



CHILD LABOUR IN RAICHUR CITY: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Social Science

Sharanabasavappa Research Scholar Department of Sociology Gulbarga University Kalaburagi: 585 106

Dr. S.L. Hiremath Registrar Central University of Gujarat & Professor, Dept of Sociology Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi: 585 106

ABSTRACT

Employment of children of less than 14 years is strictly prohibited in India, still due to different reasons such as poverty, poor economic support to families, family disorganization, etc, it is still prevailed. The child labourers are facing many of the problems such as lower wages, longer working hours, ill health, poor psychological development, exploitation, sexual harassment, etc. Hence, to study the problems of child labourers a sample survey was made in Raichur city in Karnataka and totally 120 child labourers were interviewed to collect the primary data. It is found that, poverty is the main reason for child labour and ill health and exploitation in terms of lower wages and longer working hours are major problems faced by child labourers. Hence, it is suggested to assign the responsibility of education of child labourers to their employers and prohibit child labour by imposing strict restrictions.

KEYWORDS:

Introduction:

According to International Labour Organization (ILO), the term 'child labour' is often defined as "work that deprives children of their childhood their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and 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 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" (Barman and Barma, 2014).

It is one of the deadliest cause which has to be addressed and eliminated from the deep roots of our Indian society, especially in rural areas. India stands with the highest number of child labourers under the age of 14 in the world, With an estimated 12.67 million children engaged in hazardous occupations (2010 Census India), However, poverty is often cited as the cause underlying child labour, various factors such as, discrimination among the society towards children especially towards lower strata, social exclusion, as well as the lack of quality education, existing parents' attitudes and perceptions about child labour and the role and value of education need also to be considered (Ansari, 2016).

As the child labour is menace and curse for every child worker, it is essential to explore the reasons for child labour and also to look into their problems and for this purpose, present study is made in Raichur city. The research study is based on primary data collected from child labourers working in Raichur city.

Objectives of the Study:

The research work is mainly aims to:

- Look into the personal and social characteristics of child labourers in Raichur city.
- Study the economic benefits gained by child labourers from outside work.
- Assess the reasons for working outside at an early age.
- Study the Problems of Child workers working in Raichur city.

Sources and Methodology:

Secondary literature published on child labour at national level was studied to assess the extent and magnitude of child labour at national level. Based on the published literature, general problems faced by child labourers are studied. It is found that such child labour is more in backward areas like Raichur district and hence, a sample survey of child labourers working in Raichur city was made. Raichur city is part of Hyderabad-Karnataka backward region and located in Karnataka state. Interview schedule was used to collect the primary data from child labourers. As there is no estimates of child labourers in the district, a sample survey of 120 child labourers working at different commercial establishments, shops and households was made. The

collected primary data through interview schedules is analyzed, interpreted and discussed as under.

Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion:

It is observed that, the child workers are working at different places and engaged in different types of work activities. To look into the nature of work of child labour, the collected primary data on nature of occupations or works of child workers is shown as under:

Table No. 1. Work Activities of Child Labourers

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Construction Work	23	19.17
Domestic Work/ Service	18	15.00
Family/ Caste based Occupation	14	11.67
Motor Cycle/ Car/ Cycle Repair Shops	33	27.50
Agriculture	15	12.50
Any Other	17	14.16
Total	120	100

Among the total 120 child labourers surveyed, 23 (19.17%) are working in building construction sector, 18 (15.00%) are working as domestic servants at different households, 14 (11.67%) are working in family and caste based occupations, 33 (27.50%) are working in Motor Cycle/ Car and Bicycle repair shops, 15 (12.50%) are working in agricultural sector and 17 (14.16%) are working in other types of activities especially in hotels.

It is noted that, many of the child workers are working at different shops or commercial establishments and households. It is revealed that, many of the child workers are also females and the gender-wise distribution of the respondents is shown in the following table.

