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## Research Article

# CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA: AN INVESTIGATION IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND HEALTH CONDITIONS OF TRIBES

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### ABSTRACT

The term child labour is often used synonymously with employed children or working child. The child labour is a work which involves some degree of exploitation- physical, mental, economic and social which impairs the health and development of children, they constitute nearly 255 million economically active in the age group of 5-14 years. Most of these children are working in very hazardous conditions in rural and urban sectors. In India, the extent of child labour is not as large as in Turkey, Thailand, Bangladesh, Brazil, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mexico and Egypt. 97% of children are in 12-15 years category their Mean age is 1.77 very critical age group of children are found working in various informal units. Female child labour is more vulnerable than male child labour. 57% of children both male and female studied primary level education. 76% of families having 4-6 family members. >68% are working in the field of agriculture. >75% are started working as labour at the age of 8-10 years. 53 per cent of samples tribal children are working 5-8 hours per day and 47% are working more than 8 hours per day. More than 75% of children earning less than a dollar per day. 95 per cent sample child labour expressed that, owner abused and threaten. 58% sample respondents' opinion that they faced scolding/ abusing, harassment and reduction of wages. The study examines poverty and poor economic conditions are the root cause of child labour in rural areas of the study. Therefore, the social development model is the only alternative for eradicating child labour problem. The process of development for poorer sections through the promotion of compulsory education, health and skill development is the need of the hour.

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## INTRODUCTION

**Definitions of Child Labour:** a). Children who are engaged in work unsuitable for their capacities as children or in work that may jeopardize their health, education or moral development and whose age is below 14 years. Children who practice and engage in economic activities, on a part or full-time basis. b). The practice deprives children of their childhood, and is harmful to their physical and mental development and c). Child labourers constitute a group of working children who are either too young to work or are engaged in hazardous activities- that is, work that is potentially harmful to their physical, social, psychological or educational development, UNICEF (2013).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The prevalence of child labour is one of the most important problems confronting the world at large, especially developing countries such as India. Millions of children are engaged in hazardous situations, or conditions, such as working in mines, working with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or working with dangerous machinery, Lal (2016).

Child Labour is a global phenomenon. It exists both in the developing and the developed countries though with a difference in cause and magnitude. Its prevalence is more in the developing countries as compared to the developed ones, because the families, to which the working children belong, are in an urgent need of income of child labour for their subsistence, whereas children in the developed countries are often working for pocket money, Lal (2006).

Amongst various causes of child labour, unemployment, poverty and indebtedness of the households are the most important. Many parents secure advances from the landlords or the employers and repay the loans in terms of their child labour. In some cases, the children are compelled to migrate temporarily to the nearest cities or the urban areas of adjoining states to earn the necessary subsistence, Lal (2006).

**The poverty of Family:** Women and female children are often denied equal access to common resources when a family is in poverty. Female members, mainly female children are victimized by the poverty of the family. A poor family naturally jeopardizes female children. Every chance is used for

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avoiding the burden of the female. So poor families naturally resort to child marriage to avoid all sorts of the burden of a female child. Sometimes it can also be perceived that poor families selling girls and child marriage is a hidden form of selling girl. Marring child to gods as a tradition is also originates from family poverty, Lal (2015).

The working children themselves may not be productive but are capable of relieving the adults for productive employment by engaging themselves in domestic chores and looking after younger children in the home. This way, they allow their parents to spend more time, on income generating activities. They also free adults to enable their migration to the areas of high employment, Lal (2016).

**METHODS**

**Objectives:** The study is broadly examines an economic perspective of tribal child labour in Warangal District. The objectives are:

1. To investigate the socio-economic background of child labour in the study area.
2. To identify the factors responsible for child labour in the study area.
3. To examine the working condition, income, health hazards of child labour, and
4. To study educational and health problems of child labour.

**Hypotheses:** 1. Poor economic conditions of the family leads child labouring in the study area. 2. Poverty and large size of a family is the root cause of tribal child labour and 3. Children are suffering from psychological stress.

**Sampling Design:** An altogether 200 tribal child labours were selected by adopting the purposive sampling techniques. They were selected from the ten mandals and ten villages in Warangal District for the collection of the data.

