

# CHILD LABOUR AMONG SCHOOL DROP-OUTS AND ITS SOCIAL IMPACT ON THE WORKING CHILD

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**Abstract :** Child Labour is a big problem in India and there are 10.1 million working children below the age of 14 in India, the share of U.P. is 2.17 million which is 21% of total working children (Census 2011). This study is an attempt to find the social effect of being Child labour in a population of school drop-outs at the elementary level in Central Uttar Pradesh. The study is based on the primary data collected from 500 school drop-outs and their households through a predesigned well-structured questionnaire. The objective of the study is to establish if there is a relation between high school drop-outs and prevalence of child labour and conduct a comparative study of the social behavior including psychological effects among working children and non-working children in the studied population of school dropouts. Out of 500 school drop-outs, 246 (49 %) worked as child labour. Pearson Correlation method is used to establish the relationship between high school dropout and the prevalence of child labour and a strong positive correlation is found among them. Out of the total surveyed drop-outs who suffered from anti-social impact in form of involvement in alcohol or drug abuse, criminal offense, stealing or suffering from mental or physical discomfort a visibly large number are working children. The findings of the study showed a higher incidence of anti-social involvement among child labour in the sample, suggesting child labour does have an adverse social impact on society and also on the individual

**Index Terms - School Drop-outs, Child Labour, Social impact, Uttar Pradesh.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

School drop-outs refer to discontinuation of schooling without completing a particular level of education. A drop-out can be defined as "a child who enrolls in school but fails to complete the relevant level of the educational cycle". Duby (1981) argues that child labour will never be eradicated until and unless poverty is eliminated. Poverty is a precursor to Child labour. The magnitude of the problem of child labour is much bigger than depicted in official numbers. There are a large number of children especially in the rural area who work to support their household and are not paid. Unpaid child work consists of domestic and household-related duties (mostly girls) and agricultural labour (mostly boys).

The association between child labour and dropout from school has been studied from different perspectives. It is thought that children drop out of school due to a need to supplement family income through work (Basu K, 1998). The cost of schooling also influences the rate of school continuation (Hazarika & Arjun, 2006). Lack of finances and the need to support the family when confronted with the need to buy stationery and uniform and pay school fees could lead to dropout from school (Sooryamoorthy R., 1998). While this kind of work may not completely deprive the child of schooling, but it takes up a considerable amount of time and results in absenteeism or nonperformance (the PROBE, 1999). Seasonal agricultural labour affects the attendance of the child and low attendance leads to dropout as child is not able to cope up with the heavy out of school workload (Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001). Poorer households with fewer physical assets may increase their labour supply, with women and children often called upon (World Bank, 2000 cited in Hunter & May 2003) to deal with income shocks. However, these strategies cater to short term income shocks but frequent withdrawals from schools can lead to permanent drop-out.

The need for children to perform outside work for cash payment is one of the main reasons for children dropping out of school (IIPS & Macro International, 2007). Small-scale studies in rural Odisha had shown that children belonging to very poor households are more likely to drop-out and work in rural areas of India (Malik & Mohanty, 2009). Employment or apprenticeship opportunities could act as powerful "pull factors" stimulating students to stop out or drop out (Olsen and Farkas, 1989; Pittman, 1993; Marks and Fleming, 1999). The opportunity to earn in the urban area for children from a rural area is contributing to migration and withdrawal from schooling (Edmonds, Pavcnik, & Topalova, 2008).

School dropouts who work as child labour have substantial economic, social and mental effects. The negative economic impact that drop-outs in terms of the difference in wages and lack of good employment opportunities. The differences in wages among college graduates, high school graduates, and high school dropouts are steadily increasing (Murphy & Welch, 1989, as cited in Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999; Murnane, Willet, & Boudett, 1995). The drop-outs are more likely to engage in antisocial activities and social vices like drug addiction, stealing and alcohol abuse. Researchers have explored the negative relationship between dropping out and specific mental health consequences including rebelliousness and delinquency (Bachman, 1972), self-esteem (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986), and depression (Fine & Rosenberg, 1983). Dropping out may result in low self-worth and dissatisfaction with their quality of life and job. A working school dropout is faced with the expectation which are adult responsibilities for which the individual may not have the maturity to hand. School drop-outs refers to discontinuation of schooling without completing a particular level of education. A drop-out can be defined as "a child who enrolls in school but fails to complete the relevant level of the educational cycle". Duby (1981) argues that child labour will never be eradicated until and unless poverty is eliminated. Poverty is a precursor to Child labour. The magnitude of the problem of child labour is much bigger than depicted in official numbers. There are a large number of children especially in the rural area who work to support their household and are not paid. Unpaid child work consists of domestic and household-related duties (mostly girls) and agricultural labour (mostly boys).

