

Critical Evaluation of Child Labor in India: With Special Reference to Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh

**Prince Chhabra
J.BT.,G.P.S.Kariwala,(Sirsa)**

Abstract

If the total strength of child labor in the country is evaluated we can see that it constitutes around 10.3% of total work force. This percentage has increased from 5.01% in 1971 to 5.81 in 1980 and 7.8% in 2001. This is also a fact that most of the child labors are engaged in rural areas of the country, this is because that in the rural areas there are a number of problems like poverty, droughts, floods, employment, etc., and the children of the family are forced to work for earning some extra money to feed the other members. There are certain facts that one cannot deny like family issues, drought, flood, etc. because of which all the respective family members including children are forced to work for earning bread. This present study will evaluate the scenario of child labour in the country, considering Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh as sample.

Keywords: Child labor, curse or crime, migration.

Introduction

Global Scenario of Child Labor

Whenever there is a discussion on child labor people take the example of third world countries and developing countries like India but as a matter of fact this issue of child labor is very deeply associated with social and economic plight of people. It can be said that the problem of child labor exists in the developed nations as well but then again the major issue lies with developing nations, and there are a number of associated issues like poverty, excess population, fluctuating inflation rate, etc. Apparently the respective governments of such countries are taking all the measures to control these problems but then again they are facing a lot of problems in dealing with the same. As a result total eradication of child labor is still a far-fetch goal even for developed countries.

As per the reports of **ILO (International Labor Organization) 2015**, there are almost 250 million children engaged in certain types of employment and out of these 250 million at least 100 million are engaged in full time employment and here the meaning of full time is 12-14 hours of rigorous hard work. In Asia alone, there are more than 150 million child labors, then in African countries there are 75 million child labors, even in America there

are more than 20 million child labors. In some of the countries like Senegal, India, etc. the child labors account for around 17% of total work force.

As far as the age group of child labors is concerned, it ranges from 10 years to 14 years and the percentage of girl child is more than the boy child. The concern of age is different in different countries, like in African countries the minimum age of child labor is 12 years, in China it is 13 years, in Western countries it is 14 years. Then at the second level, societies of children welfare all around the world like UNICEF, etc. have further categorized the age into different industries, like in agriculture minimum age is 14 years, 15 years for industrial work, 16 years for mobilization and hard work and 12 to 13 years for soft and non-mobilization work. As a matter of fact **ILO (*International Labor Organization*)** has defined that 15 years should be the minimum age for a person to be engaged in any type of employment and this age is determined on the basis of the fact that by this age a person may complete his or her primary education.

In some of the developed nations like USA, etc. there is ban on child labor since 1960, but then again different studies from different agencies revealed that in 2014 more than 3 million children were engaged in child labor and the respective age of these child labors was around 8 to 15 years. **Richard et al (2016)** then in case of U.K. more than 2.8 million of children were found to be engaged in child labor and these are spread all over the country. As it is said that the Child Labor Act of UK is one of the strongest in world but then again they have failed to put a complete ban on this issue. **Chaterjee (2015)**

Problem of Child Labor in India

The traces of child labor can be found in India from ancient times but it came in noticeable existence in the later years of 19th century under the colonial rule, this was the time when the beverage industry originated and started to grow, other than this a significant number of child labor was engaged in jute industry as well. **Tinel (2013)** in the colonial period it was a common scene that the children below the age of 15 years are pulling the carts on road and treated as grown up workers, even they were engaged in coal mines as labors, loading and unloading workers, etc.

If the total strength of child labor in the country is evaluated we can see that it constitutes around 10.3% of total work force. This percentage has increased from 5.01% in 1971 to 5.81 in 1980 and 7.8% in 2001. This is also a fact that most of the child labors are engaged

in rural areas of the country, this is because that in the rural areas there are a number of problem like poverty, droughts, floods, employment, etc., and the children of the family are forced to work for earning some extra money to feed the other members. This is the reason that more than 90% of the child labor is engaged in rural areas provided most of them are coming from deprived section of the society.

Then on the other hand, in case of urban areas the problem of child labor is even severe. There are two scenarios in this concern, at the first instance some of the children are working in house-hold industries where a single family is owing the business and all the members of the family are contributing, including children and second is non-household industry, where the children are engaged as full time labors and in most of the cases they are exploited. Some of the non-household industries where child labors are engaged are bangle industry in northern India, fireworks industry in south India, Carpet industry in north west region, glass industry all over the country, cottage industry all over the country and even hotel industry all over the country. Then again there are some of the non-classified avenues where child labor is popular like kirana shops, footpath sellers, street vendors, road side hotels, etc.

