

## PROBLEMS OF THE CHILD LABOUR WORKING IN URBAN HOTELS, WITH REFERENCE TO PUNE CITY

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### ABSTRACT

Child labour is a Universal phenomena and it is a by-product of socio-economic structure of the society. Child labour can be classified as hazardous and non-hazardous labour. In India the problems of child labour is alarming. Today the country is having the world's largest number of child labour. The empirical research on child labour shows that, the child labour has been increasing in urban areas from the last two decades. Pune is not the exceptional urban area in increasing child labour in organized and unorganized sectors.

The pune city is fastest growing city in India, especially in education, industries and hotel establishments. There are large numbers of hotels and restaurants being operated in the city Pune, all these hotel were classified in large size, medium size and small size hotels. 'A' grade, 'B' grade 'C' grade hotels. Child labourers are mostly working in 'B' grade (Medium size) 'C' grade (Small size) hotels of Pune city.

The analysis in this section are mainly based on the data obtained from 300 child labour workers, which is 5% of the total child labour population of 6000 in Pune city.

The present research study is an attempt to examine and describe the social factors, economic factors, familial factors, physical & psychological factors and other factors, which is being the problem of the child labour engaged in urban area of Pune city. And the findings also explore the inefficiency of law, administrative system, policy and lack of governmental mentor of the Pune city.

**KEYWORDS:** Child Labour Problems, Pune City

### INTRODUCTION

Childhood is perhaps the most blessed stage in a human life. It is that phase of life where, children are not really aware of any form of worldly responsibilities, they are free from all the tensions and they can learn a whole lot of new things. No wonder, people keep having this wistful desire of going back to their childhood and relive all those beautiful memories. But there is other side to this phase and in that, many children are forced to work in inhumane conditions. This phase is also known by "child labor" where a child is full of tensions and burdens and he has to perform the tough job of being primary earning member of the family. Such children lose their innocence to satisfy the needs and wants of their family. The problem of child labor is huge and is faced by many countries in the world.

The problem of child labour is one of an important human rights issue at stake. The working child is designed as a child in the age of 5 to 14, which is doing work in hotels, restaurants, tea stalls, juice bars and other eating places of Pune city. The working condition and environment of the child labour in urban area were quite horrible. Exploitation of child labour is reflected in terms of long hours of working for low wages, casual nature of work, absence of holidays, absence of

social security etc. The children are often physically, mentally, socially and sexually abused. Illiteracy or improper educations keeps them unskilled or semi-skilled which limited the opportunities of upward mobility. Psychological deprivation has developed due to early exposure to adult life and it has been observed that, child labour engaged in urban hotels are being illegally and immorally indulged.

## **SOCIAL FACTORS**

Child labourers belongs to Dalits, Adivasis and Nomadic Tribes communities and these communities are the most backward classes, living below the poverty line in Maharashtra state. Child labours are mostly vulnerable to labour related exploitation, ill treatment and physically, mentally, socially and sexually abused in hotel establishments of Pune city. There are four social factors found in the present study, such as poverty, education, occupation and accommodation problems. They are as follow;

### **Poverty**

Poverty is undoubtedly a dominant factor in the use of child labour; families on or below the poverty line force their children into work to supplement their household's meager income. The increasing gap between the rich and the poor, privatization of basic services and the neo-liberal economic policies are causes major sections of the population out of employment and without basic needs. This adversely affects children more than any other group. Entry of multi-national corporations into industry without proper mechanisms to hold them accountable has lead to the use of child labour. Lack of quality universal education has also contributed to children dropping out of school and entering the labour force.

Families are so poor that they become dependent on their children's income. In order to support large families, parents sometimes make illegal deals with the employer and push the children towards bonded labour. The employer also earns an advantage as he can get labour at a cheaper rate than the prevailing market rate. They are made to work in life threatening conditions in factories manufacturing firecrackers, coal mines, beedi-rolling factories etc.

### **Educational Problem**

Once a child is employed, he has to face problem of not being able to educate himself. It is observed that, most of the child labourers couldn't able to attain their education because of their regular labour jobs in hotels settings of Pune city.

### **Employment Problem**

An employment status of child labour is through open secret talks by oral order of the hotel owner without specifying any employment condition.

It is found that, most of the employers employed the child labour in a hotel and restaurant by orally ordered without any written employment conditions and they do all types of odd jobs which is unsuitable to their physical and mental capacity without any limitations. The employment period, wages increment and job security were instability for the child labourers.

### **Accommodation Problem**

This is one of the most important problems faced by the children, according to the surveyed in Pune city. Most of the child labourers are staying in a rented room near their working place and few are given accommodation in their premises, where 5 to 10 persons were adjusted in one room to live together. Their rented accommodations are on the street and in slum areas of pune city. Children staying in rented rooms are given no house rent allowances.

