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An Analytical Study of Child Labour Among the Rural and Urban Areas of Gujarat

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ABSTRACT

Although Gujarat has seen a significant decline in poverty, there are still high levels of poverty above the state average in the tribal, coastal, desert and hilly areas. Children in poor families are sent to work to supplement the family income. Many poor families do not have sufficient resources to send their child to school so they are sent to work. The child labour exists in both the rural and urban areas of Gujarat. In rural areas, the children work in farms while in cities the children are sent to do domestic works or they work in hotels and restaurants. Without adequate rest intervals, they work for long hours. In addition, they are also paid very small amounts without any increment. Thus, for years, these children have been forced to work for meagre incomes under difficult conditions. This paper aims to present an analytical study of the prevalence of child labour in the rural and urban areas of Gujarat.

Key Words: Law, Child Labour, Urban, Rural, Gujarat



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Introduction

Children have always been regarded as the greatest gift to humanity in every community. Childhood is an important stage of human development because it holds the potential for any society to develop in the future. Children who are raised in an atmosphere that contributes to their intellectual, physical and social development continue to be responsible and productive in society. If we are to involve children in the job when they are too young for the job, we are unduly reducing their current welfare or future income-earning capabilities, either by reducing their future external choices or by reducing their future individual productive capabilities.

It is generally said that children are forced to abandon educational and other development opportunities due to economic problems and take up jobs that mostly exploit them as they are usually underpaid and engaged in dangerous circumstances. Due to poor economic conditions, parents send their children to work as a



VIDHYAYANA

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An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

desperate measure. Therefore, it is no wonder that poor households are the largest contributing segment of child labour. One of the key aspects of child labour is that, at the expense of education, children are sent to work. There is a strong impact of child labour on school attendance rates and their ability to attend school is inversely associated with the length of a child's work day. Child labour restricts children's right to access and benefit from education and denies the basic possibility of attending school. Child labour, therefore, prejudices the education of children and also affects their health and safety adversely.

Definitions

The operational definitions of the terms used in this title of the study are as explained below:

Child Labour:

According to International Labour Organization, Child labour is a job that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and is detrimental to their physical and mental growth. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or work that interferes with their ability to attend regular school.

Further it is stated that Children or adolescents who engage in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their education are not child labour. This type of work should be taken in a positive way. Activities such as helping their parents at home, helping families or earning pocket money outside school hours and on holidays involve such harmless work. By providing them with skills and experience, such types of activities can contribute to the development of children and help prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult lives.

As per Indian Census 2001 child labour means the involvement of a child in any work with or without wages. This work involves part-time support or unpaid work on the farm, in the family business or



VIDHYAYANA

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www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

in any other economic activity, such as the cultivation and production of milk for sale or domestic consumption.

Urban Area:

Urban area or a city is larger than a country or a village. The cities are blessed with technological progress. Because of this development, all modern facilities, educational facilities and career opportunities are available in cities. Urban individuals lead a more economically stable and luxurious life but they have no time for each other though technological advancement has brought the world closer. They maintain distance from others. The cities are characterized by multi-ethnicity, skilled craftsmanship, brisk trade and commerce.

Rural Areas:

Rural or village people are very attached to their soil and their relations. In rural area, the general masses lead a simple life, depend on agriculture. Village people are greatly attached to their religion and rituals as compared to the city people.



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Literature Review

Shrimali, Rajeshwari and Farmer, Mayuri (2015) analysed the situations of child labour in Ahmedabad city of Gujarat state in their collaborative research paper. As per their findings Their monthly income varies from 500 to 3000 Rs. depending on the kinds of their work and the areas in which they work. Very few, i.e., 28% of them get lodging and boarding facilities from their employers. 23% were faced with their employers' very rude behaviour. There are hardly a few of them who get financial assistants from their employers if they need them.

Salahuddin (2001) observes that the most precious human capital in any country is children.



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Children are the most productive and helpful to the community. In Bangladesh, the use of child labour is on the rise and it is gradually being recognised as a multidimensional social problem, along with care, nurturing and protecting from exploitation. In Bangladesh, the problem of child labour is mainly the creation of extreme poverty, aggravated by the tradition-bound attitude of Agro-based society.