Some Statistics

Table 1: Forms of Child Labor in India

S.No.	Form of Child Labor	Child Labors (in millions)
1	Bonded or Forced	5.2
2	Naxsalite, Bodo and other armed recruits	0.08
3	Prostitution	2.05
4	Victims of off shore Trafficking	1.09

Source: Lieten (2014)

Table 2: Age and Region Wise distribution (inMillion)

region	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years
Rural	1.23	21.08
Urban	2.08	10.62

Source: Lieten (2014)

Table 3: Industry wise Distribution

S.No.	Form of Child Labor	Child Labors (%)
1	Agriculture	43.04%
2	Physical (Mobilization)	23.87%
3	Physical (Non-Mobilization)	7.93%
4	Household industry	8.7%
5	Non-Household industry	6.59%
6	Other Services	9.87%

Source: ILO Report (2016)

Literature Review

Lal (2016) conducted a study to evaluate the problems of child labor in India, the findings of the study stated the in case of India the problem of child labor is increasing with the development in industries and with every new economic set up in the country, number of child labors is increasing down the line with supporting industries. At this level the suppliers are interested to increase their profit at any cost and they engage children for the same, exploit them and take maximum work from them.

Suresh (2019) stated that the problem of child labor still prevails in most of the developed regions of the world i.e. Asia, UK, USA, etc. there are instances where the suppliers use to engage children from tribal areas of the region, they actually buy the children from their parents and put them at highest level of physical and mental exploitation. In some of the regions like in Mexico, Latin America, etc. the cases of child trafficking are rising like anything. In the worst case scenario when the children are not able to work physically they use to sell vital organs and make money.

Ahmad et al (2015) conducted a study on the reasons behind child labor and the findings of the study stated that poverty, education level of families, lack of family support and even the education of the children itself are the main reasons. In most of the cases it is found that in rural and deprived regions of the country parent are reluctant to the education of girl child and at the later stage they put her at work for earning money for the family. Then there is a different set of urban poor who have migrated from the rural areas and are not able to get proper employment, in such a case they are forced to employ all the members of the family in order stay alive.

Singh (2014) evaluated the reasons of child labor in the rural areas of the country, the findings of the study stated that it is not so that the government and other agencies are not

in the process of providing educational and other facilities to the rural households but then again for the regular household expenses they are on their own. In the worst case scenario some of the families are forced to sell their children to suppliers just for few thousand bucks, then again some other reasons can be the illness in the family, death of the family head, negligence of parents, etc. force the children to work and earn money for the family.

Objective

The main objective of the study is to evaluate the prevailing scenario of child labor in India and will also try to critically evaluate the reason of child labor.

Research Methodology

Population and sample selection

This present study is a blend of primary and secondary data. The researcher has considered the secondary data for the previous records of child labor in the country and primary data from the respondents of different social and economic stature of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

The universe of the study is all the children engaged in employment and below the age of 15 years. The researcher has considered a sample of 200 respondents i.e. 100 from each state. Capita city of the state i.e. Jaipur and Indore are selected for collecting data.

The researcher has considered random sampling method **Beri (2013);Malhotra (2014)** for selecting the sample and the respective respondents of the study were the children themselves and their family members.

Interview method was adopted to communicate with the respondents and almost similar questions were asked to all the respondents.

Sources of Data

- Most of the studies based on primary data are based on the pillars of secondary data, in this present study as well secondary data is used to frame the objectives and understand the scenario of child labor in the selected cities.

Some of the sources of secondary data are as follows:

Reports

- ILO (*International Labor Organization*)
- Ministry of Labor (website)

- India Statistics (2010-2018)
- Center for Civil society, 2015-18

Other sources

- Research paper from journals of National and international repute
- Articles from Magazines
- Indian and Foreign newspaper article on child labor

Tools of study

- Percentages, Averages, trends, etc.

