

A Sociological Study of Child Labour in Incense Stick Industries

Sonu Puri* and Amit Kumar**

Child labour is a complex problem primarily rooted in poverty. And at the same time the nation bears the deadly outcomes of this trouble of the society. In many cases, child labour is principally necessitated by economic compulsions of the parents. It has become a socio-economic problem which distresses children of their childhood, potential and nobility. The main reason which gives rise to child labour is widespread unemployment and underemployment amidst the adult poor strata of the population, inter alia, due to keen growth of population. Over the years, however, global awareness about the earnestness of the problems has created. The government of India has also taken several other actions to alienate child labour problem. It has been observed over a decade that, poverty emphasis poor families to send their children to work, which consequences in a considerable problem the world is dealing with presently. When children work, it does not mean as a standard they recourse their families economically, neither all of them get paid for their work since many of them work as bonded labour or as slaves. Children generally work to contribute and bestow financial recourse to their families.

* Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Govt. Girls Degree College, Bangar, Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh (India) E-mail: <drsonu_socio@yahoo.in>

** Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, P.S.M. (P.G.) College, Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh (India)

The present study is empirical in nature which carried out in Kannauj District, Uttar Pradesh. The main objective was to analyze the causes of joining labour work by the respondents in Incense Stick Industries. This study focuses on several concepts and studies concerned with child labour, their socio-economic intentions in the World and Indian scenario of child labour. The information was supplemented by the respondents through some specific technique i.e. interview, observation and schedule methods. The outcomes from this study decode reasons which emphasis children to work, poverty. This study also draws conclusion that governments, societies and communities should collaborate in a superior way with other to reduction child labour. Probabilistic and innovate suggestions are grew at the end of this study.

[**Keywords** : Poverty, Child labour, Hazardous, Legal provisions, Slavery, International labour organizations]

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children”.

—*Nelson Mandela*

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of child labour is not only passable in the developing countries. Their presence is also acknowledged in developed countries but the nature of their work is different. It started in Europe from the time of industrial revolution and from the mid of 19th century in America. The procedure of industrialization and urbanization brought a change in socio-economic structure and a new proportion of labour emerged. With the progress of industrialization the disposition to make quick profits by reducing high working costs. This has instigated the exploitative practice thereby employment of children is a common practice. In a socio-economic structure, involvement of child labour started rising and different modes of exploitation became very much disclosing. The problem of child labour is a burning problem of the world. From the ancient, it had been a concern of the social reformers, the priests, the legislators, the jurists, the philosophers, the politicians and economists etc. This problem is more severe in the under developed and developing countries. Children are the blooming flowers of the nation, nobody should be allowed to pluck these flowers, and rather they require their protection from the bad conditions prevalent in any society. Child labour is one of the worst forms of violation of child rights an also the most widespread.

Mohapatra and Dash (2011) have talked about in detail the socio-economic problems of child labour. Methods used in growth rate sample data through investigation or interview. They found that

the migrant's family from different district of Odisha their social economic condition is very poor which make them to go for labour. Dahal B. N. (1989) examined major cause of child in labour in Nepal. He found the major causes of child labour are food insufficiency and unemployment because of the lack of land owned. Sekar Helen, R. (2007) focused on accesses the effects of technological change and industry restructuring on the existence of child labour in Moradabad city, Uttar Pradesh. He observed the reasons leaving of school and joining work related to supplementing faculty income, absence of sufficient number of government schools and quality of teaching. Devi, K. & Roy, Gautam (2008) investigated in rural areas of Pondicherry to highlight the problems and causes related to child labour through the primary data collection technique. They found that the low income was the main reason for child labour. The main problem of the child labour is that their employer scolded them at the work place.

All the above and many other social science researchers have studied various issues of child labour. Many studies of child labour discussed different features of child labour like poverty of family, population of family, agricultural labourers of parents, child labour in school children, child labour in hotel and bread industries etc. but there are fewer studies about the child labour in Incense Stick Industries in sociological perspectives, therefore there is need of more studies on the above issues.

2. An Overview of Literature

Child labour mentions to the employment of children in any work that dispossesses children of their childhood, intervenes with their capability to be present to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and injurious. This procedure is considered exploitative by many international legislations across the world prohibit child labour. These laws do not contemplate all work by children as child labour; exclusions include work by child artists, supervised training, and few categories of work such as those by Amish children, some forms of child work common among indigenous American children, and others. Child labour in India is addressed by the Child Labour Act 1986 and National Child labour Project. Bass (2004) has analyzed the frequency of child labour in developed as well as developing countries. In fact child labour was practically completely decreased from the developed world.