Table No. 2. Gender of the Child Workers

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Boys	78	65.00
Girls	42	35.00
Total	120	100

It is noted from the above table that, of the total child labourers surveyed, 78 (65.00%) are boys and 42 (35.00%) are girls. Age is most significant criterion in the present study as the labourers are of children. If these labourers are of more than 16 years, then there should be knowledge and even they may be employed. If these labourers are working at less than 12 years, then it is strictly restricted. Age is the significant factor and it is stipulated by law, that children of more than 15 years of may be employed in non-hazardous work and

other laws such as Minimum Wages, etc are applied to these labourers. Hence, only a few of the child labourers aged more than 15 years are surveyed. The age-wise distribution of the respondents is presented in the following table.

Table No. 3. Age of the Respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 10 Years	21	17.50
11 to 14 Years	47	39.16
15 to 16 Years	52	43.34
Total	120	100

The age of the respondents revealed that, 21 (17.50%) of the child workers are of less than 10 or 10 years of age, 47 (39.16%) of the child labourers are in the age group of 11 to 14 years and 52 (43.34%) are in the age group of 15 to 16 years. As the law stipulated that child labourers are of less than 15 years, only the child labourers of less than 16 years are surveyed.

It is observed that a few of the child labourers are also going to schools along with their outside work. Further, a few of the respondents are drop outs after a few years of schooling. Hence, information was collected from the respondents in this regard and tabulated as under.

Table No. 4. Educational Status

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	25	20.83
Up to 4th Std (Lower Primary)	17	14.16
5th to 7th Std (Higher Primary)	12	10.00
8th to 10th Std (Secondary)	20	16.67
Drop Outs at Primary	27	22.50
Drop Outs at Secondary	19	15.83
Total	120	100

When it is observed from the above table, it is found that, about 49 child labourers working are going schools now along with their outside work and the remaining are illiterates and drop outs. Particularly, 25 (20.83%) of the child labourers were not went to schools and are illiterates, 17 (14.16%) are going to lower primary schools, that is up to 4th standard, 12 (10.00%) are going to higher primary schools that is 5th to 7th standard, 20 (16.67%) are studying in secondary education that is between 8th to 10th standard, 27 (22.50%) are drop outs at their primary education and 19 (15.83%) are drop outs at secondary education. It shows that, there are majority of the drop outs and illiterates among the child labourers.

As part of economic profile of the child labourers, it is essential to look into the reasons for working outside at an early age. In this regard, the primary data collected is presented as under.

Table No. 5. Reasons for Outside Work at Early Age

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	53	44.16
Lack of Economic Support to Family	34	28.33
Family Indebtedness	23	19.16
Family Disorganization	04	3.33
Any Other	06	5.00
Total	120	100

The reasons furnished by the child labourers for working outside at an early disclosed that, 53 (44.16%) have stated that they are working outside due to family poverty, 34 (28.33%) of these child labourers are working outside as they don't have economic support to their families, 23 (19.16%) of these respondents have mentioned that their families have borrowed loans, 04 (3.33%) are working outside due to family disorganization and 06 (5.00%) are working outside due to other reasons. It is highlighted that poverty and lack of economic support to their families are the major reasons for the respondents for their outside work at an early age.

As discussed above, the child labourers are working outside for the sake of economical benefit. As such, they are more concerned about their salaries. In this regard, the primary data was collected on the monthly salaries of the respondents and tabulated as under.

Table No. 6. Monthly Salary

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Less than Rs. 500	03	2.50
Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000	09	7.50
Rs.1001 to Rs. 2500	58	48.33
More than Rs. 2500	16	13.33
Only Food & Accommodation due to Parents' Borrowings	23	19.17
Family Employment	11	9.17
Total	120	100

The monthly salary of all the respondents depicted that, 03 (2.50%) are getting only less than Rs. 500 per month as salary, 09 (7.50%) are getting monthly salary between Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000, 58 (48.33%) are getting monthly salary between Rs. 1001 to Rs. 2500, 16 (13.33%) are getting monthly salary of more than 2500, 23 (19.17%) of the child labourers are not getting any salary as their parents have borrowed loans from employers, but are getting food and accommodation from their employers and 11 (9.17%) are working in their own family employment.

It is noted that work of many of the child labourers is not limited to fixed hours as they are working in different types of occupations and works. Further, many of child labourers are working in shops or agriculture or in construction activities have limited number of working hours, but the child workers living with employers, especially working at hotels and households have no fixed working hours. Hence, information was collected from the respondents on their daily working hours and presented in the following table.