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## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study is analytical in nature. The method of survey is used for this study. A total of 100 schools from the district of Unnao, Raeberelli, and Sitapur are selected purposively and 5 dropout students from each school are selected for the purpose of the study. School records of the time period 2006 to 2016 are used to select school drop-outs. A sample of 500 drop-out, 170 dropouts from Unnao and 165 each from Raeberelli and Sitapur is collected. Data collection is done through a questionnaire instrument.

The sample consists of 500 students in which 246(49.2%) started working as child labour. The major objectives of the present study are to analyze the magnitude of the problem of child dropout among school drop-outs in Uttar Pradesh and the impact it has on their life. The statistical tools like percentage method and correlation have been used for data analysis and drawing inferences.

## III. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

H0: "The prevalence of child labour in the society is independent of the high rate of school drop-outs."

H0 "The child labour has no adverse social impact on the society"

## IV. THE OCCURRENCE OF CHILD LABOUR AND SCHOOL DROP-OUTS

The term 'child labour', suggests ILO (2012) is best defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. 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. As per the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, amended in 2016 ("CLPR Act"), a "Child" is defined as any person below the age of 14, and the CLPR Act prohibits employment of a child in any employment including as domestic help. It is a cognizable criminal offense to employ a Child for any work.

The data is analyzed to establish a relationship between the incidence of child labour and school drop-out at the elementary level. The school records from 2006-2016 have been selected to get sufficient information regarding the current engagement and mindset of the drop-outs and avoid biases of data. The age of the children when they dropped out and started working has been taken as a benchmark to decide whether they worked as child labour or not.

Table 1 Prevalence of Child Labour Among Studied School Drop-Outs in Districts Under Study

District	Number of School Drop-outs	Total Employed Drop-out(X)	Child Labour(Y)
Unnao	170	120	100
Raeberelli	165	108	72
Sitapur	165	98	74

Source: Primary data Computed

The findings of the survey revealed that out of a total of 500 school dropouts 246 started working as below 14 years of age. To ascertain whether there is any dependency between the high dropouts and drop-outs, we have compared the total number of employed drop-outs in each district with number drop-outs who are working as child labour. The table shows that district Unnao has the largest number of school drop-outs working as a child (59%). The number of children who dropped below fourteen years of age and are involved in earning has been correlated using Pearson Correlation method. It is seen that the number of employed drop-outs(x)and drop-outs working as child labour (y) share a strong positive correlation and a Correlation Coefficient of 0.86 is found (with a significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$ ). Figure 1 shows the scatter plot graph to show how the prevalence of child labour among total employed drop-outs is distributed in three districts and the graph shows an upward trend with some deviations. The result suggests as the number of drop-outs who are in employment in a district is increasing the number of child labour in that

particular area is also increasing. Therefore, it can be said that more drop-outs are working as child labour. It points to the fact that more child drop-outs are entering the child labour market. The causal factor and stimuli though are so intertwined that we cannot separate the two processes. Child labour leads to drop-outs and drop-outs leads to child labour, both statements are equally true based on the fact whether a child is being pulled out of education system to earn or he is withdrawing from school due to disinclination or need to work, etc. A working child irregular pattern of attendance leads to academic pressure and difficulty to cope up with the studies and it gradually forces him out of the education system. There are cases where a child who is not performing well and not interested in studies or due to the financial needs of the family is pushed or pulled out of the education system and enters the child labour market.