### **Employer - Employee Relationship**

It is found that, Overwhelming respondent's employers are very strict and harshly treated to them at their work. Strictness and harshness approach towards children is more often found in vegetarian hotels owned by Tamil people. These employers recruit children with the concern of their parents, yet the deals and bargaining system are at the hands of employers without the children's anticipation.

### **FAMILIAL FACTORS**

In the present study, most of the child labourers are from the joint families and they have an average family size of 5 persons. Child labourers usually got family broken of Divorce, marital conflicts, parent's alcoholic addiction and death of their parents.

### **Education & Occupation of the Child Labourer's Parents**

Most of the child labourer's parents are illiterate and had worked in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, viz, bidi worker, industrial worker, gawandi, hotel worker, coolie, construction worker (bigari), etc., in the urban area and in rural areas, they work as road repairing worker, dam worker, cattle tender, farming, small scale of business like tea stalls, tailoring, catering, pot making, etc.

### **Broken Family**

Nearly 7 percent of the respondents belong to broken family. It is because of father's addiction and frequently quarrels between mother and father. Under such circumstances the child labour had taken responsible of his/her family.

### **Reasons of School Dropout**

School dropout is not only because of the large size of family or poverty, but it also due to broken family, marital conflicts with the children or neither with father nor with mothers, negligence of father or mother, early death of mother or father and some respondents have left the school for psychological reasons i.e. fear of the teacher etc.

### **Parent's Unconcern about Their Children's Education**

Poor economic conditions of parents are the main reasons of child labour to work in a labourious situation, as most of the child labour families are below the poverty line. Some of the family member revealed that, they didn't send their children to school because of unaffordable educational expenditures, instead of it; they make them work for their living. 75 percent of children from rural area left their school after class-I and class-II standard due to their poor economic condition, while children belonging to the sugarcane worker's family left their school due to their migration (shifting cultivations, from native place to any regions of sugarcane factory site).

90 children out of 300 have left their school education due to poor performance in school, these children are not taking much interest in their education and had failed in their test/examination, whereby under such circumstances children are neither protected by their parents or their teacher, due to which they prefer job instead of education.

### **Reasons of Child Labour in a Family**

It is stated that, the proportions of male's child labour are more (54%) than female's child labour (46%). Many of the child labour are working in hotels and restaurants for supporting their families because of their father or mother death. 29 respondents had lost their fathers and 13 cases lose their mothers. Thus, 42 respondents are taking full responsibility of their family.

## **ECONOMIC FACTORS**

There are four economic factors found in the present study, such as low wages, no wages for overtime, Fringe Benefits, delay in payment of wages & Employer - Employee Relationship.

Child laborers are typically paid less than adults in all varieties of jobs even though they perform the same work and have to work beyond normal working hours.

Child Labour is a 'harsh reality' and one can only mitigate some of the harshness of the exploitative aspects of Child Labour. The 'harsh reality' of Child Labour arises out of the fact that in the present state of development in the country many parents, on account of poverty, have to send their children to work in order to supplement their income and the income derived from the Child Labour, however to do work is essential to sustain the family. This is the 'poverty argument of Child Labour. Further it can be said that Child Labour as an economic practice signifies employment of children in gainful economic occupation with a view to adding to the income of the family.

### **Low Wages**

It is observed that in various hotels, the employers paid small amounts to the child labourer. The children who are working in small size hotels like juice bar centre, wadapav centre, cold drink and tea stalls are paid Rs. 15 to 20 per day for their wages, while in medium size hotels they paid Rs 20 to 30 and in large size hotels they paid Rs. 30 to 40 for long hours of work. With this minimal amount they are managing their family not only themselves.

### **No Wages for Overtime**

More than 75 percent of the child labourers are working more than 12 hours per day without any extra wages amount and most child labourers who got accommodation in their premises got more working hours than the rented child labourers.

### **Fringe Benefits**

In the present study, no incentives in the form of bonus or profit sharing are paid to the child labourer, even though they work as equal to the adult worker. This type of problem is found in large, medium and small size hotels in pune city.

Most of the child workers don't obtain any fringe benefits or allowances like bonus, uniform, travel etc. Seemingly, only 19 per cent were getting bonus and other benefits of the job but, majority of them did not get any type of fringe Benefits from the employer.

### **Delay in Payment of Wages**

The distribution of the respondents according to the delayed payment of their wages, the child labourers reveals that, they had always delayed in paying their wages payment without fixing the date of payment, which is without "Payment of wages Act" for adults. Such types of economic problems are being faced by child labourer in large, medium and small size hotels of pune city.

## **PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS**

Most of the child labourers are working under pressure with their employer and adult workers. If any mishap happens during the course of work, immediately the employer takes physical assault or severe action against the child labour, which leads to emotional effect.

### **Psychological Health**

Children who are in risky job fields have no opportunity to build their natural psychosocial health. Long working hours breed their feeling of frustration and inadequacy. Their involvement in risky work resists eventually in building their emotional cognitive skills and they become withdrawn, introvert and uncommunicative. A significant portion of the children working at construction and welding sector are suffering from psychological immaturity and overall 30 percent child laborers are affected by abnormal psychological growth. They are also deprived of the special care that would be required for their psychological effects.

