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A STUDY ON PROBLEMS OF WORKING CHILDREN IN UNORGANISED SECTORS

KEY WORDS: Child Labour, Unorganised Sectors, Working Environment, Compulsory Education

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Introduction:

Children begin to work in family from an early age imitating their parents or relatives and sometimes with master artisan as a part of socialization process. They learn the skill by observing and participating in such activities. It was only after the Industrial Revolution in the early 19th century that children started being employed both on farms and on factories as wage labourers because they provided a cheap and uncomplaining labour force as against adults who could be more demanding and hence difficult to handle.

Most of the work, the children do is monotonous, repetitive and dull and is often not suited to their physical and mental capabilities. The children continue to work in appalling conditions and are more exploited in a number of ways. Some children are ill-treated, humiliated and even beaten, while others are looked after with parental care, which acts as incentive and motivate these children to undertake arduous and hard work beyond their capacity for a long duration. This may adversely affect their health and well-being. It is against this background that various problems faced by child labours are being discussed.

According to International Labor Organization, or the ILO, defines

child labour as “some types of work” done by children under the age of 18. The ILO also says that child labour includes full-time work done by children under 15 years of age that prevents them from going to school (getting an education), or that is dangerous to their health. 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 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.

Problems of Working Children:

The risk of occupational accidents or diseases is present in the unorganized sectors. The risk of child workers in occupational accidents or diseases is more because their physic are not strong as those of adult workers and therefore, depending on the job that a child is doing, he experiences fatigue, develops aches and pain in the body as well as infection due to work in dirty environment.

Table: Problems Confronted by Child Labourers

S. No.	Problems	Strongly Agree(5)	Agree (4)	No Opinion(3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree(1)	Total Scores	Rank
1.	Strenuous work	214	192	74	56	58	2230	1
2.	Heavy lifting of loads	155	115	140	127	57	1966	6
3.	Over work to the extent of 14hours a day	176	120	108	130	60	2004	5
4.	Irregular hours of food	190	105	95	160	44	2019	3
5.	Inadequate sleep	142	122	128	119	83	1903	7
6.	Low wages	202	140	102	55	95	2081	2
7.	Ill treatment	198	122	80	98	96	2010	4
8.	Lack of safety measures	168	95	122	98	111	1893	10
9.	Lack of toilet facilities	182	99	70	140	103	1899	8
10.	Cramped sleeping space	160	115	110	95	114	1894	9

Source: Primary data

The table shows the various problems encountered by the child labourers while performing their work in the study area. It is seen that 214 respondents strongly agreed with the point that there is a problem of strenuous work whereas 58 say that they strongly disagree with the view. It is revealed that the work is strenuous for them. Similarly, for low wages, 202 have expressed that they strongly agree that their wage rate is very low whereas 95 respondents strongly disagree with the view. Another notable problem facing children is irregular hours of food.

The working environment is not congenial to them because they are designed for the adult workers. The other reported problems confronted by the respondents are ill-treatment by the adult workers and employers. This shows that their employers and co-workers abuse child workers physically and psychologically. There are no safety measures for the health and hygiene of the child labourers. Some children reported that inadequate sleep is their major problem. The long hours of work and unhealthy wet, dusty and dirty environment is unfavourable for their sleep.

So, it could be inferred that the problems such as doing the work disproportionate to age, low wages, ill treatment, lack of safety measures for maintaining health and hygiene, food at odd times, over work, inadequate sleep, etc., were reported by majority of the respondents.

KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST:

Calculation of H in the Kruskal Wallis test

$$H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \left[\frac{\sum(Tg)^2}{n_g} \right]^{-3(n+1)}$$

Tg = The sum of ranks in a given sample

Ng = The size of a given sample

N = Number in all samples

p = calculated Value

H = Statistical Inference

Level of significance is 0.05

Kruskal Wallis Test:

(1) Problems Confronted by Working Children and the Revenue

Divisions:

Null Hypothesis H_0 : There is no significant difference, among the respondents of the three divisions, in the existence of various problems like strenuous work, Heavy lifting of loads, over work to the extent of 14 hours a day, irregular hours of food, inadequate sleep, low wages, ill treatment, lack of safety measures, lack of toilet facilities and cramped sleeping space

the respondents of the three divisions, in the existence of various problems – Strenuous work, Heavy lifting of loads, Over work to the extent of 14hours a day, Irregular hours of food, Inadequate sleep, Low wages, Ill treatment, Lack of safety measures, Lack of toilet facilities and Cramped sleeping space.
Level of Significance (α) = 0.05

Alternative hypothesis H_1 : There is a significant difference, among

The following table provides the statistical inference aspect of the above mentioned problems of child labours.

Table: Problems confronted by child labourers and the Revenue Divisions

S. No.	Problems	Calculated Value	Inference	Result
1.	Strenuous work	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
2.	Heavy lifting of loads	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
3.	Over work to the extent of 14hours a day	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
4.	Irregular hours of food	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
5.	Inadequate sleep	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
6.	Low wages	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
7.	Ill treatment	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
8.	Lack of safety measures	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
9.	Lack of toilet facilities	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
10.	Cramped sleeping space	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted

Based on the statistical inference from the table, it may be concluded that there is a significant difference in the existence of all the problems, among the respondents of the three divisions.

facilities and Cramped sleeping space.

Kruskal Wallis Test :

(ii) Problems confronted by child labourers and the educational levels of the respondents

Alternative hypothesis H1:

There is a significant relationship between the educational levels of the respondents and the existence of various problems – Strenuous work, Heavy lifting of loads, Over work to the extent of 14hours a day, Irregular hours of food, Inadequate sleep, Low wages, Ill treatment, Lack of safety measures, Lack of toilet facilities and Cramped sleeping space.
Level of Significance (α) = 0.05

Null Hypothesis Ho :

There is no significant relationship between the educational levels of child labourers and the existence of various problems – Strenuous work, Heavy lifting of loads, Over work to the extent of 14hours a day, Irregular hours of food, Inadequate sleep, Low wages, Ill treatment, Lack of safety measures, Lack of toilet

The following table provides the statistical inference of the above mentioned problems of child labours.

Table: Problems confronted with child labourers and their Educational Levels

S. No.	Problems	Calculated Value	Inference	Result
1.	Strenuous work	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
2.	Heavy lifting of loads	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
3.	Over work to the extent of 14hours a day	P=0.006	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
4.	Irregular hours of food	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
5.	Inadequate sleep	P=0.007	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
6.	Low wages	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
7.	Ill treatment	P=0.688	Not Significant	H_0 accepted H_1 rejected
8.	Lack of safety measures	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted
9.	Lack of toilet facilities	P=0.671	Not Significant	H_0 accepted H_1 rejected
10.	Cramped sleeping space	P=0.001	Significant	H_0 rejected H_1 accepted

Based on the statistical inference from the table, it may be concluded that there is a significant difference in the existence of all the problems except ill treatment and lack of toilet facilities, among the respondents of the three revenue divisions.

CONCLUSION:

Right to Education Act, 2009 should be compulsorily implemented by the government. The extension and improvement of schools to attract and retain child labour has been brought out by many studies to be an effective strategy to wean children away from work force. Child labour and compulsory education cannot coexist. Education, although will not by itself eradicate child labour but it will reduce and discourage it. Employers will find child labour uneconomic if the children are available for only half- a- day and if the working child becomes more visible by virtue of being a student. Education, besides raising the capabilities and welfare of its beneficiaries, also has a positive impact on health, mortality, fertility and family life. What we need is an education system different+ from the conventional one – that is properly resourced and valued that reaches the poorest children in terms of hearts and minds that expand their horizons beyond the gate marked drudgery. The Gandhian education system is relevant in this regard in order to provide decent relevant education for all children. Schools must teach useful skills that are seem as relevant by both children and parents. They need to be more flexible and adept to local children's circumstances. Education of this empowering kind can help to prevent a child from being trapped by an exploitative employer. If there were no employer prepared to exploit children, there would be no child labour.

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