal or reduction of child labour has been the main aim of democratic governments all-over the world. In contrast, in contemporary times, the phenomenon of child labours is related almost exclusively with the developing countries. While Asia has the largest number of child workers in the world, the highest sizes of child workers in relation to the child populations is to be found in Africa. According to ILO (1996) which estimates the participation rates for children aged 10-14 years, in 1995 to be 26.23 per cent in Africa, 12.77 per cent in Asia and only 0.06 per cent in Europe. Latin America also has the highest incidence of children working in the urban informal sector. There was most working children are still found in the rural areas. The child labour was a long history. It was during the 'International Year of the child' in 1979 that international attention became fully focused for the first time on the issue of the child labour. Child labour not only remains economically important in the developing countries.

Child Labour Definition

Those children who are between the ages of 6 to 14 years and are directly or indirectly forced to work at home or outside the name, they are come under the Constitutional Act definition. The work done by children as a labour not only hamper the physically as well as mental health of the child in different dimensions. Unfortunate, even today the problem of child labour is greatly prevalent in India and in the world. While the latest statistics shows that about 250 million child workers exist all over the world.

According to Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, "The nation walks on the tiny feet of its children"; Children are the coming future of the country. They are flowers of our country garden.

According to Singh views: " Child labour means a child who is between 6 and 15 year of age is working and not attending school during the day is working under an employer or is learning some trade as an learner."

Homer Folks (the chairman of the United State National Child Labour Committee) defines child labour as... "any work by children that interfere with their full physical development, their opportunities for a desirable minimum of education on their needed recreation."

International Scenario of Child Labour

Different agencies give different evaluations of child labour on explanation of multiplicity of concepts, methods of estimation and sources of data in India. As per the UNICEF report on the child labour, according to this report there are 246 million children are working in the world in the age group 5- 14 years. The magnitude of child labour is as high as 61 per cent in Asian countries, followed by 29 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, 16 per cent children are working in Latin American and Caribbean countries and 39.15 percent in Kenya (UNICEF Re-

port).

Child Labour in India

Thus child labour is global problem in India. This problem was a serious challenge for India; it has been increasing from year to year. It was observed that out of five children below the age of fourteen years, one child is labour. In India, 20 per cent of children are labour out of the total population. There are 1.2 crore workers in India of the total 1.2 crore 1.85 lakh are employed as domestic help and another 70,000 restaurants and Dhabas. According to the National Sample Survey (NSSO) 66th round in India estimated that the child labour in country is around 9.07 million. The 4.7 million of boys and 4.31 million of girls are working in our country. Thus the estimates of total number of child labour very extensively in India. According to Census 2001, Uttar Pradesh has the highest 1927997(15.2 per cent) child labour, followed by Andhra Pradesh 1363339(10.8 per cent), Rajasthan 1262570(10.0 per cent), Bihar 1117500(8.8 per cent), Madhya Pradesh 1065259(8.4 per cent) lakh, Haryana 253491(2.0 per cent) and Punjab 117268(1.4 per cent) child labour (Census of India 2001).

The Highest Number of Child Labour in the State of India (Census 2011)

State	No. of Child Labour (in lakh)	Percentage
Uttar Pradesh	1363339	10.8
Rajasthan	1262570	10.0
Bihar	1117500	8.8
Madhya Pradesh	1065259	8.4
Haryana	253491	2.0
Punjab	117268	1.4

Source- Census Report 2011.

The economic status of the slaves, hired labour unskilled workers is bad. The same was the position of child when he was engaged in agriculture sector, road construction, digging of well and house building. A large number of children are employed in plantations. Children are found generally in highway side restaurants, small hotels and other eat-outs, cotton ginning and weaving, match-making, stone-breaking, brick-kiln, handicrafts, automobiles repair workshop. Mostly child labours were found in the rural areas as compared to urban areas. As per (2010-11) 66st Round of NSSO data, out of 9.07 million child labours, 12.16 million were in rural areas.

Child Labour in Punjab

A large number of children are employed in the Punjab. In Punjab most of the children are engaged in the agriculture sector, sports goods industries, fireworks, road side dhabas, restaurants, carpet industry etc. According to the census symbol there were 232774 working children in Punjab in 1971, 216939 in 1981, 142869 in 1991, 1428268 in 2001 and 117268 in 20011. The census data show that the increase the number of working children in Punjab in 1991-2001 (Census of India). Moreover India has one of the largest numbers of street children. These children for their survival they working in agri-

culture sector, paper looms, work as coolies and collect rags. In developing countries mostly Child labour is depends on informal sector. It is estimated that informal sector employs 85 per cent of child labour. As revealed by NSSO data 2010-11, this sector alone account for over two third of the child employment. This sector is followed by manufacturing sector which explanation for 12.71 per cent of child employment, 67.91 per cent children are working in agriculture sector, 1.16 per cent work as construction worker, 2.59 per cent work in transport, 7.21 per cent work on trade/ restaurants / hotels and 8.43 per cent children are working in commercial sector (NSSO, 2010-11).

Census Data of Child Labour in Punjab (1981-2011)

Year	No. of Working Children (in lakh)
1981	216939
1991	142869
2001	1428268
2011	117268

Source - Census 1981-2011.

Government of Punjab is trying to bring about best development of children by providing them food, healthiness care, schooling, physical and emotional support. Due to poverty, hunger, illiteracy, ignorance, traditional thoughts and lack of good implementation of child labour still persists in our society. The children of age below 14 year have working in various fields and in very hazardous condition. There are many reason of child labour in our state like poverty, big families, traditional thought, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of education facility etc. The main reason of child labour is poverty. The poverty forces the children to sell their labour at an age which they should have gone to school. Thus, the governments are provided many provisions in our constitution and in law to control the child labour in our society. The state government is not only trying to fulfil the constitutional and governmental duty to up lift and rehabilitate the child labour family but also trying to bring them in the main stream of the society.

Conclusion

In the end the paper analysed that the future of child labour is unpredictable. The result of the present paper reveals that child labour is not exploitation but a necessity and a privilege as long as there is a lack of social and economic security. The paper suggested that the government should have taken a step towards improving the present conditions of child labour. These conditions are small family size, compulsory free education, choice of past- time employment social security etc.

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