



CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA: AN INVESTIGATION OF SOCIO- ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Child labour is a curse to the whole society. Children involved in economic activities used to face exploitation mainly physical, psychological, financial and social which directly or indirectly affects the education, health and development of children. As per Census 2011, the number of child labourers in India is 10.1 million. Most of these children are working in highly unsafe and unhygienic conditions. This paper is an attempt to focus on the problem of child labour existing in Delhi, socioeconomic conditions of child labours and their educational status. Constitution of India does not allow the any children below the age of 14 years to be involved in economic activities. Despite several provisions in the Constitution, measures undertaken by Government at central and state level, child labour continues to show its existence.

Key words: Child labour, Economic activities, Unhygienic condition.

INTRODUCTION

Child labour is an evil which implanted their roots in the whole world, particularly in developing countries. Africa and Asia together report over 90 per cent of total child employment. Children involve in economic activities due to numerous reasons, out of which the most key reason is poverty. Due to poverty family harass children to earn rather than to go school for acquiring education in a very immature age. Children do not earn much amount but their contribution matter to family income. Apart from poverty, education of parents also manipulate their pronouncement to push their child in economic activities as less qualified and illiterate parents are unaware of importance schooling and education. Such parents wish to compel their children in more profitable pursuits. Stiff traditions and culture of society also sometimes bound educational achievement and amplify the cases of child labour. Involvements in labour work not only obstruct the overall development of child labourers including physical, psychological and mental development but also result in

extreme exploitation of child labourers in terms of toiling for long hours at negligible pay. Their work conditions are unsympathetic often not providing the inspiration for proper physical and mental development. Many of these children continue lives of pure deprivation. However, there are many stones in the path of spontaneous solution to abolish child labour. Any plan of abolishment depends on schooling. The state could help by making it worthwhile for a child to attend school, whether it be by providing students with nutritional supplements or increasing the quality and usefulness of obtaining an education. There must be a fiscal change in the condition of stressed families to free a child from the liability of earning. These children are deprived of the joys of childhood.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has been initiated to execute the following objectives

1. To study the socio-economic characteristics of child labour found in Delhi.
2. To examine the education level of child labourers found in Delhi.

METHODOLOGY

This was a cross-sectional community based study. Total 50 children involved in economic activities were selected to carry out the study. Universe for The study were limited to different shops, weekly markets, dhabas, food stalls, maid in houses and road side in different parts of Delhi. Study completely based on primary data. Questionnaires were used for the purpose of collection of primary data from child labourers. Questionnaire covers all questions related to socio-economic conditions and education level of child labourers. Purposive method of sampling was used to collect primary data from 50 child labours.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In spite of all the precautions taken, there may be some of the lapses in collection of primary data. As it completely based on the information gathered by respondent. Sometimes the respondents may not disclose the complete facts, in order to secure their livelihood. Thus, the conclusions, is drowned on the basis of the responses of representative sample under the study.

RESULTS

Study was conducted on total 50 children of age group 12-17 years involved in economic activities. Study indicates (figure 1) that out of the total respondents' maximum percentage was of age group 16 year. 30% of total respondent were found to be of 16 year of age and second highest percentage was of age group of 13years. Both girl and boys can be seen working as child labour in the city. As per the study (figure 2) the percentage of males working as a labour is 76% which is much higher as compare to female which is 24%. In terms of ratio, male to female child labour ratio is found to be 3.1: 1.

Percentage of child labourers live in joint family (figure 3) is found to be 56% which is higher than child labour live nuclear family i.e. 44%. This shows that in joint family children are more vulnerable to be involved in labour work in young age as compare to children grown in nuclear families.

