

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING THE INCIDENCE OF CHILD LABOUR IN SMALL SCALE COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS: A STUDY IN DELHI

Bishnu Mohan Dash ^a

^a Department of Social Work, B.R.Ambedkar College, University of Delhi, Yamuna Vihar, Delhi, India.

^a Corresponding author: bishnudash2006@gmail.com

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Abstract: In the India's national capital, Delhi, a large number of children are engaged in jobs and many of them in hazardous occupations are deprived of basic rights resulting in the denial of childhood, education, recreation, health and social security provisions. Due to rapid industrialization and urbanization there is an unprecedented flow of the poor from villages to Delhi, mostly in search of gainful vocations. Such migrant families often concentrate in slums and squatter dwellings and have to struggle for their existence. So, in order to meet the survival needs, children are put to work. The nature of child labour in urban areas particularly in Delhi is very complex, because most of the child labour is found in unorganized manufacturing and service sector. Of Course there are plethora of laws, involvement of large number of non governmental organizations, but still we are witnessing wide spread prevalence of child labour in the India's national capital of Delhi and the problem deserves immediate attention.

The study is descriptive in nature. The study is based on interviews with 120 child labourers in the age group of 7 to 14 employed in small scale commercial establishments viz; vegetable markets(subzi mandi) garages, dhaba/tea stalls, and shops. Beside that, the views of parents and employers were also included in the study.

This paper has been divided into three sections. Section-I describes the factors responsible for the incidence of child labour as reported by the child labourers. In this section, besides children's responses on determinants of child labour, their views on reasons of school drop out, age and education at the time of migration, reasons of migration, aspirations of child labourers, and their awareness

about compulsory education and legal provisions were studied as these were important factors responsible for the entry of the children into the labour force. Section-II describes the factors contributing to child labour as reported by their parents. In this section, other important factors, poverty and inadequate income of the parents, illiteracy of the parents and occupation of the parents were studied separately as these variables were responsible for the growth of child labour. Section III describes the responses of employers regarding the reasons for appointing them in their establishments. The study has also forwarded various suggestions for abolishing the problem of child labour.

Keywords: Child labour, Small scale commercial establishments, Determinants, Empowerment,

SECTION- I

INTRODUCTION

The term 'child labour' means different things in different societies. Defining child labour has always been a contestable term. Not a single definition of child labour is exhaustive and acceptable to all concerned including governments, social scientists, non-governmental organizations etc. A universally accepted definition of child labour not available because it is a social construct, not a natural phenomenon, and social constructs are cultural ideas that differ between actors, histories, contexts and purposes (Ennew et al, 2007). Definitions of child labour vary across time, nations and industries. They range from normative ones based on specifications of minimum age for employment; to education-oriented definitions which define any child out of school as child labourer or as a potential child labourer; to right-oriented definition which consider any work

that deprives children of their fundamental childhood rights as constituting child labour (UN, 1998). At times, the definitions change contextually and depending on the situation and environment. The terms 'employed child' and 'working child' were used in the past to denote employment of child. Now, the term 'child labour' is standardized and replaced the above terms.

The Encyclopedia of the Social Science (1963) describes the term child labour as "when the business of wage earning or of participation in itself or family support, conflicts directly or indirectly with business of growth and education, the result is child labour". In simple terms, child labour can be defined as the work undertaken by a child, below a certain age, for gainful purpose within or outside the family.

Article 1 of the United Nations "Convention on the Rights of Child, 1989" (CRC) defines child as "every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". The convention calls for protection of the child from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Flowing from the above, a distinction has to be drawn between child work and child labour. The term 'Child Work' and 'Child labour' though used synonymously, have different meanings. The term 'Child labour' is used synonymously with other terms like 'employed child' or "working child". In this sense, it is coextensive with any work done by a child for gain. It signifies employment of children in gainful occupations with a view to add to the household maintenance activities. In the definition of 'child labour' according to 1971 and 1981 census of India, "the stress has been on the concept of main activity i.e. on the economically productive pursuits in which the worker engages himself or herself for most part of the time. As for seasonal work such as agriculture and ancillary pursuits, the main activity of a person was defined with reference to his or her work during the year preceding the enumeration. Further, if a person participated in economically productive work, not as a main activity or for most part of the year, he/she is not treated as worker but as marginal worker. (Mishra and Mishra, 2004).

'Child Work' refers to occasional light work done by children, which in most of the societies is considered to be an integral part of the child's socialization process. While helping parents at home and in family farms, children learn to take responsibility and acquire certain skills and prepare themselves for the tasks of future adulthood.

'Child Labour' implies something different in which young people are being exploited, or over worked or deprived of their rights to health, education and childhood. It impairs their health, their overall physical, mental and social growth.

The distinction between both child work and child labour may be briefly stated as follows.

Child work

(a) It involves light work (children learn to take responsibilities) (b) It accords some respect to children's right to health and education (c) It is occasional and legal

Child labour

(a) It involves hard and hazardous work, often exploitation (b) It entails deprivation of rights to health and education (c) It is constant, long hours and illegal (d) It involves some payment for their work

Fyfe (1989) attempts to provide a distinction by differentiating between 'child work' and 'child labour'. The former being seen as permissible and the latter as exploitative.

Children attending to some form of work as part of familiarization and socialization without its effect on his/her education and recreation, which can be termed as child work, is different from that of child labour. A relatively workable and functional definition is provided by ILO (1996) according to which "child labour includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working long hours for low wages under conditions damaging to their health and to their physical and mental development, sometimes separated from their families, frequently deprived of meaningful education and training opportunities that could open up for them a better future".

Homer Folks (1946) of the United States child labour commission defined child labour as "any work by children that interfere with their physical development and their opportunities for desirable minimum level of education or the needed recreation".

