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## Research Article

# A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE ON HAZARDS OF CHILD LABOUR AMONG PARENTS IN SELECTED SLUM AREA AT MANGALORE, DAKSHINA KANNADA, WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOP HEALTH EDUCATION PAMPHLET

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### ABSTRACT

Child labour is widely recognized as a major problem in India and in many under developed countries. If we cannot begin to agree on the fundamentals of the elimination of child labour then we really are not ready to march forward into the future. A descriptive design approach was adopted in this study to identify the knowledge and attitude of the parents regarding child labour and its hazards. A total of 50 parents were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The data was obtained using a knowledge questionnaire and an attitude scale on child labour and its hazards, which was developed by the researcher himself. The reliability of the tool was tested using split-half method. The knowledge questionnaire ( $r = 0.81$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and the attitude scale ( $r = 0.73$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) were found reliable. The findings of this study revealed that majority (52%) of the parents had average knowledge and least (48%) had poor knowledge. Similarly a higher number (68.00%) of parents were unsure and least (32.00%) of parents disagreed with the ill effects of child labour. There was a positive Karl Pearson's correlation (0.37) that showed a significant association between knowledge and attitude of parents with selected demographic variables. From this study it is concluded that the parents have average knowledge as well as unsure and disagreed with the child labour and its hazards. Parent's awareness regarding this major social problem will help them in the proper foundations of the childhood leading them to a successful adult life. Thus, the health education pamphlet was distributed by the researcher, which will improve the knowledge of parents regarding child labour and its hazards.

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## INTRODUCTION

The most innocent phase in human life is the childhood.<sup>1</sup> Every child born into the world is a new ray of possibility and hope.<sup>2</sup> Children should have PENS in their hands not TOOLS. For much of human history and across different cultures, children less than 17 years old have contributed to family welfare in a variety of ways. In developing countries with high poverty and poor schooling opportunities child labour is still prevalent.<sup>3</sup> Child Labour refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school and that is mentally, physically, socially and morally dangerous and harmful.<sup>4</sup> UNICEF suggests that poverty is the big cause of child labour. The report also notes that in rural and impoverished parts of developing and underdeveloped parts of the world, children have no real and meaningful alternatives.<sup>3</sup> There are industries and individuals, who employ young innocent children. They put them to work

under grueling circumstances. They make them work for long hours weaving delicate threads to make the world's most expensive carpets. They make them work in dangerous factory units manufacturing fireworks. They make children carry load even heavier than their own body weight.<sup>5</sup> There are individual households that have their own young children growing up in a cozy family environment, but they hire children as domestic help. They beat them and physically torture when they make a mistake. They starve them and give them their children's worn out clothes.<sup>6</sup>

### Need for the study

Child labour is one of the major social problems, which India has been facing since decades. There are many of which contribute and promote the growth of child labour in India as scores of children easily become prey to this problem.<sup>7</sup> As per census, India has around 12.6 million children who are between the age group of 5-14 years. The census reported that among

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the children aged 10-14 years who are economically active, 70% were involved in agriculture and forestry, 15% were engaged in wholesale and retail trade and 6.5% were involved in manufacturing and recycling.<sup>2</sup> Child labour is a social curse that can be eradicated from the world in general and India in particular, by promoting basic education at least up to the higher secondary level so that three fourth of the population may understand what human rights and democracy mean. Our children should not be allowed to wilt and waste away doing hard labour in unhealthy conditions. They should not lose their childhood. They are the keepers of the country's future.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the researcher keeping these aspects in mind and through his personal experience of facing some children working in the hotels, garages and construction sites that are prone to a lot of health hazards felt the need of educating the parents of such children.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Descriptive research approach was used to assess the knowledge and attitude on hazards of child labour among parents in a selected slum area at Mangalore, Dakshina Kannada, with a view to develop health education pamphlet. A conceptual framework was prepared to assess the knowledge and attitude among parents on child labour and its hazards based on Modified Health Belief Model by Becker, Drachmen RH and Kircht TP (1974). Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample of 50 parents having working children below 14 years of age living in the selected slum area of Mangalore. The study instrument was close-ended knowledge questionnaire and Modified Likert scale to assess the attitude on child labour and its hazards. The study instrument was divided into III parts. Correlation of the test was found out by using Karl-Pearson's correlation co-efficient formula. The reliability co-efficient of the whole test was then estimated by using Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula. The knowledge questionnaire was found reliable ( $r = 0.81$ ). The attitude questionnaire was also found reliable ( $r = 0.73$ ).