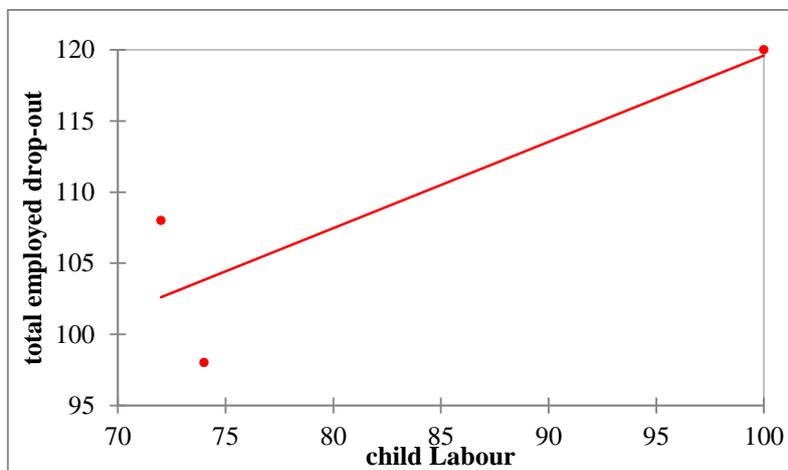


Figure 1 Scatter plot to show the correlation between total employed dropouts and prevalence of child labour in the three studied districts

The result shows that there is a significant relationship between the prevalence of child labour and high school drop-outs. The null hypothesis that “The prevalence of child labour in the society is independent of the high rate of school drop-outs” is rejected. Hence, it can be concluded that the prevalence of child labour in society is dependent on the high rate of school drop-outs and an increase in drop-out leads to increased incidence of child labour in society. Apart from paid employment, a large number are involved in unpaid activities like helping parents in their employment or helping in family farms which includes mostly boys. Many drop-outs are spending major time in performing household activities and looking after siblings (mostly girls or elder children) while both parents are working to meet their needs in Table 2. It is to be noted that a child is involved in multiple activities and spend different hours on various activities

Table 2 Daily Activities of Drop-out Children in the Sample Households

Area	Working (all ages)		Household Chores		Looking after Sibling		Spending time in Recreation with Friends	
	Average hours	Number of Children	Average hours	Number of Children	Average hours	Number of Children	Average hours	Number of Children
Rural	5.6	188	4.3	241	2.4	229	1.6	195
Urban and Semi-urban	6	137	5.5	164	2.18	162	1.47	132
Entire Study Region	5.8	325	4.3	405	2.28	391	1.53	327

Source: Primary data Computed

**V. CHILD LABOUR AND ITS IMPACT**

The data related to social impact is analyzed and the percentage method is used to establish whether child labour is contributing to major negative social effects on society. It is established from the primary data that 75 percent of the working population is below 14 years of age. The study confirms that the total drop-outs who suffered from some kind of anti-social impact in form of involvement in alcohol or drug abuse, criminal offense, stealing or suffering from mental or physical discomfort, a hefty percentage belongs to working child category. In Table 3 Prevalence of Social Vices among Child Labour in the Sample Table 3 the total number of dropouts who are involved in some sort of anti-social activity or behavior is analyzed, it is plainly deduced that a greater number of child labour are getting involved in such activities compared to the rest of the surveyed drop-out population. The findings show that out of total of 342 dropouts sad for choices made in life, 68 percent belong to child drop-out who is working (179) and only 32 percent belong to dropouts who are not working as child labour in the sample. Similarly, physical discomfort or mental stress associated with current engagement is stated more by child labour (57 percent). Thus, a high degree of disgruntlement among child labour related to job and working conditions is found in the results. For the prevalence of alcohol abuse and other addictions, there is a marked difference between working children and the rest of the population in our sample of dropouts.

Table 3 Prevalence of Social Vices among Child Labour in the Sample

Category	Addiction	Criminal Offence	Stealing	Physical/Mental Stress	Sad for Choices made
Number of Dropout	218	11	241	295	342
Number of Child Labour	183(84)	9(82)	171(71)	168(57)	179(79)