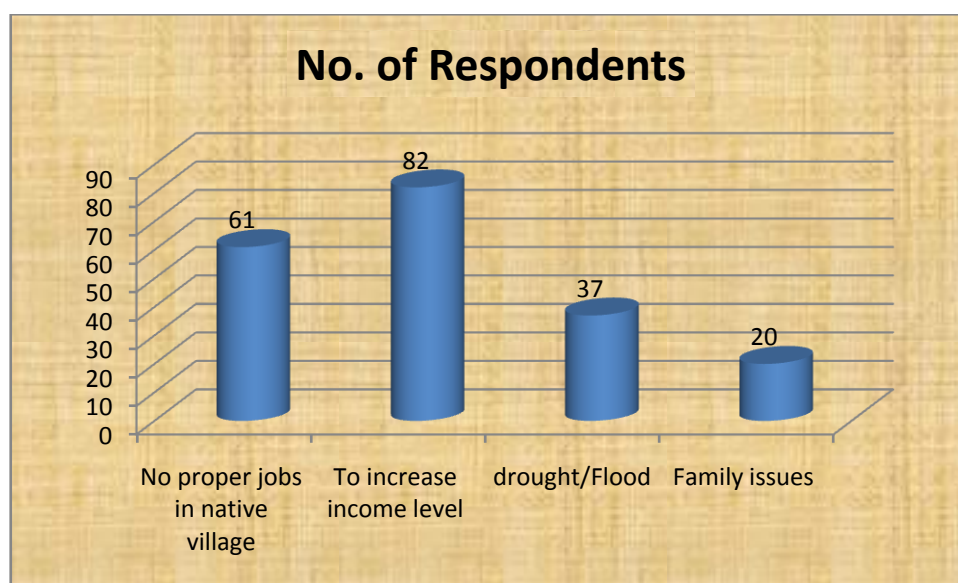
Software used

- MS Excel

Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. Migration from home town

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
No proper jobs in native village	61	30.5
To increase income level	82	41
drought/Flood	37	18.5
Family issues	20	10
Total	200	100

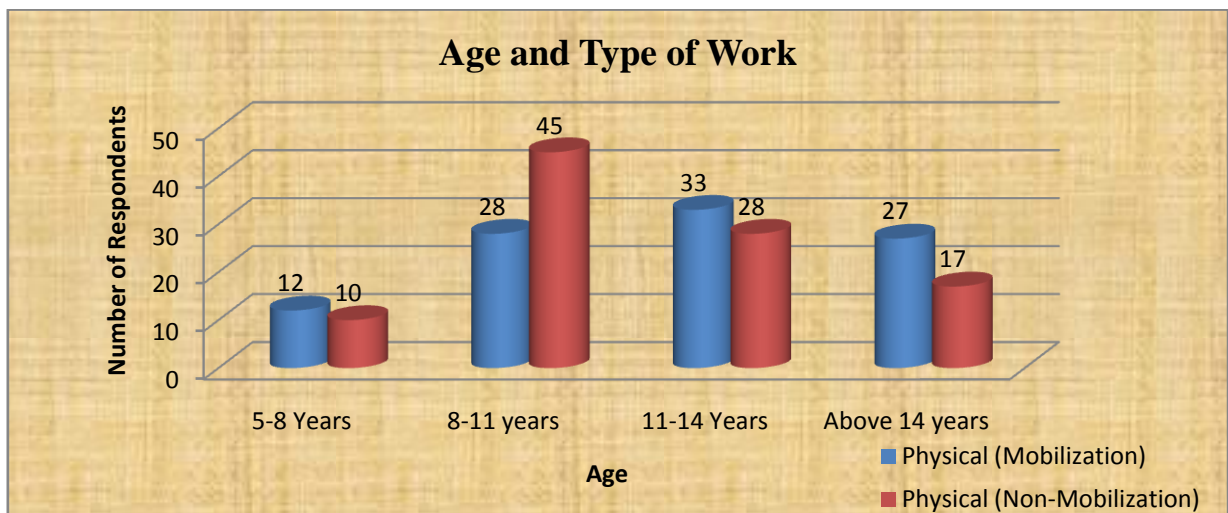


Interpretation

- As can be seen from the above chart and table, most of the respondents i.e. 41 percent of the respondents have migrated to increase their income level, most of the contacted families are from rural and semi-urban areas and have migrated to the capital cities.
- 30 percent of the respondents stated that they have migrated because there are no proper jobs in their respective villages; at this level some of the respondents are skilled in one or the other work.
- There are about 18 percent of the respondents who have migrated from their native places because of drought or flood.
- Then about 10 percent of the respondents have migrated because of family issues like, death of family head, long illness, debt, etc.