The Constitution of India calls for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. It also prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories and certain hazardous employments. Census of India (1991) consider the full time child labour as children below 14 years, whose main activity is economic and who have spent more than half the year(183days or more) in economic activity.

Several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) differ with the definition given by the census and other Government agencies and they believe that every child in the school age group and who is out of

school is child labour. The Operations Research Groups (ORG, 1993), Baroda defines child labour as “ a child falling within 5 to 15 age group and who is at remunerative work, may be paid or unpaid and busy any hour of the day, within or outside the family”.

According to encyclopedia of Social Work (1997) “a generally valid definition of child labour is presently not available either in the national or international context. Any definition turns upon the precise meaning we attach to the two components of the terms ‘child labour’ i.e., ‘child’ in terms of his chronological age, and ‘labour’ in terms of its nature, quantum and income generation capacity. It defines child labour as that segment of the child population which participates in work either paid or unpaid.

According to V.V. Giri, the term child labour is commonly interpreted in two different ways; first, as an economic practice and secondly, as a social evil. In the economic sense, it signifies employment of children in gainful occupations with a view to adding to the income of the family. In the social context, it takes into account the damages to which children are exposed, which means the denial of opportunities for development (Tripathy, 1996).

The Indian Factory Act of 1948, which is an elaborate and highly specific act relating to child labour, makes use of three different concepts to classify the workers, i.e., a ‘child’, a ‘young person’ or an ‘adolescent’ and an ‘adult’. It has been made explicit in this act that a person below the age of 15 years is to be regarded as a child.

The word ‘child labour’ also been defined variously in the multiple studies undertaken on the broad theme of child labour. In the study of working of children in Bombay, Singh (1991) and others have held a view that ‘Child labour’ means a working child who is between 6 and 15 years of age, is not attending school during the day, is working under an employer or learning some trade as an apprentice. In the study conducted by Indian council of child welfare (ICCW) in Delhi opines, ‘every child below 14 years, who contributed to the family income or treated as a full time/part time worker is a child labourer.

According to the Sen Committee (1981), Child labour, however, can broadly be defined as that segment of child population in work either paid or unpaid. The diversity of opinion among researchers in defining child labour is due to differences in social perceptions.

Age is an important criterion for distinguishing child labour from adult labourers. In the context of child labour, a working definition of a child may be a person below the age limit of 15 years set by minimum age convention (1973). In a wider context,

the United Nations convention of the rights of the child (1989) set the age limit of a child at 18 years. In India, many labour acts have fixed the minimum age of employment. But the definition of a child in terms of age differs from act to act. The Factories Act prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories. The limit in Mines Act is 15 years, whereas it is 12 years in Plantation Labour Act. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, defines ‘child’ as a person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age.

Now days, child labour is a widespread phenomenon. It is not only confined to work on family farms or in traditional family jobs and occupations, but it has also extended to other fields. They work in agriculture and allied activities, unorganized small-scale sectors and even in organized industries. The notion of child labour is intended to cover children under the age of 14 engaged in work or employment with the aim of earning a livelihood for themselves or for their family or themselves directly or indirectly at the cost of their physical, mental or social development." Thus the term child labour not only applies to the children working in industries but also to the children working in all form of non industrial occupations which are injurious to their physical, mental, moral and social development.

In the Indian Context, there has been a tendency to formulate the definition of child labour rather loosely. Even in the latest Labour Commission Report (2001), all working children are taken as one hardly differentiated category. It also includes all the children who are out- of- school. Burra (1999) advocates that; a child labourer is "basically a child who is deprived of the right to education and childhood. What makes her definition important is that it makes it unambiguously clear that all out of school children is working in one form or another. The ‘nowhere’ children are stated to be potential child labourers and are assumed to be staying at home, away from school so that they can take over some of the household duties of the parents and allow the latter to go out of and work.

Operational Definitions

Child labour

Those children below 14 years of age who are engaged in occupational pursuit with wages in Delhi.

Determinant

Determinants refer to factors contributing to taking up a job.

Small Scale Commercial Establishment

The establishments which employ less than 10 people, and characterized by low labour productivity and

include particularly the four categories of establishments i.e. shops, tea stalls/ dhabas, subzi mandi and motor garages.

Employer

An employer is a person who operates enterprises or engages independently in a profession of a trade and pays some other persons to help him.

Research Design

The study is descriptive in nature in that it seeks to describe the factors contributing to child labour.

Sampling

In order to get comprehensive idea of the problems, the responses of various stake holders viz. children, parents and employers were studied. The sample comprised of (a) Child labourers (b) Employers (c) Parents/Guardians

Child Labourers

For the selection of child labourers, the Quota Sampling method of the Non- probability type was adopted. The sampling was done in two stages.

In the first stage, the population was divided into four strata: Children working in shops, subzi mandis, motor garages and dhabas/tea stalls in Delhi.

In the second stage, equal numbers of children i.e. 30 were selected from each stratum. The total samples of working children derived were 120. Besides ten cases were selected by purposive sampling of non probability type for the purpose of narrative analysis.

Employers

The researcher has included the views of 40 employers selecting 10 each from each stratum to study their views on the working conditions of children employed with them and in general.

Parents

The researcher has also included the views of 40 parents of child labourers who were also included in the sample.

The details of the samples are as follows.

(a) Total number of child labourers: 120 (b) Total Number of Child Labourers for Narrative analysis : 10 (c) Total number of employers: 40 (d) Total number of parents /guardians: 40 (e) Total size of sample: 200

The samples were collected from the different parts of Delhi. The researcher had tried to cover as many areas to include in the sample.