However, presently child labour still continues because of rapid population growth, high rates of unemployment, inflation, poverty, malnutrition, bad leadership, corruption and low wages. Ahmad Bhatt (2010) tried to analyze the importance of education in the context of child labour. He tried to find out the impact of child labour on children's school attendance. He suggested some solutions to overcome child labour with the help of education. Bhatt (2011) has reported the first legislation came to ban child labour in 1833 and 1844. It complied that children should not work, and the idea was to remove all children should not work and the idea was to remove all children from labour which interfered with school. However, many children child labour which was prohibited by law continued to be involved. Das (2012) has reported that the incidence of child labourers throughout the world is difficult to verify because of the lack of authentic statistics of child labour and many child labourers are unseen. Today in India, there are more than after 10.12 million children who are expanding their childhood learning carpet-weaving, beedi-rolling, domestic labour, agriculture, firework and apparel manufacture and countless other occupations instead of going to school and receiving quality education. Most of the labour in large town hails, primarily from village. The workers assembled to the cities from distant village in search of livelihood. Many of them have now become permanent residents of the city, having no ties with their native village, while a large population of the migrant labour still has tie with their villages where they generally go during harvest season, festival or in family function. These families again and again carry load of economic subsistence to their village home, although the cost of living in the cities was still high. This led the woman of workers family to open hands and come ahead to become a wage earners later, came the role of children to further contribute to the family income and this gave birth to the child labour in the cities.

In modern time, the phenomenon of child labour draws the attention of social scientists at the international level as it is considered to be a serious and important social problem in the third world countries. It also exists in developed countries but in a marginal extent. It may be, therefore, viewed as a worldwide problem challenging the human rights. It may be declared that the chances of child worker to become full-fledge citizens seem to be bleak. They have every like hood to become physically or mentally depressed in the year to come. Hence, in the present social

circumstances, it is important to understand the nature, intensity, types and reactions of child labor in India. So an empirical study in this area is the need of the hour.

3. Meaning of Child Labour

In general valid definition of child labour is nowadays no available either in the national or international context. Any definition turns upon the specific meaning we link to two components of the terms "Child labour" *i.e.*, "child" in terms of his chronological age, and "labour" in terms of its nature, magnitude and income generation competency. Child labour, however, can widely be defined as that segment of the child population which engages in work either paid or unpaid. Child labour mentions to the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their capability to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful. Defining child labour is not as easy and straight forward as it may seem because it encloses three difficult-to-define concepts "child", "work" and "labour".

In the view point of child labour, a working definition of a "child" may be a person below the general limit of fifteen years or in special conditions fourteen years, set by the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). The term child labour has many definitions by various scholars. According to Edmonds and Pavcnik (2005) child labour is viewed as a form of child labour abuse, when children work in worst conditions and hazardous occupations. According to Moyi (2011) child labour mentions to low wages, long hours, physical and sexual abuse.

The meaning of the term of child labour also varies among organizations; ILO declares that child labour is not easy to define. It depends on the type of the job and, if the age is under eighteen and if the job intervenes the children's education and development (ILO: 2004). A child, according to the UN Convention of the Child (CRC) 1989 mentions to a person under the age of eighteen. The World Bank presumes that child labour can do serious threat to long-term national investment. In addition, according to UNICEF the problem of child labour can have more bad effects besides all the concerns of investment or its relation to economic activity (ILO, 2013; Weston, 2005).

The Encyclopedia of Social Science (1959) defines child labour as, “When the business of wage earning or of participation in self or family support conflicts directly or indirectly with the business of growth and education the result is child labour”.

4. Characteristics of Child Labour

Child labour implies at least one of the following :

- Prevents children from going to school.
- Violates a nation’s minimum wage laws.
- Involves unbearable abuse, such as child enslavement, child trafficking, debt bondage, forced labour, or illegal activities.
- Uses children to undermine labour standards.
- Threatens children’s physical, mental, or emotional well being.