**Tools for Analysis:** In this study, simple averages, percentage, frequency distribution, correlation and Chi-Square test were employed. Applying appropriate statistical tests on the collected data, the valid, reliable, and dependable results and conclusions have been drawn.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

1 in every 11 children in India works to earn a living, India's 2011 census revealed that more than 10.2 million "economically active" children in the age group of five to 14 years- 5.6 million boys and 4.5 million girls. Eight million children were working in rural areas, and 2 million in urban areas. Although in rural settings the number of child workers reduced from 11 million to 8 million between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, over the same period, the number of children working in urban settings rose from 1.3 million to 2 million.

**India and World Scenario**

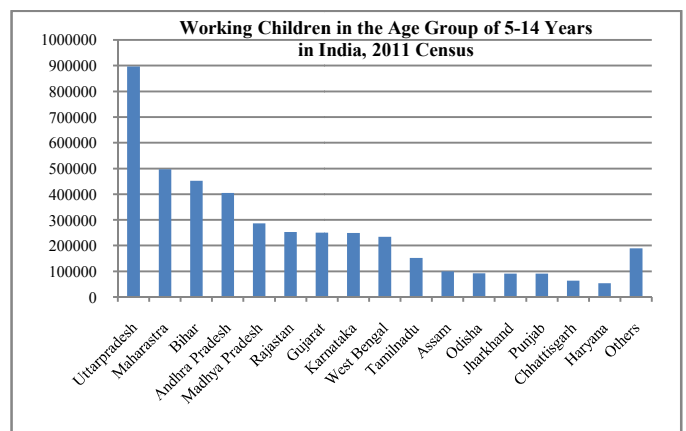
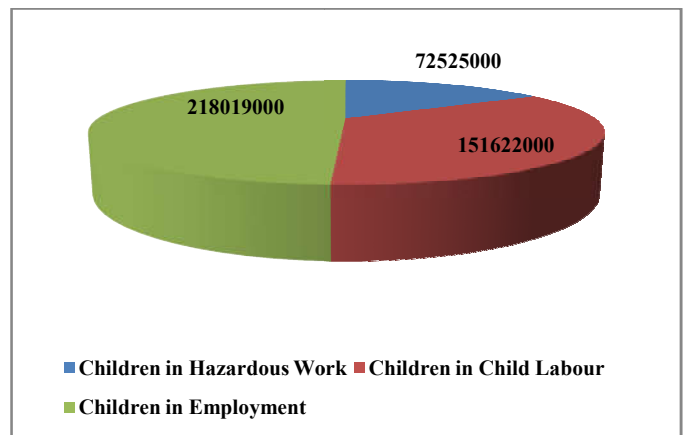
The global estimates indicate that 152 million children- 64 million girls and 88 million boys- are in child labour globally, accounting for almost one in ten of all children worldwide. Seventy-one per cent of children in child labour work in the agricultural sector and 69 per cent perform unpaid work within their own family unit. Nearly half of all those in child labour- 73 million children in absolute terms- are in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety, and moral development. Children in employment, a broader measure

comprising both child labour and employment of children above the legal working age, number 218 million. Children in forced labour, the worst form of child labour that is estimated using a separate methodology, number 4.3 million, ILO (2017).

According to census 2011, there were 255 million economically active children in the age group of 5-14 years. In India, the extent of child labour is not as large as in Turkey, Thailand, Bangladesh. Brazil, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mexico and Egypt.

It is estimated around 5.2 per cent of the total labour force in India as against 27.3 per cent in Turkey, 20.7 per cent in Thailand. 19.5 per cent in Bangladesh. 18.8 per cent in Brazil, 16.6 per cent in Pakistan, 12.4 per cent in Indonesia, 11.5 per cent in Mexico and 8.2 per cent in Egypt. However, in Srilanka, child labour accounts for only 4.4 per cent of the total labour force. Even the workforce participation rate of children in the age group 10-14 years in India (10.4 per cent) is less than Bangladesh (33.3 per cent), Nepal (22 per cent) and Pakistan (11.6 per cent), but greater than Indonesia (8 per cent) and Srilanka (1.8 per cent), Lal (2015).

The absolute number of children in employment, child labour and hazardous work, 5–17 years age range, Children in Hazardous Work, 72525000, Children in Child Labour, 151622000 and Children in Employment, 218019000 the same has been presented in figure-1.



