

Child Labour : Hazardous Work and Its Impact

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Abstract:

It has been observed over decades that, poverty forces poor families to send their children to work, which results in a serious problem the world is facing nowadays. Child labour can leave many severe consequences on children and their families. When children work, it does not mean as a standard, they support their families economically, neither all of them get paid for their work since many of them work as bonded labour or as slaves. In addition to that, they face many problems which may cause permanent damage to their childhood.

Introduction:

For many years, child labour has been one of the biggest obstacles to social development. It is a challenge and long-term goal in many countries to abolish all forms of child labour. Especially in developing countries, it is considered as a serious issue these days. Child labour refers to children who miss their childhood and are not able to have the basic amenities which a child should have. Recently the International Labour Organization (ILO,2013) estimated there are around 215 million children between the ages five to fourteen who works worldwide. They are often mistreated and work for prolonged hours, in very bad conditions. This can affect their health physically, mentally and emotionally. These children do not have the basic rights like access to school or health care.

According to ILO (2013) the largest numbers of child labourers are working in hazardous work and the total number of child workers is increasing, even though it is forbidden by law. These children are vulnerable to diseases and they struggle with long-term physical and psychological pain. The main cause that induces children to work is poverty. These children work for their survival and their families. Some studies like Dessy and Pallage (2003) argue not all the work that children do is harmful or brutal. Some work may provide successful learning opportunities, such as babysitting or newspaper delivery jobs, but

not if the work exposes them to psychological stress, like human trafficking, prostitution and pornographic activities.

The international organizations have made great efforts to eliminate child labour across the world. Many countries have adopted legislation to prohibit child labour; nonetheless child labour is widespread throughout the world. It is not easy task for low income countries to achieve banning child labour. Several studies and international organizations considered that education is the key strategy in addressing child labour, and it can help children to stay away from work. However not every family can afford to send their children to school or, even if they enrolled, afford to keep them attending the school.

The legal framework and policies to control child labour in India:

The Indian government has established various proactive policies towards elimination of child labour. India has not yet ratified ILO Conventions 138 and 182 on banning child labour and eliminating the worst forms of exploitation. However the government of India implemented a child labour law in 1986(The Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act) the legislation sets a minimum age for employment of children at fourteen years and forbid child labour in dangerous sectors. The Government prohibits forced and bonded child labour but is not able to enforce this prohibition. The Child Labour

Prohibition and Regulation Act does not forbid child labour but consider about regulating it. But indeed the law does not eliminate all forms of child labour specially when the vast majority of children under the age of fourteen are working in family farms or doing households.

India has a number of child labour projects which have been implemented to help children from hazardous occupations and provide them an education. Including the National Child Labour Policy (NCLP) started in 1987. The aim of NCLP is to help children in hazardous activities and provide non-formal education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition etc. The ILO IPEC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour) is also another programme which eliminate child labour, the programme sponsors 175 projects in India (Padmanabhan, 2010)

Furthermore, several NGOs like Care India, Child Rights and You, Global March against Child Labour, etc. have taken up the task to get the children back to school and also volunteers along with villagers. The MV Foundation is non-governmental organisation (NGO) whose mission is to tackle child labour through promoting elementary education, even approaching parents to send their children to school. In spite of various laws regarding child labour and much efforts done by the non-governmental organizations, nonetheless children continue to work on a massive scale in most parts of the country. This is a problem because most child labour laws in India do not cover all types of work such as agriculture, wholesale trade, restaurants and domestic works. Usually these children are the most vulnerable child labourers.

Types of child labour:

Child labourers are involved in many different forms of works, which include risks and hazards. These children are vulnerable to physical pain and injury particularly being exposed to health hazards (Levison & Murray, 2005). According to ILO (2012) the vast majority of child labour is involved in hazardous occupations such as agriculture,

mining, manufacture, construction bonded child labour, domestic work and fishing etc. Environmental and occupational conditions can impact on the health and development of the children. Children working in different sectors such as agriculture, factories, domestic labour, sex workers and carrying out their illicit activities, migrant labourers, and on the streets as vendors etc.

Socio-economic factors related to child labour:

Poverty as root cause, Large Family size, Poor Family condition, Traditional or cultural factor, Corruption, Civil war, Urban migration, Globalization etc.

Child Labour in India:

There are several key factors that affect child labour in India most notably is poverty. Child labour in India is to be found in almost every sector of the informal economy. The state of Uttar Pradesh has the highest child labour population followed by Andhra Pradesh. As Singh mentioned in The Times of India article on October, 18, 2013 that Uttar Pradesh has the highest number 20 % of India's child labourers, children between the aged of ten to fourteen years old. The rate of poverty is highest among people in Uttar Pradesh however, the proportion of urban population living in slums. The region is dominated by families with large sizes generally people are living in households with eight members.

There is gender difference that existed between boys and girls in India. There are more male children are involved in economic activity than female children. Since girl's work is more invisible and as a result hidden and not reported.

The high incidence of child labour is much higher in rural areas than urban areas and most of the child labour in rural areas is engaged in agricultural activities. During 2009-10 the numbers of child labour in the age of group five to fourteen years has declined by ten per cent, but still a large numbers of children working specially in rural India, because of the agricultural activities (Sharma et al, 2012). However, the incidence of child labour in rural areas are high than urban areas. Although most of child

labourers prepositioned from the poor households and poverty is more prevalent in rural areas than urban India. Another reason is bonded labour which is usually common in rural areas in India where traditional class or caste. Migrant labourers, are mostly vulnerable to bonded labour because they have no choice sources of credit so, due to debt their whole family forcing their children work as bonded labour.

Conclusion:

The problem of child labour appears in severe form and various factors are involved. The reasons for the incidence of child labour in India is complex and deeply rooted into the society. Poverty seems to be the main cause. In general poor children contribute to

household income. Child labour can be found in urban and rural areas. However the vast majority of child labour occurs in rural areas since poverty is more rampant. Although, many poor rural families struggle for a better life in urban areas, this pushes families to force their children to work in order to increase the family income and ensure survival. Study found children under the age of fourteen years are still engaged in economic activity in India. These children tend to work more consequently they are not regularly in school. However, besides poverty there are other causes such lack of schools, lack of regulations and enforcement, corruption, lack of awareness and rapid population growth.

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