**Part I - Demographic Performa:** It consists 11 items of demographic variables such as parental relationship, age, educational status, occupation, family income, type of family, number of children, working children, age of the working child and stay in the slum area.

**Part II - Structured interview schedule:** It consists of 18 questions under 2 sections like general aspects of child labour and hazards at work of child labourers. The investigator places a tick () mark against the corresponding places according to response of the respondents. Each item had a score of one for the correct answer and zero for the wrong answer. The knowledge score of parent's  $\leq 35\%$  was considered as poor, 36- 70% average, 71- 100% as good level of knowledge. The study revealed that majority (52%) of the parents had average knowledge and 48% had poor knowledge.

**Part III: Attitude scale:** A modified Likert scale is used to assess the attitude among parents towards child labour and its hazards. It consists of 20 questions under 2 sections like attitude towards encouraging child labour and attitude towards children rights and development. The attitude score of parents  $\leq 35\%$  was considered as disagree, 36- 70% was unsure, 71- 100% as agree with the child labour and its hazards.

## RESULTS

The majority (62%) of the samples were fathers and most (40%) of the samples were in the age group of 26 – 35 years. Maximum (48%) of the samples had no formal education and nearly more than half (57%) of the samples occupation was coolie. A majority (40%) of the samples had an income of 4001-5000 Rs/month and nearly (62%) of the samples were staying in a nuclear family. Less than half (44%) of the samples had single child and nearly one third (74%) of the samples had single working child. Majority (46%) of the samples working child were in the age group of 13 – 14 years and nearly half (52%) of the samples family were staying in the slum for duration of 1 – 5 years.

The results revealed that a majority (52%) of the parents had average knowledge and 48% had poor knowledge regarding child labour and its hazards. The parents had highest knowledge in the area of knowledge on the hazards at work of child labourers with a mean percentage of 38.57% followed by prevention, meaning and causes of child labour with a mean percentage of 38.00%, 33.33% and 33.33% respectively. The mean knowledge score was  $6.5 \pm 0.8$ , with a mean percentage of 36.11% revealing that the overall knowledge of the parents regarding child labour and its hazards is average.

The majority (68.00%) of the parents were unsure and least (32.00%) disagreed with the child labour and its hazards. The parents had highest level of attitude in the area of prevention of child labour with a mean percentage of 41.66% followed by introduction, hazards and causes of child labour with a mean percentage of 37.66%, 37.00% and 36.72% respectively. The mean attitude score was  $15.00 \pm 1.49$ ; with a mean percentage of 37.50% revealing that overall the parents were unsure regarding child labour and its hazards.

The results also revealed that there was significant association between the knowledge scores of parents regarding child labour and its hazards with selected demographic variables like educational status, family income and age of the working child. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted. Similarly there was significant association between the attitude scores and selected demographic variables like educational status and no. of children. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted.

Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to find the correlation between the knowledge and attitude scores. The Karl Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.37 (table value  $r = 0.270$ , for 48 d f), which is more than table value at 0.05 level of significance. So the null hypothesis was rejected. There was correlation ( $r = 0.37$ ) between the knowledge and attitude of the parents regarding child labour and its hazards.

## DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to assess the knowledge and attitude among parents on child labour and its hazards in a selected slum area, Mangalore. In view of the nature of the problem under study and to achieve the objectives, a descriptive survey approach and a non-experimental typical descriptive design was found to be appropriate to describe the study. Purposive sampling, which is a type of non-probability

sampling technique, was used to select the samples. The data were collected from 50 parents.

A cross sectional study was conducted in a tribal dominated district of Kandhamal in the state of Orissa, basically to examine the situation of aboriginal people vis-à-vis the mainstream of the country supported the findings of this study. The result of the sample survey implies that 20.7% of the child workers are employed as maidservants, 13.6% as hotel/shop boy and very few child workers are engaged in house hold industries showing that parents had poor knowledge regarding child labour and its hazards.<sup>9</sup>

The study findings were supported by a study conducted on knowledge, attitude a cross sectional study was conducted among 500 families to assess the various reasons for sending their children to work in Bangalore. The analysis of data showed that more number of children (34.78%), poverty (32.78%) and inadequate family income (23.45%) were the reasons for sending their children for labour showing that parents had disagreed with the child labour and its hazards.<sup>10</sup>

The study findings were supported by the study conducted on knowledge of causes, hazards and prevention of child labour among the mothers in selected slum areas at Bangalore City. The findings revealed that age, education, occupation, family income, family type, parental relationship, no. of children, year of stay in slum did not have any relationship with the knowledge scores.

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