The areas included were Seelampur, Zama masjid, Tis Hazari, Indira market, R.K.Puram, Kashmir gate, Govindpuri, Wazirpur, Palam, Dakhinpuri, Azadpur, Ashok Vihar, Ambedkar Nagar, Giri Nagar, Sarai, Loni, Sanjay Gandhi transport nagar, Anand Vihar, Nand nagari, Sundernagari, Shahdara, Loni border, Jhilmil, Harsh vihar, Mansarover Park, meet nagar, Adarsh Nagar, Ashok Nagar, and Welcome.

Inclusion criteria

The study was limited to children between the ages of 7 and 14 years. The lower age limit of 7 years was set based on the assumption that younger children would not be able to provide requisite information to the researcher. All children between the age of 7-14 years employed in either of the specified occupations with wages, and working more than four and half hours in a day for a minimum period of 6 months in Delhi were included in the sample.

SOURCES, METHODS AND TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected both from Primary and Secondary sources (documentary sources). The primary sources of data comprised the child labourers, parents and employers for gaining first hand information from the respondents.

The effective use of different methods to elicit information generally rests upon the problem, its dimensions and areas under the study. In the present study, the data was collected by using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The methods of data collection included interviews, observation, and using narrative analysis. The following tools were used for the three categories of respondents to be covered by the study. The interview schedule and interview guide were pre tested, and were finalized after entering certain modifications in the light of the results of pre testing.

Interview schedule for child labourers

An interview schedule was used to collect in-depth information from child labourers which covered I) demographic profile of child labourers such as age, education, caste, nature of family and native place II) Working conditions and terms of employment such as place of work, hours of work, payment of wages, over time, etc. III) Present living conditions like housing, basic facilities available at home like bath room, toilet facilities etc. Besides that, the schedule also contained questions regarding the factors contributing child labour, their educational level, awareness about child labour legislations, their future aspirations etc.

Table 1: The sampling details of child labourers

<i>Sl. No</i>	<i>Place of Stay</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	East Delhi	48	48
2	West Delhi	19	15.83
3	North Delhi	21	17.5
4	South Delhi	32	26.66
Total		120	100

Interview guide for parents of child labourers

The schedule for parents was prepared with a view to gather some information which was considered to be difficult to be gathered from the child labourers because of their relatively limited understanding and knowledge, and also to verify the information given by the child labourers. It was used to understand the socio-economic condition of the household, purpose of migration, reasons for allowing children to work, their living conditions and other relevant aspects.

Interview guide for employers of child labourers

The **schedule** for employers was also prepared with a view to understanding their motives and feelings in employing children and also to know their awareness about the labour laws and perceptions about child labour. It was used to understand the working conditions of child labourers, leisure period provided, hazards associated with the performance of the job, recruitment policy for appointing child labour, payment to the child labour, attitude towards employment of child labour etc.

Narratives

Ten cases using narratives were undertaken to generate qualitative information for an in-depth knowledge of the research questions and to support quantitative data.

Observation guide

An observation guide was developed to study the living and working conditions of child labourers. Diagrammatically, the methods employed in collecting data are given in the following figure.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data was processed both manually and through the use of computer programmes. This was due to the

specific nature of study and also because of the use of multi-method approach in the study. Quantitative information has been used substantially in the analysis to interpret the findings. The process of analysis involved categorizing the qualitative raw data (obtained through administering interview schedule) under some common headings and then post-coding the same. The quantitative data was pre-coded. The codes were then transferred to the master charts and then to the SPSS spread sheet. This whole procedure was very tedious and time consuming. But once this was accomplished, the data was analyzed descriptively. Through SPSS, univariate tables were made. Tables were used to add to the descriptive data and for easy understanding and viewing. Diagrammatic representation of data was also attempted to provide clarity and easy comprehension. Data analysis was done as per the objectives of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher has obtained verbal consent as part of ethical considerations for conducting research. The consent of child labourers, parents and employers were obtained for the purpose of data collection. The researcher has taken very special care before asking any questions which could hurt their sentiments. All the respondents were given an introduction of the researcher and the purposes of his study. The permission was asked for from each respondent before interviewing him and a commitment was made to keep their names and responses confidential.

Major Findings of the Study

There are several factors which seem to be responsible for the early entry of children in the labour force, but all of them can't be qualified. This chapter will highlight the important reasons which emerged from the present study which have

contributed to their joining workforce in their childhood. This chapter has been divided into three sections. Section-I describes the factors responsible for the incidence of child labour as reported by the child labourers. In this section, besides children's responses on determinants of child labour, their views on reasons of school drop out, age and education at the time of migration, reasons of migration, aspirations of child labourers, and their awareness about compulsory education and legal provisions were studied as these were important factors responsible for the entry of the children into the labour force. Section-II describes the factors contributing to child labour as reported by their parents. In this section, other important factors, poverty and inadequate income of the parents, illiteracy of the parents and occupation of the parents were studied separately as these variables were responsible for the growth of child labour. Section III describes the responses of employers regarding the reasons for appointing them in their establishments.

The children were asked to narrate various reasons which compelled them to engage in remunerative jobs at a tender age. It was found that the reasons put forth by them were overlapping. The researcher tried to classify them as per the statements given by the respondents. This resulted in multiple responses by each respondent.

CHILDRENS' RESPONSES

Table 2 reveals that the most important factor which led them to work was to supplement family income. About 62(52%) child labourers started working only because their parents wanted them to work since the economic background was very poor for the entire family; they joined work so that they could provide extra income to the family. Some of the respondents also responded that their fathers' did not get jobs throughout the year and hence they had to face financial crisis. So, in order to support the family, they joined in remunerative job. Again 59(49%) child labourers reported that they started work due to the family pressure only because their parents wanted them to work. This was due to the illiteracy and ignorance of the parents. Another major factor was poverty of the household. Around 48(40%) of them started working because of poverty of their household. Around 41(34%) respondents reported that they had less interest in studies and had dropped out from schools and did not want to study further. Some of the respondents 36(30%) also pointed out that, they dropped out from school because of the migration of their parents and hence got engaged in

jobs. Another related factor was the unemployment of parents. Only 8(7%) child labourers said that they started working because of their own desire for having a better living standard and to earn some pocket money. Still another factor was death of parent in some cases. Loss of parents or bread winner of the family, chronic illness of family members, drinking habits and other social evils among adults, forced some children to enter employment at a tender age.