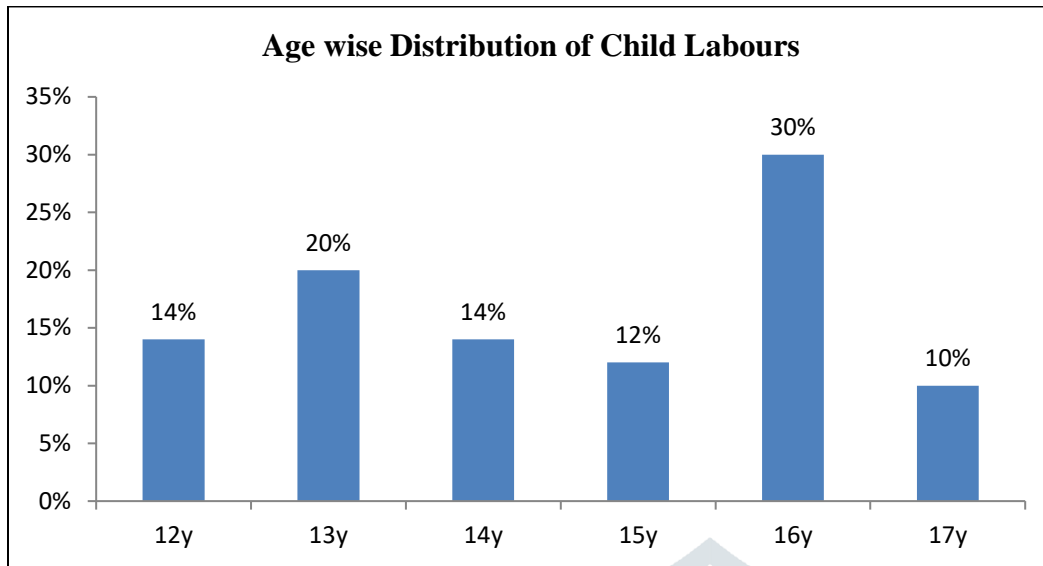


Figure 1

Source: Primary Data, 2021

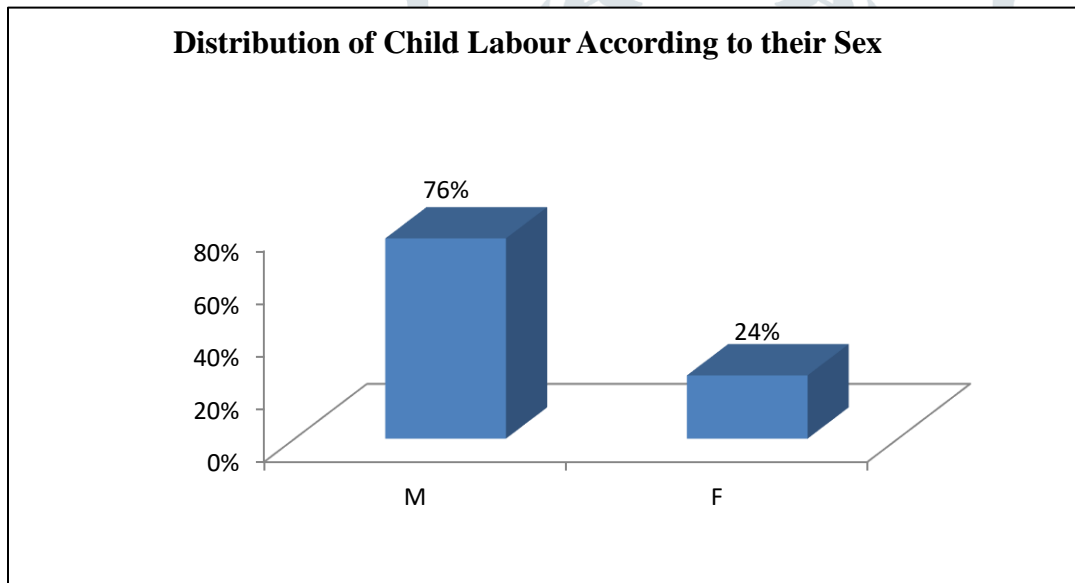


Figure 2

Source: Primary Data, 2021

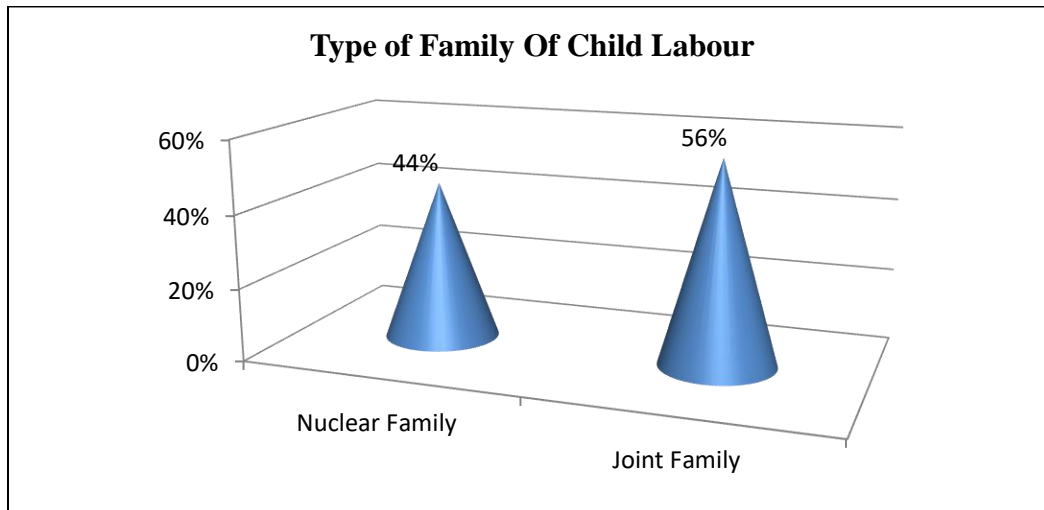


Figure 3

Source: Primary Data, 2021

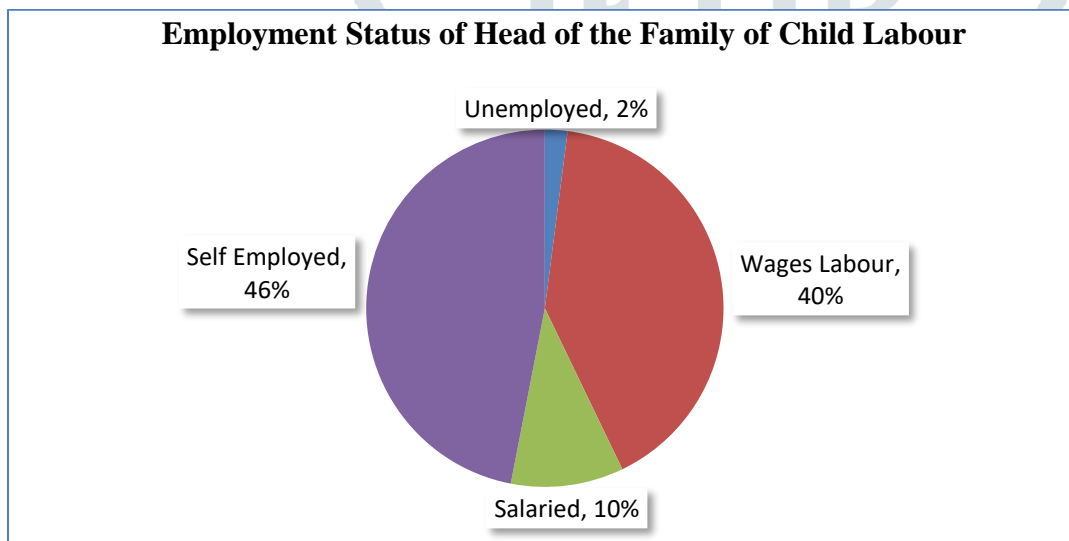


Figure 4

Source: Primary Data, 2021

Study show that majority of surveyed child labourers belong to the family where head of family are self employed (figure 4), like fruit seller, sell goods in weekly markets, vegetable seller, have food stalls, some have small manufacturing units, or do tailoring etc. Most of these families involve their children in labour work from very young age. These reduce their labour cost as they consider their children as free cost labour. Second major categories is of wages labour, these parent works on daily wages and involve their children also in their wages job to increase their earning. Third category is of salaried parent, and fourth category is of parent who is unemployed and earnings for the livelihood for the family are the sole responsibility of child labour. To fulfill their family needs these children have to work in small factories, garages, dhabas, tea stalls and other food stalls. Monthly income of child labourers family (figure 6) is also very less, 26 % of total surveyed child labourers family’s monthly income is less than Rs 5000. 66% of total surveyed child labourers family’s monthly income is between Rs 5000 to 10,000. Only 8% of families have monthly income more than Rs 10,000.