5. Categories of Child Labour

Child labour is a term that requires being unpacked; it cannot be used in a sweeping way but covers a range and variety of conditions in which children work. Child labourers are engaged in the following forms of works :

1. **Child labour** : Those children who are doing paid or unpaid work in factories, workshops, establishment, mines and in the service department such as domestic labour. The ministry of labour, Government of India has employed the term ‘child labour’ only in the context of children doing ‘hazardous’ work. By implication, children who are not doing ‘hazardous’ work are not considered to be child labourers and are said to be doing child work.
2. **Street children** : Children living on and off the streets, such as shoeshine boys, rag pickers, newspaper-sellers, beggars etc. are called street children. Most children have some category of home to go back to in the evening or nights, while street children are totally alone and are at the leniency of their employers. They live on the payments, in the bus stations and railway stations.
3. **Bonded children** : Children who have either been pledged by their parents for meager sums of money or those working to pay off the inherited debts of their fathers. Bonded children are

in many ways the most difficult to help because they are unreachable. If the carpet owner has bought them, they cannot get away. If the middle-class housewife has paid for them, they cannot run away. If the landlord in the village owns them, they will spend their life in slavery until they get married and can, in turn, sell their children.

4. **Working children :** Children who are working as part of family labour in agriculture and in home-based work. If children are working 12-14 hours a day in company with their parents at the cost of their education, their position is similar to that of children working for other employers. In reality children, especially girls, are expected to take on work burdens by parents in complete disproportion to their strengths and capabilities. This is the immense classification of children who are out-of-school and are working full time. And it is here that we find the largest percentage of girls working at the cost of education.
5. **Children used for sexual exploitation :** Many thousands of young girls and boys supply the sexual appetites of men from all social and economic backgrounds. Direct links between the commercial sexual exploitation of children and other forms of exploitative child labour are countless. Factories, workshops, street corners, railway stations, bus stops and homes where children work are common sites of sexual exploitation. Children are mainly helpless to resist abuse by employers, either as perpetrators or mediators. The physical and psychological loss inflicted by commercial sexual exploitation makes it one of the most hazardous forms of child labour.
6. **Migrant children :** India faces a huge challenge with “distress seasonal migration”. Millions of families are being enforced to leave their homes and villages for various months every year in search of liveliness. These migrations mean that families are forced to drop out of schools, something that closes up the only accessible opportunity to break the vicious cycle generation after generation. At work-sites migrant children are indispensably put to work. Many industrial and agro-industrial departments like brick-making, salt producer, sugar cane harvesting, stone quarrying, manufacture, fisheries, plantations, rice mills and so on run to a great extent on migrant labour.

7. Children engaged in household enterprises : Apart from children who are employed for wages (either bonded or otherwise) as domestic help, there are a great number of children (especially girls) who are working in their own houses, engaged in what is not normally seen as "economic activity". These children are engaged in taking care of younger siblings, cooking, cleaning and other such household activities. Further, if such children are not sent to school, they will in the end join the labour force as one of the above categories of child labour.

6. Causes and Consequences of Child Labour in India

Child labour is a socio-economic phenomenon. Most writings on child labour generally lack a theory or theoretical base for understanding the issue. In reality, it is tough to find any theory that could explain the verifiable dynamics of child labour issue. It is therefore; often accept that the nature and extent of poverty in a country determine the number of its child labour. Thus the theory of poverty which usually is also reflected in a poverty of theory is also relevant to child labour. Child labour is generally accepted that illiteracy unconsciousness, low wages, unemployment, poor standard of living, stark poverty, deep social discrimination and shocking backwardness of the country side are all, personally and jointly, the root cause of child labour. Poverty under a capitalist model of advancement is a systemic characteristic involving of requiring cheap labour force. The distributive authority under the capitalist development procedure is consistently skewed towards owners and managers of capital and its knowledge workers the middle class. Therefore, the outer confines of this distributive regime remain often impoverished and economically underprivileged, becoming a heaven for child labour.

Mr. Madan, Deputy Director, Ministry of Labour, is of the view that, "the children are required to seek employment either to augment the income of their families or have a gainful occupation in the absence of availability of school going facilities at various places".

It has been officially asserted that, "child labour is no longer, a medium of economic exploitation but is necessitated by economic necessity of the parents and in many cases that of the child himself".