In some families children are the main bread winners. Often orphans and children from broken families run away to big cities and work as child labourer. These children viewed that they had no other option and started working in remunerative jobs.

So, the present study revealed that a majority of the children joined the labour force because of poverty, migration, supplementing family income, family pressure and lack of interest in studies. The above table depicts that a majority of the children were engaged in jobs for fulfilling the basic economic needs of the family.

School Dropout

Another important cause for the perpetuation of child labour is the dropping out of children from schools because of various reasons. The dropping out of children from schools is associated with the pressing needs for the childrens' earnings as well as with low perceived advantages of schooling. Child labour is believed to be closely related to the children dropping out from schools. Wherever dropout rates are high at the primary levels, incidence of child labour is also very high. If a dropped out child does not enter the labour force, then there is a tendency for him to drift into crime and other illegitimate activities.

Sociologists consider school drop outs as the important reason for existence of child labour. But as regards, the reason of school drop outs, there is a difference of opinion between those who argue poverty as the paramount reason and those who attribute the school. According to the National Council for educational research and training (NCERT) the inability of the school system to retain children who have enrolled in the primary level education-"the push out" has been the single greatest reason responsible for the existence of child labour (Weiner,1991). Thus, poverty cannot always be argued to the paramount reason of school drop outs and supply of child labour. It is poverty simply a classical defense offered by sociologists till date (Basu and Van, 1998).

Table 2: Determinants of Child labour

Determinants of Child Labour	Number of Responses	Percentage
Supplement family income	62	51.66
Family Pressure	59	49.16
Poverty	48	40
Lack of interest in studies and school drop out	41	34.16
Migration of parents	36	30
Self-desire	8	6.66
Death of parents	3	2.5

N= 120**Table 3:** Reasons of drop out of child labourers

Reasons of drop out	Frequency	Percentage
For supplementing family income	65	54.16
Lack of interest in studies	46	38.33
Parental Pressure	54	45
Migration	38	31.66
Death of parents	3	2.5

N=120**Table 4:** Age at the time of migration

Age of entry into job	Percentage	Frequency
Less than 7	8	6.7
7-9	27	22.5
9-11	64	53.3
11-13	21	17.5
Total	120	100

Table 5: Education at the time of migration

Educational standard	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate`	58	48.3
Up to 2 nd standard	25	20.8
3 rd to 5 th standard	36	30
6 th to 7 th standard	1	0.8
Total	120	100

Table 6: Reasons of migration of respondents

Reasons of migration	No. of Responses	Percentage
Financial problem	59	49
Family problem	47	39
Natural disaster	16	13
Peer pressure	9	7.5
Self-desire	8	7
Family migration	59	51

N=120**Table 7:** Level of Aspirations of Child Labourers

Level of Aspirations	Frequency	Percentage
To continue in the same work	8	6.66
Low ambitions (Earn some money)	7	5.8
High ambitions (owner of hotel, doctor, actor etc.)	9	7.5
To get engaged in skilled job	2	1.7
Never thought about the future	94	78.3
Total	120	100

Table 8: Determinants of Child labour as perceived by the parents

<i>Sl.No</i>	<i>Parent's response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
1	Poverty	22	55
2	Use of spare time of children	6	15
3	Children's dislike for studies	8	20
4	To learn skilled jobs	4	10
Total		40	100

Table 9: Poverty as a crucial determinant

<i>Sl. No</i>	<i>Poverty as a crucial determinant for child labour</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Children	48	40
2	Parents	22	55
3	Employers	6	15

Table 10: Literacy levels of parents

Literacy level of the parents	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	25	62.5
Basic education	11	27.5
Primary	3	7.5
Middle	1	2.5
Totally	40	100

Table 11: Occupation of parents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Employed in petty jobs	19	47.5
Unemployed	2	5
Truck driver	1	2.5
Self employed	18	45
Total	40	100

Table 12: Reasons for hiring child labourers

Employer's responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very cheap and obeys orders	7	17.5
Child centric work	4	10
Children's need for job	6	15
Learning trade skills	13	40
Parents request for proving job to their children	7	17.5
Total	40	100

One of the important reasons that forced children to drop out of their educational institutions was their poor economic condition. The data reveals that about 54% of the drop outs were those whose parents could not afford to send them to schools due to financial constraint. These children reported that they had been pulled out of schools in order to supplement the family income. Thus, the poor income of the parents is an important factor for drop out of children from schools. It was also found that 46(38.33%) of the total drop outs were not interested in studies and considered work more beneficial than study. A majority of these child labourers 54 (45%) dropped out because of parental pressure to get engaged in either remunerative jobs or in family business. A significant number of respondents 38(31.66%) also dropped out due to the migration of their parents to Delhi.

However, the study reported that 16 (13.3%) respondents of the respondents expressed

unhappiness due to dropping out from school because they wanted to continue their study and wanted to stay in their village. In contrast, 25 (20.80%) respondents opined that they felt very much relieved after dropping out. These respondents reported that they became economically independent.

It can be concluded that supplementing family income, migration and parental pressure mainly because of poverty were responsible for the dropout of those children

Age at the time of migration

The details of age at which these children migrated to Delhi is given in Table 4. Table 4 shows that as high as 64(53.3%) child labourers joined work force between the age group of 9-11 years followed by 27(22.5%) between 7-9 years and 21 (17.5%) at the age of 11-13 years and only 8 (6.7%) started work even at the age of less than 7 years also.

