

## Child Labour Issues And Challenges – An Empirical Study of Ludhiana District



### Commerce

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### ABSTRACT

*Child labor continues to be a great concern in many parts of the world. In 2008, some 60% of the 215 million boys and girls were estimated to be child laborers worldwide. Major engagement was in agriculture sector, followed by fisheries, aquaculture, livestock and forestry. In addition to work that interferes with schooling and is harmful to personal development, many of these children work in hazardous occupations or activities that are harmful. With respect to the child workers between the ages of 5 and 14, Asia makes up 61% of child workers in developing countries. The Government spends thousand of crores in poverty alleviation, but only a meager amount reaches the targeted group. Hence, effective measures are to be taken to see that the child labourers families get the benefits of poverty alleviation programmes due to them.*

### INTRODUCTION

The term "child labor" is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical-mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Though restrictions on child labor exist in most nations, many children do work. This vulnerable state leaves them prone to exploitation. The International Labour Office reports that children work the longest hours and are the worst paid of all laborers. They endure work conditions which include health hazards and potential abuse. Employers capitalize on the docility of the children recognizing that these laborers cannot legally form unions to change their conditions. Such manipulation stifles the development of youths. Their working conditions do not provide the stimulation for proper physical and mental development. Finally, these children are deprived of the simple joys of childhood, relegated instead to a life of drudgery. First, there is no international agreement defining child labor. Countries not only have different minimum age work restrictions, but also have varying regulations based on the type of labor. This makes the limits of child labor very ambiguous

### BENEFITS OF CHILD LABOUR TO EMPLOYER

- Child labour is cheap; frequently employers pay no wages at all.
- Children are easy to manipulate, are often unaware of their right,
- Children are unable to organize themselves in a trade union, Employers can easily oppress them with threats or physical force,
- Children are considered to be faithful, obedient, hard working, and generally, will not complain,
- Many child laborers do not know that they have rights, that these rights are being violated and that their situations can be better.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The 18<sup>th</sup> century when brisk growth of large-scale manufacturing culminated into exploitation of very young children in mining and industrial toil (Hopkins 1993). The literatures on definition is primarily a dichotomy, as Bourdillon (2003) put it, between

- Child work and child labour
- Child labour and adult labour
- Child and not-child
- Labour and not-labour

Bequle & Boyden (1988) in his study reveals that most of the

working children are not getting their due wages while the labour of the children may or may not be productive. Grootaert & Kanbur (1995) question, for a World Bank report, the scale for the child labour magnitude whose answer depends on who is being counted. Greed is the only rational that is deriving factories, employers and companies ( in the latest sense ) to go for inexpensive labour in the form of children. Hirsch (1995) and Woodward (1906) are perhaps the two names in early writing that discusses in detail "a Business Man's Viewpoint on Child labour". Grootaert & Kanbur (1995) talks about the demand side analysis of child labour problems in terms of structure of the labour market and the prevailing production technologies. Although, there is not much literature focusing this side, it has its episodes in all times. Canagarajah & Nielsen (1999) outline demand-side factors that can play critical roles in perpetuating child labour. Gaines (1996), King & Marcus (2000), Lesson (2000) are some recent examples of this literature.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1: The infrastructure and characteristics of the Garment sectors that result in the use of child labour
- 2: The socio-economic background of the child labour
- 3: The leisure time activities, education and work skills of the child labour and suggest suitable remedies to the entrepreneurs to provide good environment.
- 4: The occupational history, the wages and other working conditions of the child labour and causative factors that would have induced children to take up jobs.

### HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present study:

#### NULL HYPOTHESES:

There is no relationship between the income of the household and the education of the children.

There is no relationship between the community of the households and the size of the family.

#### ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES:

There is relationship between the income of the households and the education of the children

There is relationship between the community of the households and the size of the family.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a case study of child labour in the Garment industry in Ludhiana district of Panjab. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected by conducting a survey among 350 sample child labours in Ludhiana

and 50 garment managers. Secondary data have been collected from books, journals, census reports, published records of Garment industry and published Ph.D. theses.

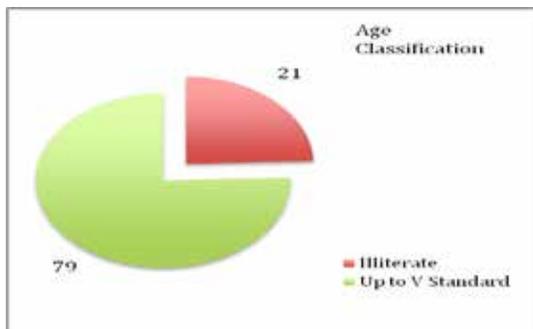
**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

**Age-Wise Classification of Child Labour**

Labourers who are below the age of fourteen years are regarded as child labourer. Age-wise classification of child labourers in the Garment industry of Ludhiana

**Table: 1 Age-Wise Classification of Child Labour**

| AGE            | Abs. | Per. |
|----------------|------|------|
| Up to 12 Years | 75   | 21.4 |
| 12 to 14 Years | 275  | 78.6 |
| Total          | 350  | 100  |



