

## A situational study of child labour in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh

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### Abstract

Child labour is the practice of having children engage in economic activity on part or full time basis. Child labour jeopardizes children's rights and prevents children from getting an education, learning skills. The government of India introduced various programmes like mid-day meal programme, free and compulsory education provision of books and uniforms etc. to reduce school dropouts which reduce the child labour. The present paper focuses on Situational study of child labour in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh to examine the problem of Child labour. The study examines the relationship between child labour, child schooling and educational aspirations of parents. The present study sought to examine the socio-economic profile of child labour in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Data was collected from child labour in ten villages of G.D Nellore Mandal of Chittoor district. Small Land holdings in agricultural areas and caste system in rural areas is the main reason for child labour. Poverty, Illiteracy, unemployment, lack of good schools and growth of informal economy are major causes of child labour in India. The results revealed that majority (58%) of the respondents were engaged in Agriculture. Nearly (73%) of the respondents were wage-paid workers and semi-skilled. The data concluded that Poverty is the main cause of sending their children to work. The Policy initiatives taken by Government of India through various programmes, NGO's and major National Legislations had a great impact on the situation of child labour and for the protection of child rights and elimination of child labour in India.

**Keywords:** Child labour, Poverty, Programmes, Initiatives, Causes, Education.

### 1. Introduction

Child labour refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful. This practice is considered exploitative by many international organizations. Legislation across the world prohibits child labour. These laws do not consider all work by children as child labour; exceptions include work by child artists, family duties, supervised training, and certain categories of work

In 2015, the country of India is home to the largest number of children who are working illegally in various industrial industries. Agriculture in India is the largest sector where many children work at early ages to help support their family. This is often the major cause of the high rate of child labour in India. In developing countries, with high poverty and poor schooling opportunities, child labour is still prevalent. In 2010, sub-Saharan Africa had the highest incidence rates of child labour; with several African nations witnessing over 50 percent of children aged 5–14 working. Worldwide agriculture is the largest employer of child labour. Vast majority of child labour is found in rural settings and informal urban economy; children are predominantly employed by their parents, rather than factories. Poverty and lack of schools are considered as the primary cause of child labour.

Overpopulation and illiteracy are some of the main causes of child labor. The population of India has exceeded 1.17 billion, which has a great impact on the nation's per capita income (World Bank). Not knowing the consequences, many poor, illiterate people have many children; these children are forced to work to help support their families. Illiteracy is at the root of many problems. Parents who are uneducated tend to

send their children to work instead of to study. Moreover, they may feel that primary education, which is offered for free by the government, will not be enough to earn the child a good wage. Therefore, they prefer to send their children to work at very young ages so that they can master the work by the time they become teenagers. In addition, parents with a large number of children and often other family members at home need extra income from their children to lead a normal life, having three meals every day. Thus, often parents, who want their children to go to school, must compromise because of their extreme poverty.

... In Asia And The Pacific Over 127.3 Million Children Under 14 Are Engaged In Child Labor As Compared To The 2.5 Million Children Ages Five To Seventeen Engaged In Child Labor In Developed Countries...

In addition to the above causes of child labor, people are often not aware of their rights because they are illiterate and there are few proper awareness programs to educate them. According to the Government of India 2001 census, there are an estimated 12.6 million child laborers in India under the age of 14. India also has the highest number of children in hazardous work in the world. They are involved in factories manufacturing beedis (cigars), diamonds, fireworks, silk and carpets, glass, and bricks (2001 Census of India).

To reduce child labor, the government of India has implemented a number of child welfare laws. The Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act was enacted in 1986; the National Policy on Child Labor was introduced in 1987, rehabilitating children and giving them education, nutritious food, and vocational training with a minimum stipend for poor families. Also, the National Child Labor Project (NCLP), launched in 1988, offers these services to rural interior

populations (Government of India, Ministry of Labor, and National Child Labor Project).

The main focus of the National Child Labor Project is to eliminate hazardous conditions for children by providing "basic needs" (food, clothing and shelter) and education. According to the Indian Ministry of Labor, children under the age of eight have been encouraged to stay in school with the support of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (Giving Education to All), a part of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Older child laborers are mainstreamed into schools, also with the help of this organization.

**2. Objectives**

The general objective of the study is to know about the magnitude, problems and causes of Child Labour in various dimensions.

