

# Child Labour - Social and Economic Realities Which Effecting Child Development

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Child Labour is a harsh reality and unavoidable in the present scenario of social and economic realities. Child Labour is not a new problem. It is a age old problem and it is perceived as a social evil in present situation. The Encyclopedia of social sciences (1959) defines child labour as “When the business of wage earning or of participation in work, conflicts directly or indirectly with the business of growth and education of children the result is child labour.

The child labour is essentially a development problem. It is prevalent in all the developing countries. The problem of child labour is an universal phenomenon. It is in existence in one form or another since historic times. However it is perverted as a social problem. The child labour problem is significantly acute in the developing countries than in the developed nation with the increasing rate of industrialization and modernization. The incidence of child labour in all the developing countries has been growing at an alarming rate.

The child labour concept leads to confusion as it is guided by various individual considerations. So a standard has to be accepted to determine an age range for defining a child labour is one of the oldest profession of the world and has remained as the most neglected part of population for the last few centuries (Misra, K.K; 1990). In mid 20<sup>th</sup> century social references Jurists began to bring reforms against such neglected and exploited class of human labour consideration their tender age.

Child labour is a ubiquitous and persistent problem of our country and has been a given subject of grave for administrators, policy makers, academicians and jurists for the last couple of years. The problem of child labour has been tackled to certain extent through legislation and countries of the world have enacted certain laws and regulations restricting the employment of children below certain age and specifying the conditions restricting the employment of children below certain age and specifying the conditions allowing minors to work in certain profession.

Child labour refers to the employment of children in a cartable occupations or national contribution to the income of the family. It is both an economic and social evil in that it leads to serious health hazards and denies them opportunity for physical and mental development. The term child labour is commonly interpreted in two different ways, first as an economic evil and secondly as a social evil. In the first context it signifies employment of children to earn the livelihood for them or for their family. In the second context it is said to restrict on children obstructing them to develop academically.

Definition of child labour in terms of age or which reference to occupation will not be adequate it will be necessary to examine the social situation which makes the children work (Mohisin’ 1980: 27-2). The child labour could be defined as an activity of earning of supporting self or family which directly or indirectly comes into conflict with the opportunities for further physical and mental growth of the child. In India the term child labour refers to those engaged in earnable work. Child labour includes working in all forms of non industrial occupations which are injurious to their physical, mental, moral and social development.

“Any work by children that interfere with their full physical development, their opportunities for a desirable minimum of education or their needed recreation”. Home folks (1979), chairman US National Child Labour Committee.

The term child labour basically means the children below the age of fifteen who are employed for hire or reward in occupation that are injurious to their physical, mental, intellectual, moral and social development due to depression and exploitation internet in that employment (Patel, B.R; 1988:2) , hence the term child labour is not applicable to children working in all for an hour or two to earn their pocket money or assisting their parents in house work.

According to child labour prohibition and regulation act of 1986 employment of children up to the age of 14 years and in the case of hazardous employment up to 18 years is define as child labour and is banned.

Poverty relating to child labour: Poverty can be characterized as a state of deprivation, dependence and degradation below physically and socio culturally acceptable standards. It associated with a level of living below a set of norms held necessary for human beings. These norms are related to the basic physiological need like caloric intake, clothing, shelter, drinking water, medical aid and education etc it also includes some special needs like participation, human dignity, self esteem and status etc.

The issue of poor/poverty has different dimensions. The poorest of poor are beggars, pavement dwellers, sick people etc. The ducted and politically conscious poor vary from the socially isolated poor in villages. We may find various categories of poor such as bonded labourers, landless labours, and manual labourers with a little land. Scheduled castes, backward castes and upper castes, poor differ among themselves on different social and psychological dimensions.

The concept of poverty from a different angle. He was with the opinion that a family with more dependent children is poor. But when the children become independent and earners the income of the family increases and naturally the family comes out of poverty. The family even with substantial income becomes poor because of its poor financial management. Hence all these

factors may have their influence in different contexts whether directly for the incidence of child labour.

**Child Abuse:** - Child labour is one form of child abuse. Children are abused by parents, employers, anti social elements etc. by subjecting them in unfavorable living and working conditions. Parents do not treat their children properly due to some economic, social and psychological constraints. Employers do not treat the child labour properly as they want extract more work with low wages.