Table 13: The responses of children, parents and employers of child labourers as well as the various structural factors identified by the researcher

Children's Response	Parent's Response	Employer's Response	Structural factors (identified by the researcher)
Poverty	Poverty	Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inequality of development between regions • Rapid urbanization • Rural urban migration • Bad governance • Lack of effective enforcement of legislation • Social exclusion of marginal groups • Insufficient financial and political commitments to education • Lack of decent work for adults.
Migration of parents	-	-	
Lack of interest in studies and school dropout	Children dislike for studies	-	
Supplementing family income	Supplementing family income	Parent's request for providing jobs to their children for supplementing family income	
Self-desire	Self-desire	Children's need for job	
Family pressure	-	-	
Death of parents	-	-	
Family indebtedness	-	-	
Crop failure/draught	-	-	
Landless parents	-	-	
Family business	-	-	
Parental abuse	-	-	
Alcoholism of parents	-	-	
Unemployment of parents	-	-	
To learn skilled jobs	-	Learning trade skills Very cheap and obeys orders Child centric work	

Education at the time of migration

Education plays an important role in one's life. Education aims at developing positive qualities in the children and helps them realize their potentialities. Accordingly, the child labourers were asked to state their educational qualification at the time of migration.

The data show that a majority of the respondents 58(48.3%) had never attended the school at the time of joining their jobs followed by 25(20.8%) who had schooling up to 2nd standard and 36(30%) had education upto 5th standard. Only a single child labourer was found who had studied upto 7th standard at the time of joining the work force.

So, it can be concluded that lack of education and early entry into the work are positively correlated.

Migration

The increasing industrialization since India's independence brought about migration to the cities, where rural poor found greater opportunities for earning a livelihood. Migration is caused by various forces that encourage an individual to leave one place (**push**) and attract him to another (**pull**) place. For each migration, however several push and pull forces may be operating and interacting, so that the migration can't be attributed wholly to a single force. In modern times it is the movement of families and, still more of individuals seeking economic settlement and transient work in other lands. Migration is a shift in the place of residence to the urban areas mostly because of economic opportunities. Perloff (1960) argues that localities with attractive economic conditions can draw sizeable numbers of migrants

from other localities, though only a small number may come from any single locality. On the other hand, it is very important in determining out-migration from a locality suffering from economic distress is the percentage of the labour force that is willing to leave in order to search for opportunities elsewhere. The higher income opportunities and attraction of city life are some of the other factors which were responsible for rural urban migration. On the other hand, the lack of work opportunities available in the village is among the push factors responsible for migration. In many cases, it has been seen that it is the parents who leave in search of better economic prospectus and with them the child is bound to leave.

Migration from rural areas to urban areas also encourages child employment. With growing population, small or no agriculture holdings, greater mechanization of agriculture and in general, inability of the agriculture sector to absorb greater in labour force, a large number of farm workers (who are unemployed or underemployed) are forced to migrate to cities. Most of these workers are engaged in low paid work. Coupled with unfamiliar environment and deprivation, children of these migrant families are forced to join the work force.

Table 6 shows that 59(49%) children reported that financial problems of their families was the most important reason of migration. 47(39%) children reported that they had come to Delhi because of the family problems. These parents reported that their parents used to quarrel and the child felt neglected and uncared. Eight percent children said that they were allured by city's charm and better job prospects, so they migrated from their home town. The above table reveals that the main purpose of migration was financial problem, family problem, natural disaster and family pressure to migrate to Delhi in search of livelihood opportunities.

This factor has been dealt with in some of the studies. The study of child labour in Bombay by NIPPCD (1978) revealed that 58.2% of the child labour was the exclusive result of the internalization of the urban slum culture, as their families had migrated to cities before their birth. In all, there were 90 percent of them who belonged to migrated families. The study of Gangrade (1978) in Delhi found that there are a substantial number of migrants among child labourers, particularly in the field of domestic services. Besides, domestic work they were working in tea stalls, dhabas, hawking evening newspapers, rag pickers etc. Most of the child labourers had migrated from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Khandekar (1972) revealed that low socio-economic status of family, migration from rural areas to Mumbai were

some of the main factors which had forced their children to join the Mumbai's labour market.

Aspirations of Child Labourers

The early engagement in work checks the intellectual development of a child and it confines his vision only to the periphery of the occupation he is engaged in. He hardly knows about the professions beyond his territory and this, as well as lack of education limits his aspirations to a great extent. It was found that the children who had acquired some education or were still continuing it had better aspirations. Since, it is difficult for child labourers to pursue schooling, they can't develop mental faculties in a proper way, as a result of which their aspirations get confined to low level of aspirations.

The study reported that a majority of the respondents 94(78.3%) had never thought about their future. Their major concern was only to fulfil their immediate basic needs. Besides that, a significant number of respondents had very low ambitions.

So, it may be concluded that lack of future aspirations was also an important factor for forcing them to become child labourers. This was again because of the poor socio economic background of respondents.

Awareness about Compulsory education and Legal provisions

The National Policy on Education (1986) and the Right to Education Act (2009) recommended free and compulsory education for all children below 14 years of age. Prior to it, for compulsory education provision was made in the Indian constitution (article-45), for all children up to the age of 14 years. Besides that, the Government of India has implemented the Child labour prohibition and Regulation act, 1986. In spite of this, the government has not yet been able to make even primary education compulsory. As a result of it and because of massive poverty, children of poorer families are employed at their early ages.

The study revealed that most of the child labourers were not aware about child labour legislation which bans employment of children below 14 years. These children also did not have knowledge about free and compulsory education and the Right to Education Act. However, a significant number of children were aware about various non-governmental organizations working nearby for the education and empowerment of child labourers.