2. Age wise distribution in type of work

Reasons	Physical (Mobilization)	Physical (Non-Mobilization)
5-8 Years	12	10
8-11 years	28	45
11-14 Years	33	28
Above 14 years	27	17
Total	100	100

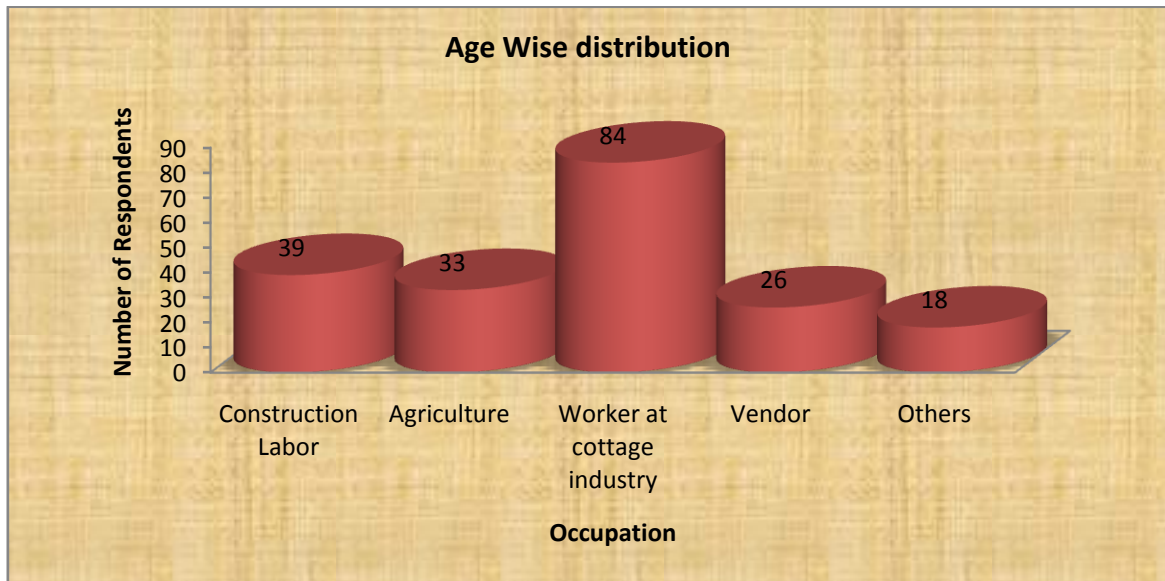


Interpretation

- As discussed in the above given matter that age is one of the deciding factor in case of child labor i.e. it is an indication that the contacted person is a child labor or not. In the above given table and chart the meaning of physical mobilization is that the children are engaged in the kind of work where they have to work physically and move as well like in case of construction industry.
- 5 to 8 years of age is the minimum age of the respondents and accordingly only 10 percent of the respondents were found to be working and 5 percent each are working in physically mobilized industries and 5 percent are working in physically non mobilized industry.
- Maximum 36 percent of the respondents were from the age group of 8 to 11 years as this age group is mostly preferred by the industries as they demand for minimum wages and work for more number of hours.
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3. Work wise distribution

Work	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Construction Labor	39	19.5
Agriculture	33	16.5
Worker at cottage industry	84	42
Vendor	26	13
Others	18	9
Total	200	100



Interpretation

- As can be seen from the above chart and table that maximum number of child labor are from 42 percent, this is because of the reason that in most of the popular cities of the country, some or the other product is famous, like bangles and glassware in Firozabad, brassware in Moradabad, leather goods in Agra and Kanpur, fire crackers in Shivakashi, etc. as a matter of fact these products are manufactured in unorganized manner and in [most of the cases it is found that more than 60 percent of labors are from the age group of 10 to 14 years.
- Here it is important to mention that most of the child labors are coming from rural background and belong to deprived section of the society and they are ready to do any work as they are striving for basic needs of food and shelter and the manufacturers and suppliers are taking the advantage of the same.

Conclusion

There are a number of parameters of social and economic develop of a country, in case of economic parameters they are measurable like growth rate, inflation, GDP, etc. but in case of social development it is difficult to get it in quantitative terms. But then again there are certain indicators like rate of literacy, education, employment, ratio of male and female genders. In all these components child labor is an important parameter as this shows that how much society is concerned about the future of their country. In the due course of this study the researcher has observed that they in most the organized and unorganized sector where children are working, the working conditions are very critical i.e. the working hours are long and working condition are hazardous. In the present times it is required to reframe and reassign the policy and regulatory framework so that people should understand the

importance of educating and nurturing a child and prevent him or her from engaging in child labor. It is not so that government agencies are not working in this direction but still the efforts are not sufficient enough to control the situation.

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