**Fig 1: Age-Wise Classification of Child Labour (in percent-age)**

Abs.= No. of Respondent

Per.= Percentage of Total Respondent

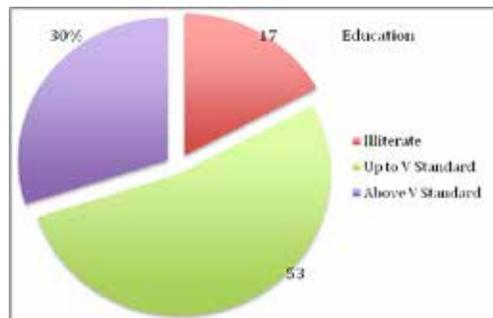
It is seen from table 1 that 21.4 per cent of child labourers are below the age of 12 years. Those who are between 12 and 14 years amounted to 78.6 per cent. A majority (78.6%) of the child labourers in the Garment industry of Ludhiana are above 12 years.

**2. Educational Qualification of Child Labour**

Since the child labour is below the age of 14 years, it is of interest to fund their educational qualification.

**Table: 2 Educational Qualification of Child Labour**

| Education        | Abs. | Per.  |
|------------------|------|-------|
| Illiterate       | 60   | 17.1  |
| Up to V Standard | 185  | 52.9  |
| Above V Standard | 105  | 30.0  |
| Total            | 350  | 100.0 |



**Fig 2: Educational Qualification of Child Labour (in percent-age)**

Abs.= No. of Respondent

Per.= Percentage of Total Respondent

Table 2 set out the classification of child labour on the basis of their educational qualification. It is clear from that 52.9 per cent of the child labour have studied upto V standard. 17.1 per cent child labourers are illiterate. Those who have studied above V standard amounted 30 per cent.

**3. Reason for Dropping out of School**

Out of four hundred child labour surveyed, five are illiterate. The reason for those who have dropped out from school are presented.

**Table: 3 Reasons for Dropping Out Of Schools**

| Reasons For Dropping Out Of Schools | Absent | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Poverty                             | 130    | 37.1       |
| Indebtedness                        | 170    | 48.6       |
| Irresponsible Parents               | 15     | 4.3        |
| Lack of Interest In Studies         | 10     | 2.9        |
| Loss of Mother/Father               | 8      | 2.3        |
| Hereditary Work                     | 6      | 1.7        |
| Compelled Work                      | 11     | 3.1        |
| Total                               | 350    | 100.0      |

Abs.= No. of Respondent

Per.= Percentage of Total Respondent

It is clear from table 3 that 37.10 per cent of child labour dropped out of school due to poverty. Those who have dropped out of school due to reason such as indebtedness, loss of mother/father and compulsion to work amounted to 48.6 per cent, 2.3 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively. Dropouts due to heredity work, irresponsible parents and lack of interest in study amounted to 1.7 per cent, 4.3 per cent and 2.9 per cent respectively. Among the various reasons for dropping out of school, indebtedness tops. The list followed by poverty and irresponsible parents.

**FINDINGS**

Child labour has been in practice in India from time immemorial. Children were helping their parents in the household and family occupation. Child labour has been necessitated by economic compulsions.

In India, the highest concentration of child labour is found in Andhra Pradesh followed by Utter Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Children work for a variety of reasons. The most important is poverty. Children work to ensure the survival of their family and themselves. Though children are not well paid, they still serve as major contributors to family income in developing countries.

In India, a child who does not attend a formal school is a working child. There are 11 crore children employed in India. In India, children are employed for activities such as collection of water and fuel, household chores like taking care of young siblings and the like.

There are broadly four kinds of child labour: (a) those who work in factories, workshops and mines, (b) Children who are under bondage to their employers, (c) street children and (d) Children who work as part of family in agriculture, industry, home-based work and the like.

The various causes for child labour include poverty, migration, gender discrimination and criminality.

Children's are exploited in India in industries such as textiles, match manufacturing, building construction, hotels and like. Children are not employed in organized industries. They are employed in unorganized sectors.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher observed that the large families are one of the reason for the poor economic condition of the families. Hence, necessary steps should be taken by the government to educate the parents regarding the small family norms. When the family is small, the needs of the family will be reduced. Consequently the children can be sent to school. Since the unskilled and uneducated parents are more in number, the children are sent to work instead of to learn. The researcher strongly feels that unless primary education is made compulsory, it is not possible to eradicate child labour. Further, a committee comprising of headmasters and village leaders should be constituted to confirm that the children are not allowed to drop out of the school till they attain 14 years of age. Vocational education will help to sustain the interest in learning and reduce the need for dropping out of schools. A majority of the working children had been to school but dropped out before they completed the fifth standard. This is because of the unemployment of educated youth. These children are frustrated when they observe educated young people elder to them remaining jobless. The government should take necessary steps to teach the parents regarding self employment and entrepreneurship.

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