Studies that have been undertaken in several countries around the world do show that child labour and poverty are intimately

related. Although, it is also clear that the specific conditions of child labour are affected by many other factors. It is implicit in the cycle of poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment and low wages caused by in equable distribution of resources and economic policies. The costs of child labour cannot be overstated. There is a complete loss of their precious childhood. There is also the permanent damage to social development of the child. Lack of education rebuke children to the worst employment prospects as adults and pushes them in to the army of low wages earners. The reasons that leads to child labour are:

- Poverty
- Parental illiteracy and ignorance
- Tradition of making children learn the family skills
- Absence of universal compulsory primary education
- Non-availability of and non accessibility to schools
- Irrelevant and non-attractive school modules
- Social and cultural environment
- Informalization of production
- Employment's preference to children for their cheap labour and inability to organize against exploitation
- Family work, level of technology, uncaring attitude of trade unions
- Ineffective enforcement of the legal provisions pertaining to child labour.

Child labour often generates a mischievous cycle of poverty, as a child coming from an impoverished family surviving harsh conditions becomes an unskilled, debilitated adult who is not employed even in the industry that exploited him/her earlier. They have no rights as workers and may not join trade unions. Child labour also depresses adult labour and sustains adults unemployed.

7. Legal Provisions against Child Labour

The constitution of India has lay down that no child under the age of 14 years shall be employed in any mine or engaged in any hazardous employment (Article 24) and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law. The directive principles of state policy in Article 39(e) provide that the health and strength of workers, men and women and the caring age

of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic essentiality to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength. Law of a government to control and regulate child labour in India has existed for various decades. In spite of these constitutional provisions, there are a number of enactments in the country which protect and safeguard the attentiveness of child labour. The employment of children below 14 years of age has been prohibited under :

- The children (Pledging Labour) Act, 1933.
- The Factories Act, 1948.
- The Mines Act, 1952.
- The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961.
- The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
- The Plantation Labour Act, 1951.

8. Child Labour Act

Although, it was in 1979, Government bring in to existence the first committee called Gurupadaswamy Committee to analysis the issue of child labour and to propound measures to hold it. The committee assessed the problem in detail and made some far-reaching recommendations. It observed that as long as poverty persisted, it would be hard on someone to totally eliminate child labour and in consequence, any effort to abolish it through legal recourse would not be a realistic proposal. The committee noticed that in the circumstances, the only alternative left was to ban child labour in hazardous areas and to regulate and betterment the conditions of work in other areas. Based on the recommendations of Gurupadaswamy committee, the child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act was approved in 1986. The Act prohibits employment of children in few specified hazardous occupations and processes and regulates the working conditions in others. The Child Labour Act, while allowing children to take part in the procedure of family based work or recognized school based activities, prohibits children to work in occupations concerned with passenger, goods mail transport by railway, carpet weaving, cinder picking, cleaning of ash-pits, cement manufacturing, building operation, construction, cloth printing, dyeing, weaving, manufacturing of matches, wool

cleaning, cashew-nut, soldering processes in electronic industries and other “hazardous processes”, “dangerous operations”, “printing” (as defined in Factories Act, 1948, etc.) .

The Child Labour Act, 1986, was the culminating point of efforts and ideas that emerged from investigations and recommendations of several committees child labour. Prominent among them are National Commission on labour (1966-69), Gurupadaswamy Committee on Child Labour (1979) and Sanat Metha Committee (1984). The basic objectives of the Act, 1986, are to ban employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines and hazardous employments, and regulate the working positions of children in other employments.

9. Objective of the Study

The present study mainly concentrates on the causes of joining labour work by the respondents in Incense Stick Industries of Kannauj District, (U.P.) through the field experiences.

10. Area of the Study

Area of the study was Incense Stick Industries of Kannauj district, Uttar Pradesh. Kannauj is a city, administrative headquarters and a municipal board or Nagar Palika Parishad in Kannauj district in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. There are many temples in Kannauj which are very important by both historical as well as spiritual purposes. In the time of king Harsha it was the kingdom of India. It is very much famous for Kannauj Perfume also. The city's name is a modern form of the classical name Kanyakubja. Kannauj is located at 27.07°N 79.92°E. It has an elevation of 139 metres (456 feet).

11. Methodology

This study used both primary and secondary sources. For primary data, working children were directly approached and interviewed. Observation, interview and schedule methods were carried out for the collection of primary data. Primary data is used as the major sources of information. 100 respondents could be interview from among the 526 respondents. Respondents have been selected through the purposive sampling. Secondary data used for understanding the reasons of child labour of the study area. The

secondary data have been obtained from the various reports published by NGOs, books related to child labour, annual reports related to child labour etc.