Theories to study child abuse:-

- 1) **Psychiatric theory:** The theory gives the explanation of child abuse in term of deviant parental behavior. The school underlying parents emotional disturbance in abuse come to be known a psychiatric problems.
- 2) **Socio Cultural Theories:** - The sociological theory is based on the assumption that external forces with in the society are responsible for child abuse. Socio cultural theories may be divided in to three categories viz.,
- 3) **Socio situational theory:** - This theory says that normal parents may be sociolised in to abusive child care practice through the interaction of cultural community and families influences. Factors such as low income, unemployment, isolation, conflict with spouse and other members of the family etc. lead to violence against children at home.
- 4) **Social habitability theory:** - According to this theory the nature of child maltreatment depends up on the environmental circumstances in which the individual and family developed.
- 5) **Exchange on social control theory:** - This theory says that parents use violence against their children because the children don't react and hit back. Certain types of children like handicapped, ill, ugly , demanding, and premature children are at great risk of being abused by there parents.
- 6) **Resource theory:** - According to this the use of force or threat by an individual depends up on the extent to which he can demand the resources – social, personal and economic.
- 7) **Social Learning Theory:** - This theory holds that people learned to be violent when they grown up in violent homes and violent environment. A history of abuse and violence in the family does increase in the risk that an individual will be violent as an adult.

## II. MYTHS AND REALITIES OF CHILD LABOUR

Traditionally poverty is considered as the major cause of child labour contrary to this belief many studies established the fact that child labour also comes from improvised families. In some case exploited child labour perpetuates poverty.

Even though child labour is generally considered as a problem of the enveloping world. The reality is children of different ages routinely work in different forms in all industrialized countries.

Child Labour is considered as the result of the poor having more number of children. The reality is more than the number of children it is the parental discretions about the child is priorities

and lack of faith in the formal education is causing the child labour. Many parents believe that working children will be equipped with skills for the future but practically. The task allotted to child workers is simple and repetitive such as cleaning, serving helping and minor repairing. Skills are a misnomer when related to the toil and drudgery children engage in many things that children prefer to work. In many cases lack of interest in schooling is making the children to prefer for work, because of their inability to conceive of an alternative.

Many believe that there is nothing wrong in allowing children to work in non hazardous occupations. Even jobs which are not inherently hazardous become hazardous for children, when they are made to do the job for long periods defying their rights of recreation leisure and play.

There is a general believe that child labour is inevitable in certain fields. But the fact is that child workers may be replaced with adults which naturally enhance the cost of a product or service. This consequence is not acceptable to all concerned.

## III. ABOUT THE PROBLEM

To any economy the child can be natural resources. The child can be compared with a bud. It is the responsibility of any society to provide a necessary atmosphere and opportunities to transform the bud into a blossom flower. However it is most unfortunate and heart burning to listen that millions of children in the age of 5 to 14 in many Asian, African and Laten American countries are attending to work. In fact the statistics relating to magnitude of incidence of child labour are not exact, in view of the fact that legislation is not controlling the unorganized sector in various countries. The estimates are only an indication of growing child labour issue.

The reasons for child labour are many. In some cases it is the social backwardness, but in many cases more than economic reasons, lack of interest in formal schooling and child development programmes pushing the children to work. For example certain communities in the society treat begging as their profession. In spite of having significant properties they continue begging, which may be called as culture poverty. On the same lines the problem of child labour is wide spread among low income groups who are also educationally backward. Many people from upper castes are in a better position in social and educational aspects in spite of their economic backwardness. High caste parents show significantly greater interest in the educational progress.

A long percentage of working children belong to Hindu religion and the percentage of backward classes and scheduled castes children among them is significant. The main reason for the low proportion of scheduled castes child workers more in agricultural sectors. It is generally observed that there is religious conversion from Hinduism to Christianity among the scheduled castes in rural areas.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

The child is a natural resource for an economy. It is the responsibility of the society to provide necessary atmosphere and opportunities to transform children into potential human

resource. They are the future makers of the nation. Childhood is understood to cover the period of the first 14 years in India. (Article 24 of Indian Constitution).

The most important cause of widespread child labour is the chronic poverty which forces the parents to send their children to seek employment parents are not only incapable of investing in their children's development due to poverty but also reluctant to support them and went them to starting earning as soon as possible. The tendency of the employers to attract children for economic reasons is also resulting in child labour problem. Limited success in providing compulsory education in all children below the age group of 14 as stipulated in the directive principals of state policy is another important factor.

Families migrated from rural areas to urban centers for livelihood could not bear the cost of living and all the family members have to work and this caused for the child labour

illiteracy and ignorance of parents and large size of the family is forcing child to work. Lack of schooling facilities and high rate of school dropouts is also leading to child labour.

Various theories of poverty gave explanation to the incidence of the child labour in different sectors caused by cultural of poverty and economic necessities. Social and cultural deprivation in some communities is also forcing the children to go for work. Lack of family harmony and child abuse is making the to discontinue schooling and start working for livelihood.

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