Table No. 7. Daily Working Hours

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 04 Hours	11	9.17
05 to 06 Hours	17	14.16
07 to 08 Hours	30	25.00
08 to 10 Hours	28	23.33
Unlimited/ Stay in Employers' House	23	19.17
Family Employment	11	9.17
Total	120	100

Above table made it clear that, of all the child labourers surveyed, 11 (9.17%) are working for less than 04 hours in a day, 17 (14.16%) are working for 05 to 06 hours in a day, 30 (25.00%) are working for 07 to 08 hours in a day, 28 (23.33%) are working for 08 to 10 hours in a day, 23 (19.17%) are working for unlimited time as they are staying in employers' households or shops and 11 (9.17%) are working in their family business.

To work efficiently and productively, it is essential that employer must be cooperative and helpful towards their labourers. Further, it is better if the child labourers are getting kind, sympathetic and cooperative attitudes from their employers. If there are no such working relations between employer and child labourers, then it should be exploitation of girl child labourers. In this respect, the collected primary data on the attitudes of employers towards child labourers is tabulated as under.

Table No. 8. Attitudes of Employers

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Kind & Sympathetic	10	8.33
Cooperative & Helpful	19	15.83
Indifferent & Neutral	56	46.67
Exploit & Harass	24	20.00
Family Employment	11	9.17
Total	120	100

The attitudes of employers as observed by child labourers revealed that, among all the child labourers, 10 (8.33%) have stated that their employers are kind and sympathetic, 19 (15.83%) have mentioned that their employers are cooperative and helpful, 56 (46.67%) have expressed that their employers are indifferent and neutral, 24 (20.00%) have remarked that their employers are exploiting and harassing them

and 11 (9.17%) have opined that they are working in family business. It is summarized from the above table that many of the respondents are facing worse attitudes from their employers.

As discussed above, many of the child labourers are facing many of the challenges and problems at their workplaces from their employers. The problems and challenges faced by the respondents are discussed as under.

Table No. 9. Problems and Challenges Faced at Work Places

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Lower Wages	52	43.33
Work Overload	39	32.50
Frequent Ill Health	31	25.83
Exploitation & Sexual Harassment	24	20.00
None	40	33.33
Total	120	100

It is observed from the above table that, many of the respondents are facing more than one type of problem or challenge and only few of the respondents are not facing any of such problems and challenges. Particularly, 52 (43.33%) are facing problems of lower wages compared to their work, 39 (32.50%) are facing work overload, 31 (25.83%) are facing frequent ill health, 24 (20.00%) are facing exploitation and sexual harassment at their work places from their employers and only 40 (33.33%) are not facing any types of problems. It is highlighted that child labourers are facing many types of problems and challenges from their employers at their work places.

Conclusion:

To conclude, it is emphasized that though child labour is banned by law, still is prevailed in society. It is summarized that the child labourers are working for more hours for lesser wages due to their family poverty. Poverty and need for economic support are the major reasons for such child labour. It is essential to address the problems of child labourers. It is clear from the present study that few of the child labourers are exploited by their employers as they are paid less compared to their work and working hours. Apart from the economic exploitation, a few of the girl child labourers are sexually harassed by their employers. Hence, the problems of child labourers should be solved.

To avoid child labour, it is essential to provide employment or self-employment to poor families, which helps to generate more income. To address the problems of child labourers, it is essential to fix the wages of child labourers based on the nature and hours of work. Further, the responsibility related to education and health of child labourers should be compulsorily assigned to employers. To look after the betterment of child labour in each district and taluka, the Labour Welfare Department must be active to look into the terms and conditions of child labourers working at different work places. It is also essential on the part of the Government to open part time schools for the child labourers. Further, the human rights activists must be alert that they have to observe the human rights violations of the child labourers and if there is violation of such rights, strict action should be taken against the employers. The Government in association with employers must have to formulate the health policy of child labourers and must insure the child labourers against the possible health disorders due to outside work. The Government must pass legislations to take permission to employ child labourers along with their personal particulars and information with nature work, age, education, etc. Of course, it is better if the child labour is completely prohibited, if it is allowed, still the Government has to put restrictions to employers on education, health care, well being, etc. of child labourers.

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