12. Findings of the Study

Poverty and child labour are contemporary to each other. We gave elaborative analysis on different aspects of child labour in present day scenario as well as future requirement to eliminate child labour from the society. In the present study analysis the causes of joining labour work by the respondents in Incense Stick Industries.

Table-1 : Causes of joining Labour Work by the respondents in Incense Stick Industries

| S. No. | Causes of joining labour work | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------|---|--------------------|------------|
| 1. | Ignorance of the family | 06 | 6% |
| 2. | Standard of living | 05 | 5% |
| 3. | Unemployment | 05 | 5% |
| 4. | Due to death of parents | 07 | 7% |
| 5. | Large family size | 08 | 8% |
| 6. | Due to not interested in the study | 13 | 13% |
| 7. | Motivated by the family due to low income | 20 | 20% |
| 8. | Culture and tradition | 06 | 6% |
| 9. | Due to suggested by the friends | 09 | 9% |
| 10. | Lack of educational resources | 12 | 12% |
| 11. | Child labour a cheap commodity | 09 | 9% |

The above table shows that 06 respondents (06%) out of 100 respondents ignored by the family, 05 respondents (05%) out of 100 respondents standard of living was very poor, 05 respondents (05%) out of 100 respondents have no job, 07 respondents (07%) out of 100 respondents due to death of their parents, 08 respondents (08%) out of 100 respondents because of large family size, 13 respondents (13%) out of 100 respondents have no interest in the study, 20 respondents (20%) out of 100 respondents were motivated by the family due to low income, 06 respondents (06%) out of 100 respondents have impact of culture and tradition on the family, 09 respondents (09%) out of 100 respondents due to suggested by the friends, 12

respondents (12%) out of 100 respondents lack of educational resources, 09 respondents (09%) out of 100 respondents because of child labour is a cheap commodity.

Thus the largest segments of the respondents (20%) have been motivated by the family due to low income.

13. Conclusion

Child labour should never exist. However, it is still noteworthy that people around the country hire children so that they will have the advantage of paying low wages to them. One should do not stimulate child labour and neither one should let any other to hire a child to any job. So it can be concluded that child labour mostly creates a roguish cycle of poverty, as a child coming from an impoverished family surviving crude conditions becomes an unskilled, knowingly adult who is not employed even in the industry that exploited him/her earlier. Experiences demonstrate that deep rooted social norms, the infraction of worker's rights, discrimination against few groups and a poorly- functioning education system are the primary causes why children are not attending school. Because children are easy to exploit and are cheap labourers, they are hired in choice to adults. Child labour this leads to lower wages and higher unemployment between adults. Children who work and do not go to school will end up in low paid jobs afterwards and so will their children and so the vicious cycle of poverty is keep going. Child labour is a universal problem that expected a universal solution. In India, Africa and Latin America, local authorities, teachers, employers, parents and children in child labour free zones work and into school. They are all convinced that no child should be working. Every child should be in school then they will grow up. These child labour free zones are successful and are continuing to expansion to other areas and countries. The costs of child labour cannot be overstated. There is an overall harm their invaluable childhood. There is also the chronic damage to social development of the child. So the real change requires more. This is why we call on governments, businesses and consumers worldwide to shoulder their responsibility and work team wise towards a child free work.

14. Suggestions

Every child born has the right to have visions and follow those visions. All though the realization of some of these desires may be

limited by various challenges, it is still possible to defeat them and obtain the highest levels of achievement. There is necessity to involve several stakeholders to realize this motive. There are some of the ways in which the problem of child labour can be addressed. Free education grips the key to alienating child labour. Parents that do not have money for school fees can use this as an opportunity to provide their children with education. Child labour should not be entertained at all. It is legally and morally incorrect. The society should be educated on the negative effects of child labour so that it becomes an issue that is scowled upon whenever it happens. This type of moral polishing would act as a defensive to people who have the intension to employ children and use them as a source of cheap labour. By creating the demand for talented and trained workers, child labour cases will decrease since almost all child labourers fall under the unskilled worker category. It will direct to adult employment as the demand for skilled labour increases. Creating awareness about the illegitimacy of child labour can also help in stemming the practice. The government, together with non-governmental organizations and the civil society, can create strategies to make such an enterprise an achievement. Poor people are the most affected by child labour. Empowering indigent people through knowledge and income generating projects would go a long way in decreasing cases of child labour.

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Website of ISO.