SECTION- II

PARENTS' RESPONSES

In this section, the determinants of child labour as reported by their parents have been presented. In addition to this, other important factors, poverty and inadequate income of the parents, illiteracy of the

parents and occupation of the parents were also discussed separately as these variables were responsible for the growth of child labour.

The parents also play a pivotal role in the incidence of child labour. The low income of the parents which is not adequate to meet the basic needs of the family, forces the parents to send their children to work and supplement the family income. Thus, poverty propels parents to send their children to distant places to work. The abject poverty and unemployment force the children to take up remunerative work in the informal commercial establishments.

Determinants of Child Labour

When parent/guardian were asked to state their reasons for sending their children to the labour force, the study revealed that 22(55%) sent their children because of the poverty. Six (15%) parents reported that they sent their child to job as he was wasting his time. Eight (20%) parents reported that their child was not interested in the study, followed by 4(10%) who viewed that children were sent to jobs to learn skilled job so that in the future they could be employed in the market easily.

So, it is clearly evident that poverty was the most important reason which compelled the parents to send their children to remunerative jobs.

Poverty and inadequate income of the parents

There are a number of factors at the household level that determine whether a child should be sent to work or not. It is often believed that it is the poverty that is the main cause of child labour. The association between household poverty and child labour is beyond dispute. The intergenerational cycle of poverty and child labour persists and that doesn't break itself over a considerable period of time. If the households do not have enough money to meet the basic needs, children are usually sent to work to earn money for the fulfillment of the basic needs of the family. So, the most important cause of child labour is widespread poverty. In India, which is a developing country, poverty forces the parents to send their children to seek employment. Diseases and other contingencies may need extra money and the employment of children is resorted to as an easily accessible method to bring in partial money.

In the present study forty percent of child labourers reported poverty is the main reason for their engagement in the occupations whereas fifty five percent of parents and fifteen percent of employers also reported that poverty as the prime cause of child labour.

The study revealed that poverty is one of the leading factors resulting child labour. However, there is a reverse effect too, such that it remains locked in a

vicious circle. When the parents send their children to work particularly to hazardous work, their potential to work may be lost hardly up to 30 to 35 years as they were early starters of work. Hence it is like a **vicious cycle**, these parents again send their wards to work when they reach their forties and this continues as a never ending process and poverty continues. This is due to the inability of the parents who began their career as child labourers.

Poverty of the households may be due to several factors: inadequate income of the family, due to unemployed adults, absence of schemes for family allowance, large family etc. Child labour actually creates and perpetuates poverty. It not only displaces adults from their jobs but also condemns the child to a life of unskilled, badly paid work. Ultimately this leads to the same impoverished, unemployed fate as their parents, which each generation of cheaper children undercutting wages. Children become part of the vicious circle of poverty from one generation to another generation.

The study conducted in the Cuttack city of Orissa pointed out that due to poverty, it becomes difficult for their parents to bring up their children but to engage them in some form of economic activity to earn their livelihood and support their families (Mishra and Mishra, 1990). The study of urban working children in Bangalore (Patil, 1988) also reported that economic compulsions were the strong reason forcing 46.33% of child labourers to seek employment. The study of Kulshrestha (1978) also concludes that factors like poverty, lack of education and large family size were responsible for child labour. Ahmed (1999) has concluded after a quantitative cross country empirical study that child labour is basically associated with inequality in society but not with poverty. Both inequality and poverty in the society have been currently found to be the consequence of capability deprivation-deprivation from quality of being able to do something. And, hence, the latter is a more responsible variable for the existence and continuum supply of child labour (Foster and Sen, 1998).

The problem of child labour is interrelated to the inadequate wage of the parents. This very inadequacy in wages of parents compels them to send their children to do some work in return of some wages in order to fulfill their basic economic needs and the employers also takes the benefit of this weakness by providing work to the children on low wages in spite of the various protective laws. The present study also shows that none of the parents income is more than Rs.5000 per month.

It is generally acceptable proposition that poverty is the main reason for which children are forced to work. Their income is necessary for the survival of

their family members and also of themselves. Chronic poverty is the largest factor responsible for the prevalence and perpetuation of child labour. Poverty forces parents to send their children to seek employment. Diseases and other contingencies may need extra money and the employment of children is resorted to as an easily accessible method to bring in that money.

A study conducted in Bombay (Singh, 1979) reveals that a majority of the children migrated to Bombay in search of employment due to lack of family income. Inadequate income of the adult earner is another factor which leads to child labour practices. The study of Rao (1996) also reported that one-third of the children were working to supplement the parental income. Similar results were found in the study of Singh (1990) conducted in Varanasi, Badhoi and Mirzapur belt. The study revealed that one of the major compulsions of the majority of the children to take up jobs has been the inadequate income of the family earner. In fact, compulsion is also increasing due to unemployment, underemployment, large number of dependents, little or no skills and lack of productive assets due to which children have to work. The case study of child labour working in unorganized sectors of Kashmir (Shah, 1992) has shown that the problem of child labour is basically an offshoot of the problem of low income of the parents to support a large sized family. With inadequate income even for the maintenance of the children at subsistence level, these poor parents are forced to fill. So, the present study revealed that literacy level of the parents has a strong correlation with the incidence of child labour as 25(62.5%) parents were found to be illiterate. Thus; parental illiteracy is also a contributory factor for existence of child labour. Majority of the child labour comes from illiterate families. Overall the literacy level of the child labourers is very low and as such children are engaged in small scale commercial establishments as a means of survival as this occupation doesn't require prior training or education. The incidence of child labour is found to be more in families whose fathers or mothers are illiterate. Sharma and Sharma (1997) have also come out with a similar result in their study on child labour in the glass industry of Firozabad. The study of George (1977) revealed that most of the children who came to labour force belonged to lower literacy group. His study reported that forty four percent of child labourer's parents were illiterate.

