

Socio-Economic Conditions of Childlabour a Case Study of Shimoga District



Social Science

KEYWORDS : Age wise child worker, Reason of Migration, Types of Houses and Civic Amenities, Income

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INTRODUCTION:

The prevalence of child labour is not a recent phenomenon. Even in the ancient times agricultural and other manual workers of servile status formed bulk of the population everyone and their children were put to arduous labour in houses and in field at an early age. In agriculture, activities such as tending of cattle's collection of grass and fuel etc. Are tedious and time consuming. Performance of such tasks by children relieve and adult members of the family for more productive work. There was no social taboo against children working along with their parents. In tradition among the children of this class is to learn the necessary skills under the watchful and benevolent eyes of their parents, adult members of their families, castes and thus get prepared for entry into the adult world rather than go for formal education. It was this factor of child labour which strongly established family and kinship ties in occupations.

The problematic aspect of child labour becomes more pronounced with the advent of industrial area. It is problematic because, it interferes obstructs and clashes with the fulfilment of the basic needs of working children's material, social and cultural life and development of their basic skills and capabilities their chances of vocational training are deduced, their physical, mental and intellectual development are hampered. The working children generally remains unskilled, underpaid, under-privileged throughout life, their physical and social mobility get restricted and vicious and cumulative cycle of poverty, ill-health, under employment also get strengthened. During the early days of industrial development in India and other countries in the west, children were employed with the intention of earning large profits as child labour was cheaper than adult labour.

In the early phase of industrialization child labour suffered most brutal and unprecedented exploitation in the western world thought its intensity has considerably been lessened in the advanced industrial nations now. In India, the problem by and large has lost its poignancy in ge organized and public sector of employment but it has assumed alarming proportion in the un organized and unregulated sectors. The employment of working children particularly in the unorganized industries attached attention of many committees and commissions, e.g., The Factory Commission, 1975; The Royal Commission of Labour, 1931; National commission on Child Labour, 1979; Child Labour in Indian Industries, 1981; Sanat Mehta Committee on Child Labour, 1986. Reports of some of these Commissions/Committees have highlighted the problems of child labour in the unorganised sector.

Normatively child labour has serious consequences and implication for children, parents and families and as such it has been recognised as a social evil. In the recent years, especially after announcement of policy on child labour by Government of India, a lot of attention has been paid to

regulating and prohibiting child labour. The constitution of India in its Articles 24, 39(e), 39(f) is very explicit about protecting and safeguarding the interests of the child. In pursuance of these Constitutional provisions the Indian parliament adopted National Policy for Children (1947) which stated that "Children shall be protected against neglect, cruelty and exploitation and that no held under 14 years shall be permitted to be engaged in any hazardous occupations or be made to undertake heavy work".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on field data as well as documentary sources. The child workers are selected from alums and from pockets where particular small scale industries are concentrated in shimoga. The published material consisting of books, journals, newspaper articles, reports and records maintained by Department of Labour, Department of Chief Inspector of Factories, The Shimoga Municipal Corporation, Karnataka Slum Clearance Board, Bangalore Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Bangalore District Census Office, Shimoga has also been used. The material gathered from secondary sources have provided a broad frame work and perspective to the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the above discussion specific objectives of the present study are stated as follows:

- To highlight the social, cultural and economic background of the working children.
- To identify the factors that forces the parents/family members to send their children to the labour market at an early age.

SAMPLING

The responsibility of implementing the scheme was given to District Adult Education Officer, Shimoga. Entirely 1560 children names were enrolled in the rehabilitation list. The children were classified industry-wise, vacation wise. Out of the list, the researcher made purpose selection of 153 working children which works out to be nearly 10 percent of the total child labours. The selection of the sample was partly systematic and partly purposive.

The industrial activities wise distribution of child labours include in the sample is given in this table.

Table 1.1
Distribution of the sample according to various industrial activities /occupations

Production Unit	Male	Female	Total
Agarbathi making, Candle making, pottery/ceramic, notebook making, Xerox making etc.	25	30	55

Job and Repair work Unit Automobile – cycle repair, Engineering and Metal works Diamond cutting and polishing Colour- Construction, Sewing stitching and patch work	34	11	45
Service and Commercial Estab- lishment Hotel and Restaurant, Domestic service, Shop attendants	24	07	31
Self- employed Rag pickers, scarp Collectors, Shoe-shine boys, various vendors	09	05	14
Odd Jobs Boot leggings, Pick pockets, Ille- gally occupying Rail ways seats, Porters, Coolies, Street Children	07	01	08
Total	99	54	153

As the children are not adequately grown up to give some of the important information needed for such study. The researcher decided to interview their parents/guardians in order to have comprehensive view about the problem. So decided to contact each and every parent/guardian of the children, but it was not possible to contact all as some of the child workers were not living with their parents/guardians, so only whom were staying with child workers come under the purview of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The profile of child workers contains description of their sex, age, religion, caste, education, length of residence in shimoga. Reason for migration, language, housing and other facilities. Occupational status of the children and income. Besides this information size of the family, income and expenditure of the households, contribution of the children’s income to family income etc. have been discussed.

Sex

The study covers 153 child workers, out of whom nearly 2/3rd (64.5%) are boys and the remaining girls. Thus a majority of the child workers are boys.

