

A Study on Child Labour in Golaghat Town, Assam

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Abstract:

This study considers the child labour among every state of India prevents the growth of child development. The reality of child labour is very complex and diversified, because it exists in every place in India. Child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity. In the Present scenario the numbers of child working population are increasing day by day in the developing and under developed countries. The child working populations are called as child labour whose age ranged from 5 to 14 years. In India, the children are engaged mostly in various low-key jobs of the unorganized sectors which are hazardous in situation. The Census found an increase in the number of child labourers from 11 million in 1991 to 12 million in 2001 and 21 million in 2011. In addition, nearly 85 per cent of child labourers in India are hard-to-reach, invisible and excluded, as they work largely in the unorganised sector, both rural and urban, within the family or in household-based units. This paper is an attempt to understand the causes of increasing child workers in Golaghat District of Assam as well as the present condition of child labour and provide suggestions about to reduce of child worker.

Keywords: Child labour, hazardous jobs, Trafficking, Child labour Act.

INTRODUCTION:

Child labour remains to be a serious problem in the world today. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), millions of children in the world work in hazardous and intolerable occupations. Currently the numbers of working children in the world are between the ages of 5 and 14 about 200 millions. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016 which was passed in the month of July, 2016 in Parliament prohibits the engagement of children in all occupations. Children refer to those under the age of 14 years. According to the National Child Labour survey report of 2001, children are engaged in productive and non productive works beyond their capacity in both the urban and rural areas in India. In the urban areas, children are often forced into labour due to situations of persisting poverty which requires all family members to contribute to the household income. Many factors are known to have contributed to the health problems of child labourers. This could be due to the fact that most of labourers perform tasks that are beyond their capacity or punishment by employers or other people. This study was conducted to assess the situation and problems of child labour in Golaghat, Assam. More specifically, the objectives of the study were to describe the socio-economic, personal and demographic situations of child labour, describe the magnitude and severity of the problems, identify and analyze factors that contribute to child labour, and recommend possible strategies for interventions that can alleviate the problems of child labourers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

As is the case with other places in India, child labour is also a problem in Golaghat, district of Assam. Though child labour in the country has been banned by the Supreme Court, the order of the apex court is yet to be implemented in true spirit. It has become a common sight to see a child working in a garage, hotel, and business establishment and under hazardous condition as well throughout the country. Golaghat is also not an exception in this regard. The present study was done to understand the causes and consequences of child work prevalent in the consciousness of the work force involved in child development and to suggest ways and means to divert erroneous and deeply engraved notions on sociological perspective. Child labour creates unfair business practices. It harms the children by forcing them to work at a very tender age and puts others who do not use child labour at a disadvantage for charging more to their services.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To find out the factors responsible for child labour in Study area
2. To understand the socio-economic, personal and demographic dimensions of child labour;
3. To recommend possible strategies for interventions that can alleviate the problems of child labourers.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

- i. Study area and population-** The study was conducted in Golaghat town in Assam. The town area was selected because here with a rapidly increasing number of child labourers.
- ii. Data source:** Both Primary and secondary data has been collected for the study. Primary data has been collected from the selected respondents from the study area. The secondary data has been collected from books, journals, magazines and from internet sources.
- iii. Study design-** Both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied in the study. Qualitative data was collected by using interview and by carrying out observations. Quantitative data was collected by using a multistage sampling method to identify or select the study participant (respondent).
- iv. Instruments used for data collection** Well structured interview scheduled was used to collect the data.
- v. Sample size and sampling design:** Twenty respondents have been selected for the study on the basis of purposive sampling as the respondents of the study i.e child labour are not found from any organisation and the researcher has to purposively locate them.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:**Table no-1: Socio-demographic characteristics of child labourers in Golaghat town**

Characteristics	Child labourer (N=20) (N= No. Of Child Labourers)	
	frequency	Percentage
Age		
6-9	5	25
10-14	15	75
Sex		
Male	14	70
Female	6	30
Educational level		
Illiterate	10	50
Read and Write	3	15
Primary	5	25
Secondary	2	10

Source: field study

Demographic characteristics of respondent- A total of 20 child labourers from Golaghat town area participated in the survey. Children in the age range of 6-14 years were used for the study. More than half of the respondents were in the age group of 10-14 years. About 30% of them in the youngest age group (6-9 years old). Of all the respondents who participated in the survey, 50% were illiterate, 15% could read and write, 25% were with primary school education and 10% were secondary school education. The above table provides the data on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents of the study. Out of 20 respondents, 5 belong to the age group of 6-9 which is 25 percent of the respondents and rest 15 Respondents are in the age group of 10-14 which is 75 percent of the total sample size.

Table No 2: Distribution Respondents by the Factors responsible for working as Child Labour (N=20)

Variables/factors	Respondent (N=20) (N=No. Of Child Labourers)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	5	25
Parental Loss	3	15
Parental Separation	1	5
Shortage of Food	11	55
Total	20	100

Source: Field Study

Reasons for being child labourer and family condition-Concerning the reasons for child labour, 33.3% of them reported that they came to this place in search of work, 16.6% due to loss of parents, 26.6% due to parental separation and 23.3% due to shortage of food. The result shows that 43.3% of the child labours were from broken families (one or more of their parents were not alive or have separated).