Occupation of parents

Table 11 shows that a significant number of parents 21(48%) were either engaged in petty jobs or unemployed, which is of course an important contributing factor for the incidence of child labour. Lumpkin and Douglas have very rightly pointed out

their family budget deficits by the little wages earned by young children.

Illiteracy of the parents

Literacy level of parents influences the extent of child labour. Educated parents are able to get employment easily. Further, as they become aware of the evils of child labour, they do not prefer to send their children to work. The education level of the father plays an important role in determining the employment status of the child. Fathers, who have higher levels of literacy give priority to the education of the children, whereas illiterate fathers do not understand the importance of education and hence do not send their children for schooling. In many cases, parents particularly in villages and urban slums are themselves illiterate and do not realize the importance of educating their children. They are unaware of the injustice done to the children by making them work instead of sending them to schools. They are ignorant about the rights and needs of children. Some parents, even though they realize the importance of educating their children, are compelled to send their children to work due to economic reasons. A large number of parents of poor families find no meaning in education as it does not guarantee a job in future. They prefer to send children for work at an early age instead of sending them to school with the hope that the children will at least acquire a skill or learn a trade by the time they become adults.

that two-fifth of the children seek work due to the unemployment of adult member of the family. Nearly two-third of the children were at work because the adult member of the family had no employment or had some part time job, and one-third of children wanted to work due to the serious cuts in the pay of the adult (Lumpkin & Douglas, 1938).

The study of Savitri (1985) also stated that poverty, large family, the death of bread winner, physical and mental illness of the parents or unemployment of adult members in the family are some of the reasons which contribute towards child labour. The study undertaken by the researcher supports all the above findings of different researchers.

SECTION-III

EMPLOYERS' RESPONSES

It is not only the children and their parents who are responsible for the early entry of child in the work force. Child labour can be attributed considerably to a segment of the employers who prefer children for various reasons. One of the main objectives of the employer is to get more profit on limited expenditure. Moreover, they are aware of the economic compulsions of the families having extreme poverty.

They watch out for exploiting the parental economic compulsions when they know that children of the backward families are more tolerant, can be put on difficult jobs for long hours, even on lower wages. The employers also understand the productive quality of children who do not raise grievances pertaining to their working conditions.

The reasons stated in the report of the committee on child labour(1980) for employers preference for children in work are : “ less age and status conscious, lesser affliction by feelings of guilt and shame, no hesitation to do non status even demeaning jobs, activeness, agility and quickness and lesser feeling of tiredness , greater in discipline and control, less expensive to maintain, superior adaptive qualities, lack of organization, moral consideration of employers to help and to provide succour to destitute or forsaken children and acquisition of fitness through initiation in the early age”. The National commission of labour (1969) has also pointed out that “quite often it is the feeling of sympathy rather than the desire to exploit which weighs with employers in employing child workers. The following table describes the various reasons cited by employers in appointing child labour.

Table 12 reveals that 13(40%) parents reported that children are engaged in the job only because they wanted to learn the trade. 7(17.5%) viewed that their parents had requested them to give employment to their child. It may be that their parents were financially very weak and are unable to fulfill the basic necessities of the life. 7(17.5%) employers reported that children were very obedient and obey orders. These children never complained on any issues. They work harder and are happy with their salary. However, 6(15%) employers reported them children had approached them directly for job due to family pressure to supplement family income followed by 4(10%) viewed that the work is basically child centric and the children can do these unskilled jobs efficiently.

So, it can be said that learning the trade skills was the most important reason cited by the employer’s for the employment of children in small scale commercial establishments.

A study conducted by Singh(1990) in Varanasi also reported that employers prefers children because they work hard, it is cheaper and can be put on any job and can work for long hours; and lastly children create less troubles in the workplace. These factors establish the importance of employer’s willingness to employ children which further becomes an important reason for increasing child labour.

On the basis of the above discussions, case studies using narratives and from review of literature, the

following determinants were found which were responsible for the incidence of child labourers in Delhi.

The responses of children, parents and employers of child labourers as well as the various structural factors identified by the researcher are presented in Table 13.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF CHILD LABOUR

Child labour is a complex socio-economic demographic problem which can be reduced and eliminated by multiplicity of actions, both by the government and the civil society sector. On the basis of the research findings and experience emanating from the research process, the following recommendations emerge for dealing with the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon.

(a) Indisputably, child labour is rooted in poverty. The income deficiency can be made up by providing sustainable livelihood opportunities to the lower stratum of society through creation of more jobs/ livelihood options, agrarian reforms, and enforcement of minimum wages and social security.

(b) Self-employment schemes should be intensified. Beneficiaries of these programmes must be carefully selected to include those poor families who have children. These families must be provided social security including medical and sickness benefits.

(c) Though a large chunk of the rural population still depends on agriculture, this sector should be developed more adequately, as it continues to provide to a sizeable population. Poor families with child labour should be provided free or subsidized inputs like fertilizer, insecticides and seeds. In rural areas, investment in better irrigation, credit and market facilities should be made available, so that rural people can get more out of their land. The dairy and fisheries development programme must be given importance. Agro based industries should be promoted to all possible extent for income generation and enhancement among the rural people.

(d) ural Cooperatives/ Self-Help Groups should play a more vital role in giving loans, offering help in procuring raw materials and in marketing so that it could add to their income. The small-scale industries should be promoted on a large scale for reducing unemployment among the adults.

(e) Provision of unemployment allowance, and old age pension schemes should be properly and fairly implemented. Benefits should reach genuine and deserving people. Systems of social protection provided by the state or non-state agencies must be carefully designed and implemented. Microfinance schemes, organized by civil society groups at the

local level can be linked into larger structures, such as banks. The state can help by providing start-up funds, and develop a supportive legislative and regulatory frame work.