As shown in Table 1.2 the age of the child workers ranges from a low of nine years to a high of 14 years. For the purpose of analysis, the child workers are classified into two categories i.e. 9-11 years and 12-14 years. An overall picture the emerges from the data is that, a large majority 91.1% of these children are in the age group of 12-14 years.

Table 1.2: Age of the Child workers

Age range	Percentage
9 – 11	08.09%
12 – 14	91.01%
Total (f)	100.00%

Reasons of Migration

The question why these children have migrated applies to those who are staying with their families and guardians. Information in this regard is shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Reasons of Migration of child worker (As given by parents/Guardian)

Reason of Migration	Percentage
Not answered	2.5
In search of employment	7.4
Poverty	54.4
Failure of Agriculture, belong to drought prone area	2.05
To learn new trade	7.7
Migrated after marriage	19.4

Parents/ grandparents mi- grated	6.1
Total(f)	100.00 (153)

It is evident from Table1.3 that quest for survival dominates the reasons for migration of families. The first three reasons are inter linked as 64.3 percent have migrated to the city in search of job due to poverty of failure of agriculture/ repetitive drought.

TYPES OF HOUSES AND CIVIC AMENITIES

A very large majority of child workers hail from various chawls and slums of eastern and western part of the city.

Table 1.5: Types of Houses of child workers

Types of House	Percentage
No Houses	08.5
Kaccha including huts and Chapra	62.7
Puccka Houses(RCC)	28.8
Total(f)	100.00

As shown in Table 1.5, of the total child workers nearly 2/3rd (62.7%) lives in Kaccha types of houses and little more than 1/3rd (28.8%) lives in Puccka house. Thus the majority of the child workers live in single room and kaccha type of houses.

Table 1.6: type of Civic Amenities in Child Workers House

Types of Amenities	Percentage
Water	
No regular facility	01.3
Public Tap	28.7
Private Tap	70.0
Total(f)	100.0
Electricity	
No facility	46.5
Owned	53.5
Total (f)	100.0
Latrine	
No facility (open space)	15.3
Public	71.0
Private	13.7
Total(f)	100.0

As shown in Table 1.6 waterfacilities both from public and privatesources are available to almost all the respondents and a large majority 98.7%bur electricity is available 53.4% and still 46.4 % houses there is no electricity. Child workers were using private and public lavatories 84.7% but 15.3% houses no lavatories they are going open spaces.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Despite the best efforts made at various levels, many children in our country either do not fo to school of leave school soon after admission. The situation both regard to drop outs is quite alarming. The education level of the child workers is shown in Table1.7

Table1.7: Education of child workers

Educational level	Percentage
Illiterate	28.10
I – IV Standard	28.98
V – VII Standard	37.25
VIII Standard	5.67
Total (f)	100.0

As shown in Table 1.7, little more than 1/4th (28.10%) of the child workers have never gone to school and 37.5 percent have studied up to primary level. Only small fractions (5.7%) of them have studies up to 8th standard and above.

OCCUPATION

The child workers are employed in a wide of occupations. It is very difficult to classify them into well-defined mutually exclusive categories. However, an attempt is made to classify as many as 33 occupations into five broad categories e.g. Production units, Job and Repair work units, Service and Commercial establishments, self-employed and Odd jobs.

Table1.8: Occupation of child workers

Occupations	Percentage
Production Units	35.5
Job and Repair work Units	29.6
Service and Commercial Establishments	20.5
Self employed	9.4
Odd jobs	5.0
Total(f)	100.00

Monthly Income of child workers

The distribution of the monthly income of the child workers brings out the fact the a large proportion of them 45.3% earn between Rs. 500 – 750 per month and 46.2% earns more than Rs. 1000 per month. 8.5% child workers earns above Rs.1200 per month.

Table 1.10: Monthly Income of child workers

Amount	Income
Rs.500 – 750	45.3
Rs. 751- 1000	46.2
Rs. 1001 – 1250	8.5
Total(f)	100.00

Contribution of Child workers Income to the Family Income

It is generally stated that income level of the households is one of the key determinates of the child labour. The lower income of the household to necessity of sending the child work. The data regarding income of the child worker have been examined in terms of the contribution they actually make to family income Table 1.11 provides a vivid description.

Table 1.11: child workers Contribution of the Family Income

Percentage	Contribution
Up to 10 Percent	7.92
11 – 20 Percent	36.61
21 – 30 Percent	34.97
31 – 40 Percent	10.93
41 – 50 Percent	7.11
51 and Above	2.46
Total (f)	100.00

Table 1.11 reveals that t little less than 3/4th (71.58%) of the child workers contribute on an average thirty percent of less up to 11 percent per month, and a very small percentage(7.92%) contribute only 10 percent towards the family income. The remaining contributes more than 30 percent to the family income.

CONCLUSION

In every society, various new problems have arisen as results of industrialization and urbanization. The problem of child labour which is distinctly visible in contemporary urban industrial societies is one of them. Farced by the circumstances, many children in such a setup, particularly in slums, chawls and of streets are constrained to spend a large portion of their life by working in various industries,

vocations/ occupations as wage labours and self-employed doing odd jobs. This study of working children is conducted in shimoga city of Karnataka.

Any social problem as an empirical reality has various aspects such as demographic, economic, psychological and social. This study has tried to highlight the social aspect of the problem of the working children using techniques of data collection accepted by sociologists and presenting it in terms and concepts used in sociological writings.

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