\*numbers in parenthesis are in percentage form

Source: Primary data computed

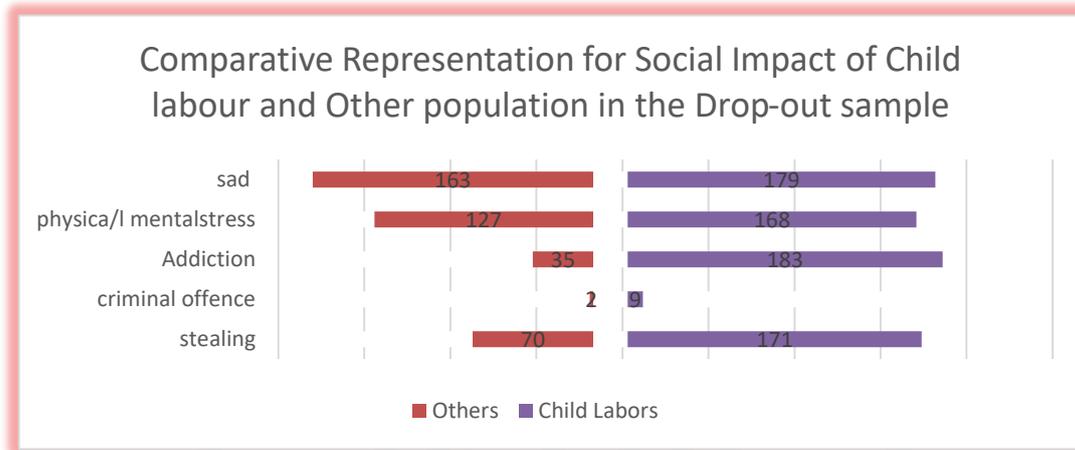


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the diagrammatic representation for the comparative study of the number of child labour and other dropouts in the sample who are involved in anti-social activity. It is visible that among the working child population, social vices are prevalent more frequently and less frequently among drop-outs who are not working as child labour in the studied sample. Hence, the hypothesis “The child labour has no adverse social impact on the society” is rejected. Based on the above discussion it can be concluded that child labour does have an adverse social impact on society, and on the individual.

## VI. DISCUSSION

Jeyaraj. D and S. Subramanian (2005) in their research study concluded that the phenomenon of child labour is explicable in terms of poverty that compels a household to keep its children out of school and put them to work in the cause of the household’s survival. They also suggested to include those children who are conventionally categorized as “non-workers not attending school” within the count of child labour. In line with that finding, it is found that apart from the 49 % of children working below fourteen years of age there are children who are involved in some sort of unpaid household work or farm labour. Only, 10 percent of the surveyed drop-out population is sitting idle doing nothing and it mostly included physically disabled or mentally retarded children or children who are less than 8 years of age. Shanta Sinha (2000) reported that children who are not in school are engaged in some form of work, and this is particularly so of girls.

The findings showed that a high dropout rate is related to child labour and as the number of employed drop-out children is increasing in the district under study, the number of child labour is also increasing. There is a strong negative correlation and it is found those who left school early are mostly working mostly in hotels, shops, agricultural labour or as house helps. However, some are also working in small scale industries like carpet making, matchmaking and beedi making. A considerable number of drop-outs have migrated to other places in search of employment (24 percent). There are many among them who wanted to continue their studies but had to withdraw from school due to either poor economic condition of the household or death or illness of the parents. There is also a large number of child labour who did not have an interest in studies.

Almost 73 percent of the children are sad about the choices made in life and a large number agreed to be suffering from some mental or physical stress. There is also an incidence of a high rate of other social vices like stealing and indulging in alcohol or drug abuse. Child labour has a deteriorating effect on a child’s personality. The only way to eradicate child labour is by imposing strict rules against child employment and by making the punishment for depriving children of their right to education. The result is in line with study made by Berg(1992,1996) which stated drop-out as an issue where a biopsychosocial perspective could be useful; where there is a confluence of biological (various neurodevelopmental issues), psychological (cognitive issues and issues connected to intelligence and learning), and social (issues of poverty, social opportunities, health provisions) factors that come into play. It is found in our study that 94% of the working drop-outs earned an average monthly salary of Rs.11000 and only 1.6 earned above Rs.15000

Poverty, drop-outs, and child labour are the events intertwined with each other and one has to first focus on the poverty and at the same time make the school environment more convivial to the child to ensure retention of an enrolled child. A working child is seen as an economic asset by the family, but it forces the child into harsh conditions which have long term social and mental effect on his life apart from the economic hardships.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The study examined the interrelation between School dropouts and child labour and the social impact of being a child labour. Working child suffer from many detrimental effects, our studies mainly focusses on social impacts but there are long term economic and health effect as well.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Child labour and school drop-outs are the two main concerns that the state of Uttar Pradesh is facing. There are many out of school children who work in large numbers as child labour. The government should come up with stringent laws against those who deprive

children of their right to education in elementary years and impose a total ban on Child labour. There is a need to count all children between 6 to fourteen years of age not attending school as child labour whether paid or not. There is also a requirement to focus on financially deprived children as poverty is the main forerunner of both issues- being child labour and school drop-outs. There is also need to make education more job centric and increase awareness among parents for long term benefits of being educated.

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