**2.1 The specific objectives of the study are**

- To study the socio-economic status of child labour.
- To assess the causes/reasons and contributing factors to become child labour.
- To study the advantages and disadvantages of schooling, especially information on school enrolment and school dropouts.
- To study educational and occupational aspirations of children.

**3. Methodology**

The present study was conducted in ten villages in Gangadhara Nellore Mandal of Chittoor district. Agricultural laborers were plenty in number in this area. The total sample consisted of 100 child laborers in the age group of 6-14 years. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of respondents. The interviewer personally interviewed the child labour and their parents.

- Interview schedule was used was used to collect data.
- Household schedule and individual schedule were used to study the socio-economic status and causes and reasons of child labour.
- Schedule was used to collect information on school enrolment and school dropouts.

**4. Results and Discussion**

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents by Major Source of Income

S. No	Source of Income	Percentage
1.	Cultivation	14%
2.	Agriculture labour	58%
3.	Others	28%
	Total	100%

The data in the above table shows that the major source of income of majority of the respondents (58%) was through agricultural labour. The other sources of income constitute house hold workers and workers in match factories and domestic service.

**Table 2:** Distribution of Child labour by Type of Work

S. No	Type of Work	Percentage
1.	Self employed	10%
2.	Unpaid family workers	17%
3.	Wage paid workers	73%
	Total	100%

The data in table 2 reveals that majority (73%) of respondents were wage paid workers.17% of the respondents were unpaid family workers and remaining 10% are self-employed.

**Table 3:** Distribution of Child labour by Nature of Work

S. No	Nature of Work	Percentage
1.	Unskilled	11%
2.	Semi-Skilled	50%
3.	Skilled	39%
	Total	100%

The data in the above table reveals that majority of child labour were semi-skilled (50%). Nearly 40% were skilled workers. Many children were semi-skilled which suggests that their skill and productivity is affected due to their engagement in labour at early age stunting their physical growth.

**Table 4:** Distribution of Child labour by their Place of Work

S. No	Place of Work	Percentage
1.	Within the Village/Town	94%
2.	Outside the Village/Town	06%
	Total	100%

The data in the above table shows that majority (94%) of child labour work within the village which reveals that all the child labour is from local areas.

**Table 4:** Attitude of parents towards Advantages of schooling

S. No	Advantages of schooling	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
1.	Spread of literacy	96	2	2
2.	Securing of better occupation	80	17	3
3.	The educated bring respect to family	52	42	6
4.	Educated daughters require less dowry	27	84	9
4.	Educated sons helps other children in their education	58	33	9
5.	Parents feel proud of their educated children	74	20	6

The data in the above table reveals that 96% of the respondents agreed that schooling spreads literacy.90% of them agreed that it helped in securing better occupation. Nearly 50% agreed that education brings respect to the family and 64% agreed that educated daughters required fewer dowries. About three fourths of the sample parents agreed that they felt proud of their educated children.

**Table 5:** Attitude of parents towards Disadvantages of schooling

S. No	Disadvantages of schooling	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
1.	Too few children remain to help family expenses	61	27	12
2.	Education is expensive	76	8	16
3.	Present education is useful and superficial	24	59	17
4.	Women need no higher education	59	21	20
5.	Parents loose control over children	48	39	13
6.	The educated will not work at home	64	12	24
7.	Children cannot get jobs even after education	77	21	2

The data in the table reveals parent s opinion on disadvantages of schooling. More than half of the respondent’s parents said that few children remained to help at family enterprises. Three fourths of parents agreed that education is expensive. More than half of the parents stated that women need no higher education as they do not work at home. Three fourths of parents felt that even after education it is difficult to secure a job.

**Table 6:** Distribution of Child labour by Major reasons for dropout

S. No	Reasons	Percentage
1.	Poverty	74
2	Lack of resources	12
3	Large family size	11
4	Lack of interest	3
	Total	100

From the above data it is evident that Poverty is the major reason for dropout of children from schools. Three fourths of the sample dropped out from schools due to poverty, one tenth dropped out due to lack of resources and large family size and a small percentage (3%) of the sample dropped out due to lack of interest.

**Table 7:** Extent of Awareness of parents about child labour

S. No	Developmental Aspects	Fully aware	Partially aware	Not aware
1	Child labour deprives children of educational opportunity	21	17	62
2	Child labour stunts their physical growth	16	28	56
3	Child labour hampers their intellectual development	11	34	55
4	Child labour forces them low wages for entire life	36	22	42
5	Child labour deprives employment opportunities for adults	35	29	36

The major cause for increase in child labour is lack of awareness in parents of its adverse effects. The data in that the table shows that more than half of the parents were not aware that child labour deprives children of educational opportunities. Half of the sample parents were not aware that child labour stunts physical growth. More than one third was not aware that child labour deprives employment opportunities for adults.