Sharmin (2004) opines that Children in many occupations are victimised by employers, both physically and sexually. In certain cases, child abuse, especially sexual exploitation of children, also remains hidden when it is difficult to discover the truth. This is mostly because, in many cases, children, particularly girls, do not disclose sexual abuse in their society because of social norms and values.

Prabhe (2009) sums up that home poverty and socio-economic compulsion combined with the failure of the school education system to retain all children under the age of 14 In schools, millions of families are driven to send their children to work as labourers to earn their families' bread or to support their family income at a tender age. Child labour is interlinked with socio-economic problems such as poverty, the lack of social security for gender discrimination, illiteracy, growing unemployment and the worsening conditions of workers in the informal economy, particularly in rural areas.

Child Labour in Gujarat- An Analytical Study

In Gujarat, the problem of child labour is quite alarming. It is said that roughly out of 5 children below the age of 14 years, one child is engaged in some kind of labourer work, which means 20 percent children are labourer out of the total populations of the children in the Gujarat state. In fact, there is not proper source of regular collection of statistics on child labour. The only authentic source of collection of data on child labour is the Census conducted every 10 years by the Government of India in the country. According to the Census 2001 figures there are 48,5530 working children in the age group of 5-14 as compared to the total child population.



VIDHYAYANA

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An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

As per Census 2011, the number of working children in the age group of 5-14 years has further reduced to 250318. It shows that the efforts of the Government have borne the desired fruits. But despite this, still a major section of child population continuous to work under the banner of child labour. According to estimated population data of NSS Report No. 515 of the year 2001, the total child labour in Gujarat State were 3,99,820 out of which 86,130 lived in urban area and 3,13,700 lived in rural area.

Gujarat has been touted as a model state, but these claims contradict the number of child labourers. Figures from the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment show an alarming picture of Gujarat, which accounts for nearly 6 percent of children working in MSMEs in the nation. (Source- Time of India dated June 12, 2016)

According to the figures, India has 43,53,247 child labourers (aged between 6 to 14) working in Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs), of which Gujarat has 2,50,318. This is 5.75 of the country's total. The state ranks seventh among the 35 states and Union Territories in the absolute number of child workers employed (UTs). Under the NCLP scheme, Gujarat rescued and rehabilitated 453 child labourers in 2013-14 and 892 in 2014-15. No infants were rescued and rehabilitated in 2015, according to government records.

Sukhdev Patel, a city-based child rights activist, said that the district collector has separate welfare funds to rehabilitate children rescued from work, but the authorities are not sufficiently sensitive to properly implement this. He said that there is a provision in the Act that binds the state government to pay the collector's welfare fund a fine of Rs 5,000 if a child is rescued from work. The employer of that child is liable for a fine of Rs 20,000 in addition to this. Since collectors are not sufficiently sensitive, proper rehabilitation is not done.



VIDHYAYANA

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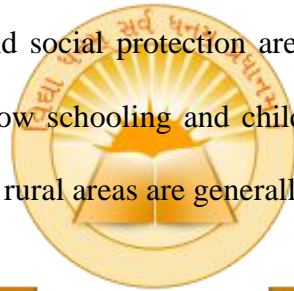
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Child Labour in Urban and rural Areas of Gujarat- A Glance

Child labour is a very complex problem in rural part of the Gujarat. Most of the children in rural areas work in farms to help their family. They work on the basis of daily wages which is very low. Generally speaking, rural children are more likely than urban children to engage in economic labour activity because poverty is more prevalent in rural areas, particularly among those who depend on agriculture.

Most of the urban children of Gujarat are involved in domestic work, restaurants, hotels or sales. They are very poor, unhealthy and crowded in their working conditions. With very low wages or no wages, they work for long hours. Girls are generally the most vulnerable; they are typically trafficked in urban centres for commercial sexual exploitation. Due to poverty, they face many issues. A number of problems such as lack of education, health care and social protection are at particular risk for poor urban children (Baker, 2008). In addition, in terms of how schooling and child labour are related, urban and rural areas differ. Education levels among children in rural areas are generally very low.