(f) School represents the most important means of drawing children away from the labour market. School provides children with guidance and the opportunity to understand their role in the society. So, top priority should be given to universalization of elementary education for children between 6 to 14 years within a time frame not exceeding more than 5 years. Along with general education, vocational training should be imparted to the children to make them economically independent in their adulthood. Apart from that, to increase the interest towards schools, handsome incentives should be provided to children of the socio-economic backward classes in the form of scholarships, free books, stationery, dress and nutritious meals for, at least, up to fourteenth year of age. These incentives would not only raise the education level but also provide opportunities for skill acquisition and better employment in adulthood.

(g) flexible timetables and other forms of flexibility in education can also help to accommodate the needs of the child labourers and their families. Not only the child labour enrolled in school should be given regular guidance but their parents also should be given continuous advice, guidance and financial support for continuing education of their children because the poor economic conditions of parents very often make conflicting demands between work participation and schooling on the children. Thus, even the easy accessibility to schools does not necessarily increase the enrolment of children if economic status of parents does not permit it. Parents belonging to low socio economic groups should be motivated to send their children to school rather than to work place through education, publicity and propaganda.

(h) Many parents involve their children in work because they do not understand and realize the significance of education. It is therefore necessary to develop education consciousness among them by making use of all possible means especially by effectively organizing adult education programmes and work through community based organizations. It is suggested that the government intensify the steps to achieve cent percent literacy by undertaking adult education programmes, which in turn will enable parents to realize the need and importance of education.

(i) There is need to arouse awareness among the child labourers, their parents and employers of the negative consequences of children's engagement in jobs. People, specially employers and the parents of the children should be made aware of the existing laws

concerning child labour and the penalties imposed for flouting them.

(j) The mass media has a critical role to play in communicating information about child labour. The information it conveys can have a significant influence on public policy and legislation both in terms of formulation and enforcement. Initiatives should be taken to ensure that child labourers get a fair and balanced hearing in the media. Mass media should be used giving regular information and running educational campaigns.

(k) Public lectures can also be organized with more emphasis on the problem and its repercussions. People, specially employers and the parents of children should be made aware of the existing laws concerning child labour and the penalties imposed for non adherence.

(l) There is a need to bring consciousness among children so that they may be aware of their Constitutional rights, which is possible with the help of radio, television, and spread of education and literacy campaigns.

(m) Efforts should also be undertaken by the voluntary organizations to involve the local public and parents/guardians of child labourers, so that they become aware of the efforts made by the government for the mitigation of the problem and enhancing the well being of the families.

(n) The state governments have to take concrete steps to strictly prohibit the employment of children in occupations, which have been banned under the Child Labour Act. The state government must activate and strengthen the law enforcement machinery to see that all the legislative measures are properly enforced. The enforcement machinery must be geared up to ensure effective enforcement of the Child Labour Legislations and take effective steps to prosecute those who violate the act. There is a need to strongly view the violation of child labour laws as trifling offences. The need of the hour is to apply the provisions of legislations strictly so that the employers of the child labourers must be severely punished in case of their violation of child labour legislations.

(o) The legal system should be framed in such a way that the people violating this law may not be spared. The law can be formed in such a way that it may leave no loophole where the employer of the children may be left free.

(p) On account of the fact that, child labour is a localized phenomenon, the panchayats and municipalities can play a potential role in the eradication of child labour in the form of local

information, communication, and local monitoring and mobilization.

(q) There is urgent need to promote social labeling. Social labeling consists in putting a label on an item or in the shop where it is sold- which guarantees to consumers that the product has been manufactured without using child labour.

(r) The trade unions can play a very important role in the implementation of existing laws on the minimum age for admission to employment, minimum wages, working hours and rest intervals. Trade unions can work more effectively if they comprehend the physical and mental havoc the child labourers have to face, and the fact that child labour reduces adult wages as well as adult employment.

(s) NGOs can also help vulnerable and marginalized groups, including child labourers, have their voices heard by government and other decision makers at local, national and even international levels.

(t) NGOs often have a comparative advantage in piloting and evaluating alternative strategies and interventions at community level. They have also played a vital role in advocacy for the elimination of child labour by publishing materials in local languages.

(u) Community based organizations are often best placed to ensure that programmes to combat child labour are realistic and adapted to the local context. There is a need for formation of 'Community Surveillance Groups' which can play an active role in preventing the migration of children by identifying, monitoring and supporting "at risk" families and children.

(v) Non-governmental organizations have to keep abreast with emerging trends and adopt newer strategies to deal with the problem. There is ample literature and information available on the reasons which try to explain the genesis of child labour and the working conditions that prevail. It is now a challenge for the voluntary organizations to address the issue not just on the periphery but aim at structural reforms. Attempts like organizing the unorganized sector, reforms in the primary education system, microfinance for the weaker sections and instilling process for community participation and ownership are some of the essential issues that NGOs would have to address at the outset because lack of such systems contributes heavily to the inflow of children into the workforce.

(w) In sum, there is an urgent need for attitudinal change, social awareness and aggressive campaign against the scourge of child labour. It should be our national obligation to ensure physical and mental development of children with measures for regulating

and humanizing child labour along with an attack on poverty. The eradication of child labour must be an explicit objective of development discourse and must be implemented with perseverance and as a matter of priority. In the absence of a proper development perspective, it is very difficult to keep the child labour away from the labour market. The elimination of the practice child labour requires people's participation and cooperation from all sectors i.e. from their families to society at large. The eradication of the problem is a long process, which requires intensive efforts on many fronts and also creation of general social awareness. There is also the urgent need for political mobilization to completely prevent the demand and supply of child labour. The basic strategy concerning child labour should be to gradually reduce and eliminate it through improving and enforcing legislation, promoting school enrolment and raising public awareness. The coordinated efforts of government and NGOs, employers and social workers through active public support can definitely help in ameliorating or controlling the problem.

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