**5. Summary**

Nearly three-fourths of child labours in the study area were wage paid workers. Half of the child labour is semi-skilled which suggests that their skill and productivity is affected due to their engagement in labour at early age stunting their physical growth. Majority (94%) of child labour worked within the village. Nearly half of child labors were engaged in agriculture. The other sources of income constitute house hold workers and workers in match factories and domestic service. 96% of the respondents agreed that schooling spreads literacy.90% of them agreed that it helped in securing better occupation. Nearly 50% agreed that education brings respect to the family and 64% agreed that educated daughters required

fewer dowries. About three fourths of the sample parents agreed that they felt proud of their educated children. Parent S opinion on disadvantages of schooling reveals that more than half of the respondent’s parents felt that few children remained to help their family enterprises. Three fourths of parents agreed that education is expensive. More than half of the parents stated that women need no higher education as they do not work at home. Three fourths of parents felt that even after education it is difficult to secure a job.

The major cause for increase in child labour is lack of awareness in parents of the adverse effects of child labour. The data in the table shows that more than half of the parents were not aware that child labour deprives children of educational opportunities. Half of the sample parents were not aware that child labour stunts physical growth. More than one third was not aware that child labour deprives employment opportunities for adults. This data clearly indicates that poverty is the main cause of the widespread prevalence of child labour Majority of respondents was satisfied with their job and they took up work to supplement family income. Almost all the parents of child labour were illiterate and agricultural labour. Thus the problem of child labour is a social evil that requires awareness and change in all sections of the society.

**6. Conclusions**

Child labour problem is an evil that requires awareness and change in approach in all sections of society. It is necessary that a strong evaluation and monitoring should be done for various child labour elimination projects and programmes. Education is one of the key solutions in the elimination of child labour. Education and skills training help to prevent and reduce child labour by providing them better opportunities. The International labour organization (ILO)and International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour(IPEC)has supported action research on many issues related to educational policies and programmes such as providing Non formal Education, Vocational Training, and other Social support services for working children and promoting their enrolment in formal schools. Non formal education programmes can teach children skills that will provide immediate economic alternatives as well as psycho-social support.

Poverty is the main cause of sending their children to work. The Policy initiatives taken by Government of India through various programmes, NGO’s and major National Legislations had a great impact on the situation of child labour and for the protection of child rights and elimination of child labour in India. From the above study it can be concluded that the establishment of local child welfare and vigilance committees is an effective tool which is increasingly being utilized. Measures to improve education need to be done as part and parcel of integrated programmes for disadvantaged population. UNICEF estimates that India has highest number of child labour in world, so there is a need for intensive focus to improve working conditions of health of children. The establishment of child welfare and vigilance committees is an effective tool which is increasingly being utilized. These committees can monitor, undertake action and even provide resources when and where necessary.

## 7. Implications of the Study

### 7.1 Child Labour Remedies

1. Education is one of the key solutions in the elimination of child labour. Children with basic education and skills have better chance in the labour market. Educational opportunities can wean working children from hazardous and exploitative work and help them find better alternatives.
2. A whole range of interventions in education is necessary to attract children to school, and to keep them there and out of work. Renewed National commitment, policy reform and massive investment in basic education are vital to meet the challenge.
3. A holistic approach to education is required. Children should be provide with access to quality education from childhood onwards at least 15 years of age. Transitional education has to be provided to prevent such children from hazardous work.
4. Non formal education programmes can teach children skills that will provide immediate economic alternatives as well as psycho-social support. Short-term vocational training and functional literacy training provide immediate alternatives.
5. Social protection programmes should be provided in awareness raising, group training, training in income generation activities to improve the socio-economic status, provide access to credit to adults in the family.

NGOs should also play a prominent role in finding child laborers and counseling them to study. People who employ child workers should be strictly punished under the Child Protection and Women and Child Development Acts, and under the Indian Constitution. Finally, print and electronic media should spread awareness of the seriousness of the problem of child labor. By fulfilling these minimum needs of poor people and children, child labor can be eliminated by 2020, which is India's vision--the vision of being a developed and healthy country.

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