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Objectives of the Research

For many developing countries, child labour is a grave problem and a challenge. Many nations have enacted different laws and have taken serious initiatives to eradicate child labour, but the issue is still very widespread worldwide. This paper critically examined the issues of child labour prevalent in the Gujarat State of India. The main objective of this research paper is to understand the differences in the situation of child labour in rural and urban Gujarat areas.

Research Methodology

This research was based on both primary and secondary information. Interviews with children between the ages of 7 to 14 were the primary data underpinning this study. The information was gathered



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using various data collection techniques and was properly analysed. Secondary data is collected through literature material researched from academic books, articles and news and research reports on child labour, poverty education and the public health of child labour in order to answer the research question. The study is based on a comparative study of rural and urban areas of Gujarat. A total of 100 samples (of which 50 are rural and 50 are from the urban area area) have been selected to compare their socio-economic status. Because child labour is an extremely complex phenomenon, this research is limited to examining the nature and extent of child labour between the ages of seven and fourteen.

Data Analysis

- Out of total 100 children, there were 72 boys and 28 girl who were engaged in child labour work.
- 55% of them were found to be working as unpaid workers while 45% were working with low daily wages.
- The labour work in rural areas include, work in farm, caring of animals, selling vegetables etc.
- The significant number of children in urban areas were engaged in works that include, serving customers in hotels and restaurants, working in garage, in tea shops, carrying and delivering luggage etc.
- The girls in urban area have been involved in the household works that include cleaning and cooking at several houses.
- 60% of them were working 10 to 12 hours a day, while rest of them were doing part time work.
- Most of the children worked to support the family's income, however a minority of two percent worked to support their single mothers.
- Out of 50, not a single child from rural area have been registered in school while in urban area, 30% children from the sample took the admission in government school but they went to the school



occasionally. It shows that they are willing to attend school but the situation stops them doing so. On the other hand, there is a lack of awareness about education among the rural people.

- The findings repeatedly presented evidence that the children are often outside the coverage of health and nutrition schemes offered by the state— hence the children are left outside the ambit of education and health nutrition services.

Recommendations

Eradicating child labour in a rural community requires jointly addressing all forms of child labour to prevent children from shifting sectors or locations while continuing to work as a result of interventions. The Integrated Area-Based (IAB) approach of the ILO promotes an integrated intervention programme based on the participation and cooperation of local communities, government, employers' organisations and workers' organisations. In identifying the root causes of child labour and promoting alternatives, stakeholders are encouraged. An ILO-IPEC project in Mongolia has targeted child labour in small-scale informal mining through: Coordination of policies, implementation, and building of capacity, Awareness and attitude of the public, Knowledge/data base and research, monitoring of child labour, Direct measures to take children out of the worst forms of child labour, Law Enforcement, Collaboration and social partnership. By building commitment, ownership and partnership at the local level, the project strategy ensures long-term and effective solutions to child labour. As a result, each target area has developed its own action plan to eliminate child labour as a priority, which was adopted by the local Parliament.

Conclusions

Children are found working in workshops and small factories in Gujarat, in dhabas and restaurants, on the streets, as well as with domestic servants. Child labour is currently the burning issue of protecting children's rights. They are always mentally abused by others who control them verbally, physically,



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mentally. They are forced to work only for the survival of their families in these vulnerable and dangerous jobs. From early morning they start working and complete their work at night. For them, no recreational facilities are available. They have no time and no educational facilities. Their working climate is seriously unhealthy. They're not getting a fair payment. Children are significant assets and are a nation's future. They should be offered ample opportunities by both the state and society for their proper education and physical, mental, social and moral growth and development. Therefore, since childhood is the formative part of human life, children should not be exposed to such work as is unfortunately harmful to their physical or mental growth, a large number of children in the world today are not cared for as they needed. For their survival, they are compelled to sell their labour. Negligence, cruelty and exploitation are also victims of them.



VIDHYAYANA



VIDHYAYANA

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