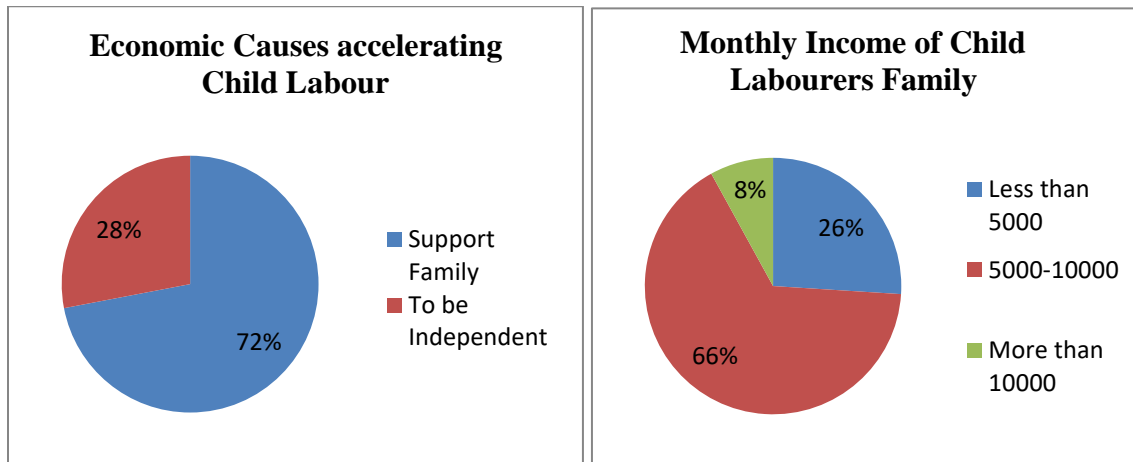


Figure 5 Source: Primary Data, 2021

Figure 6 Source: Primary Data, 2021

Out of total child labourers surveyed, 72% admit to be involved in labour work to support their family (figure 5), as economic conditions their family is not good and required their support. Out of the total respondents surveyed only 28% of child labourers involved in economic activities as they want to be independent.

Education which is must for the development of child lack behind when they start earning in young age. Finding shows that 18% of total surveyed child labour are illiterate (figure 6), that means these 18 % children never get chance to go to school for study. 4% only studied upto primary level, 32% get education up to viii class and just 46% were able to complete their schooling.

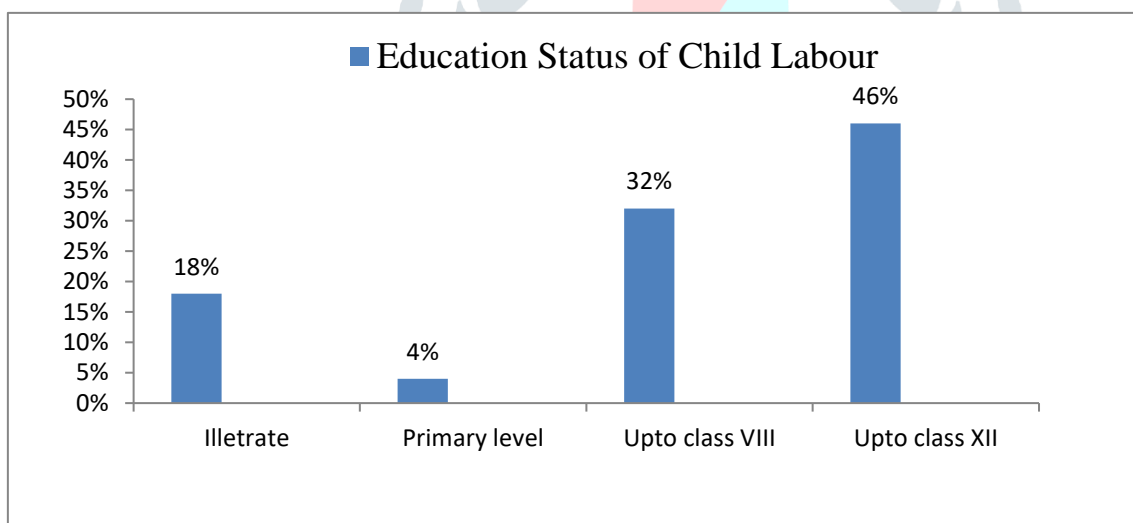


Figure 6

Source: Primary Data, 2021

CONCLUSION

In spite of various Constitutional provisions, laws and measures, society cannot get rid of child labour completely. India along with other asian countries are suffering from the problem of child labour. If we focus on the socioeconomic conditions of children involved in labour work, it is very clear that most of their families are very poor earning less money which is not sufficient for their livelihood. This study shows that around 72 % of children are working as labour to support their family so that each and every person of their family can sleep full stomach. To fulfill this purpose most of children have to leave their schooling in between and some of children never start going school. From all above data

it is very much clear that prime cause of child labour is poverty. Due to poverty family either don't send their child to school or if somehow family send their child to school, child have to dropout either due to family pressure or his/her own will due to financial constraints. So child labour can only be eradicated, when poverty gets restricted.

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