Table No 3: Distribution Respondents by the Type of Work Engaged in (N=20)

Variables/factors	Respondent (N=20) (N=No. Of Child Labourers)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Domestic work	15	25
Working in shops/factories	5	25
Total	20	100

Source: field study

From the above table the working conditions of child labourers can be seen. Out of 20 child labourers 75% mentioned that they were working in the home of individuals (as domestic labourers). Furthermore, 25% of them reported that they were street labourers and they were employed to sell small items on the streets, carrying household goods or items near or around market places and carrying passengers bags and others goods around bus stations.

Table No 4: Distribution Respondents by the Type of Work Engaged in (N=20)

Daily wage of child labour	Respondent (N=20) (N=No. Of Child Labourers)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 150	9	45
151-190	5	25
More than 200	6	30
Total	20	100

Source: field study

The overwhelming majority of the child labourers reported that they got payment for the work they performed. 45% of the respondent mentioned that their daily income is less than Rs.150. 25% of them had a daily income of between Rs.150-190 and 30% earned more than 200 (210 if over timed). Concerning average daily working hours, the majority of the respondents worked for more than 10 hours per day, while 38.3% worked for 8-10 hours. Half of the respondents have stayed in the job for more than one year.

Table No-5: Percentage distribution of health problems encountered, sources of health care reported by respondent (N= No.20 of Child Labourers)

Characteristics	Respondent	
	Frequency	Percentage
Faced health problems (N=20)		
Yes	14	70
No	6	30
Diseases encountered (N=14)		
Malaria like illness	6	42.85
Respiratory tract diseases	2	14.28
Skin disease	4	28.57
Eye problem	2	14.28
Sources of health care (N=14)		
Government health facilities	5	35.71
Private health facilities	3	21.42
Traditional medicine	4	28.57
Did not go anywhere	2	14.28

Source: field study

Health Problems: Majority of the respondent reported that they faced many health problems. Malaria like illness and respiratory diseases are the major health problem reported by 70% of the respondent, eye problem 14.28% and 28.57% were faced skin problem. According to the respondent malaria like illnesses had sign symptoms such as headache, fever sweating etc. The respiratory diseases are characterized by chest pain, cough, fever etc. Among child labourers who reported health problems, 35.71% attended government facilities, 21.42% attended private health institutions, 28.57% used traditional medicines and 14.28% did not seek any medical treatment.

Major Problems:

On the above analysis results indicated that the child labourers had the following major problems:

- a) Because they are helpless some individual pay less amount of money or not at all for the worked they performed.
- b) Because of their living condition, they are exposed to physical abuse, (they are beaten by their employers).
- c) Due to heavy work load, poor working conditions, malnutrition, exposure to harsh environmental conditions (working during very cold and hot weather) and poor sanitation they become vulnerable to diseases.
- d) Because of long hours of work, denial of permission from their employers and financial problems, they are not able to get the opportunity for education.

DISCUSSION:

Though child labour in the country has been banned by the Supreme Court, the order of the apex court is yet to be implemented in true spirit. It has become a common sight to see a child working in a garage, hotel and business establishment, and under hazardous conditions as well throughout the country. Golaghat is also not an exception in this regard. Hundreds of child labourers are working in garages, hotels, etc. A certain percentage of domestic workers in the city are of 14 years of age or younger. Though poverty is the main cause which forces many children belonging to the poor families in the city to work as child labourers, the State government has so far failed to rescue many of these child labourers.

A proper enumeration of available child labourers is a must. The use of children for domestic work is one of the most disturbing factors in the Indian society. It is disturbing because these children are isolated and separated from their family. Many children in domestic work don't receive their pay. Most of the domestic child workers work between 8 and 18 hours a day.

SUGGESTION:

1. Free, compulsory and appropriate education should be provided to each and every child and this must be implemented properly;
2. Improving access to existing health care facilities;
3. Providing appropriate health education,
4. Providing family planning service to parents heightening the children right awareness of parent, child and public;
5. And most importantly, providing family support to alleviate poverty

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, it can be said that the Child labours in Golaghat town could not get the benefit of education as most of the respondents are out of school, their health, growth and development are threatened, they have lost the love and affection, care and protection of family. The Children are the assets of our nation. The future well being of the nation depends on how its children grow and develop. The great poet Milton said, "Child shows the man as morning shows the day." So it is the duty of the society to look after every child with a view to assuring full development of its personality. Their nurture and solicitude are our responsibility. Children's programme should find a prominent part in our national plans for the development of human resources so that our children grow up to become robust citizens, physically fit, mentally alert and morally healthy, endowed with the skill and motivations needed by society. Equal opportunities for development would serve our large purpose of reducing inequality and ensuring social justice.

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