### **Physical Conditions**

Long hours of work, late hours of night employment, continuous standing, sitting or use of single set of muscles, emphasis on the finer neuromuscular coordination's with attendant nervous strain, indoor confinement in noisy factories and dusty trades, carrying heavy loads under the arm or lifting heavy weights, pressure of speed in the performance of simple mechanical acts, contact with industrial poisons, exposure to inclement weather are unsuitable occupations and provide harmful conditions for the growing child peculiarly susceptible to certain deformities and diseases.

## **OTHER FACTORS**

### **Causes of Child Labour**

Socio-economic factors are primarily responsible for perpetuation of child labour in pune city. Widespread and chronic economic poverty in the urban & rural areas forces parents to send their children for work; casteism, gender discrimination, large family size, low level of income, geographically disadvantaged area, illiteracy etc. do contribute significantly to the cause of child labour practice. Further with advantages like low remuneration, lack of unions, on demand for overtime, simple and easy to be molded and punished etc., being inherent with children, employers prefer child labour. In most underdeveloped and agrarian society children are the part of labour force. With the growth of urbanization and industrialization, they are moving from families to hotel and other employment.

The consequences of child labour are multi-fold. Education of the future citizens of the country is the major casualty. Uneducated child labour without proper skills remain as manual labourers even after they grow up and get low wages. Unsafe and unregulated working conditions affect the physical and psychological health of the children.

### **Occupational Hazards**

Occupational Hazards, the risk of occupational accidents or diseases is present even in the hoteliering sector. The risk of child workers in occupational accidents or diseases are more because their bodies are not strong as those of adult workers and therefore, depending on the job that a child is doing, he experiences fatigue, develops aches and pain in the body as well as infection due to work in dirty environment. Working children are facing a number of problems while performing hotel work. The total number of respondents 80 per cent of them reported that their jobs amounted to drudgery, which does not match their age. Continuous inhalation of smoke due to the burned of firewood, the suffocating heat and smoke of the continuously burning ovens in rooms with hardly any ventilation and closed chimney affects health of the workers. The working environment is not congenial to them because they are designed for the adult workers.

95 per cent of the respondents reported that, the work is strenuous for them. Another notable problem are irregular hours of work, ill-treatment by the adult workers and employers, no safety measures for the health and hygiene of the child workers, inadequate sleep, the long hours of work and unhealthy wet, dusty and dirty environment and their employers and co-workers were abusing the child workers physically and mentally.

### Failure of Government Machinery and Legislative System

There are number of legislations prohibiting employment of children below 14 and 15 years in certain specified employments. However, no procedure is laid down in any law for deciding in which employments, occupations, or the processes the employment of children is banned. But there is no law to regulate the working conditions of children in those employments where children are not prohibited from working and are working under exploitative conditions.

A major concern is that the actual number of child labourers goes un-detected. Laws that are meant to protect children from hazardous labour are ineffective and not implemented correctly.

The persistence of child labour is due to the inefficiency of the law, administrative system and because it benefits employers who can reduce general wage levels. Various growing concerns have pushed children out of school and into employment such as forced displacement due to development projects, Special Economic Zones; loss of jobs of parents in a slowdown, farmers' suicide; armed conflict and high costs of health care. Girl children are often used in domestic labour within their own homes. There is a lack of political will to actually see to the complete ban of child labour.

### CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings show that, there are five factors of problem affecting the child labour engaged in urban hotels in pune city, such as *Social factors* of poverty, uneducated, unemployment, lack of accommodations and employer - employee Relationship. *Familial Factors* of family problems, Education & Occupation of the child labourer's Parents, Broken family, School dropout, Parent's unconcern about their Children's education and Reasons of child labour in a family. *Economic factors* of low wages, no wages for overtime work, Fringe Benefits and delay in payment of wages. *Physical and Psychological factors* of psychological Health and physical conditions and *Other factors* of causes of child labour, occupational hazards, failure of Government machinery and legislative system.

Child labor is not a recent phenomenon. Throughout human history, children have been made to work under hazardous and unhealthy conditions. In other words, child exploitation has remained an integral part of our culture and despite the advances made by us in last few centuries; we haven't been able to eradicate this menace. Children are made to work in factories, mining, and agriculture, on streets and as domestic helps. Child labor is an attack on basic rights of the children. Leave alone lack of educational opportunities to them, most of these children are malnourished and treated like animals. Child labor practices causes damage to a child's physical and mental health apart from depriving him of his basic rights to education, development, and freedom. To make the anti child labour law a reality, poverty and unemployment need to be eliminated. Unless the standard of living improves at the lower levels of the society, children will be forced to work. Many middle and upper class families do not hesitate to engage young boys and girls to help them with household chores. The middle class family feels by employing a child below 14 years they are helping poor families to increase their earnings for daily livelihood.

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