Source: Census Database of 2011

The scenario of child labour in India varies from state to state. In states like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat, the issue of child labour is an important point of debate for the social watchers as it has assumed unbearable proportions. But the silver lining is that in these states also the phenomenon of child labour is reducing gradually. Figure-2 below presented the working child labour in India as per 2011 Census in the different state.

### **Deprivation of Socio-Economic, Education and Health Aspects**

**Table 1** Demographic Status of Respondents

Sl No	Parameters	Frequency	Mean	percentage
1	<b>Age Group</b>			
	<12 years	46 (23)	1.7700	100
13-15 years	154(77)			
2	<b>Sex Group</b>			
	Male	120 (60)	1.4000	100
Female	80(40)			
3	<b>Educational</b>			
	Illiterate	86(43)	1.5770	100
Primary	114(57)			
4	<b>Type of Family</b>			
	Nuclear	190(95)	1.0500	100
Joint	10(5)			
5	<b>Size of Family</b>			
	Below-3	48(24)	1.7600	100
4-6	152(76)			

Table 1 reveals that out of the total sample of 200, 154 (77.0 per cent) respondents are in 13-15 years category and remaining 46 (23.0 per cent) are in below 12 years. Mean age is 1.77 very critical age group of children are found working in various informal units. Lowest age is found in hotel fields, while the highest age is found in agricultural activities. It is significant to note that majority of the respondents are found to very young aged.

Nearly 60 per cent of children are male and remaining 40 per cent are female, who are working as child labour. Female child labour are more vulnerable than male child labour and the remaining 23 per cent are in below 12 years. Majority of the females are labouring in the agricultural sector as labour.

It reveals that 114 (57.0 per cent) respondents both male and female children studied primary level education. Remaining 86 (43.0 per cent) child labours are illiterates. It is informed that nearly fifty per cent of child labours were not step-down to school buildings, because of their family economic conditions. Poverty and social backwardness are still hunting the lower rung of society. For generations together these communities are worst sufferers.

Out of 200 samples, tribal child labours in the study area 95 per cent are from the nuclear family system and five per cent are from joint families. Once the joint family system has broken down, every individual family had got independence and as a result, nuclear families lost control over the family system and sharing of individual feeling, ideas and problems are out of context of the family.

About 152 (76.0 per cent) families having 4-6 family members, remaining 48 (24.0 per cent) families' possess up to 3 members only. This study further provides that the majority of families are having more than four children.

Nearly 86 (43.0 per cent) of children fathers are working as daily wage cooli, 84 (42.0 per cent) are agricultural labours and remaining 30 (15.0 per cent) are paid labours. They perform any type of physical work on a daily wage basis. As a matter of fact, tribal child labour households are found to be at the lower ring of the social and economic labour. Their only asset is labour, fathers from rural areas have to toil day-in and day-out as.

### **Occupation, Income and Facilities**

Out of 200 respondents in the study area, 120 (60.0 per cent) are doing daily wage (cool). 74 (37.0 per cent) are agricultural labour. Nearly 64 per cent of tribal households are either in kutch houses or in small huts, it shows that their economic conditions in the study areas. 92% of respondents replied that they don't have any facilities within house premises. As a matter of fact, the majority of children are exposing diseases due to poor sanitation facilities. The mean value of toilet facilities is 1.92. Nearly 120 (60 per cent) respondents replied that they do not possess any piece of land; it means they are landless labours.

Occupation of tribal child labour in the study area, employment is a very important factor to determine a person's quality of life and spending pattern, out of 200 sample child labour respondents 136 (68 per cent) are working in the field of agriculture as coolies/ labour. 200 sample tribal child labour, 102 (51 per cent) are earning rupees 110-1500 per month. Nearly 150 (75 per cent) households of child labour earning between rupees 26,000-50,000/- per annum. Out of 200 sample child labour, 150 are started working as labour at the age of 8 to 10 years. Nearly 98 per cent of respondents' opinion that they have been working since 2 to 4 years. 40 per cent of respondents are joined because of poverty and the remaining 25 per cent of respondents are joined because of their large size of the family. Therefore, poverty is the root cause of child labour in rural areas of the study.

It is observed that 106 (53 per cent) out of 200 are working 5 to 8 hours per day. Hence child labours are working more than 8 hours daily for given task and most of the owners who are employing child labour are never bothered about working hours. 154 (77 per cent) respondents are interested in school. Hence it shows that opportunity to pursue education has been denied to child labour. 118 out of 200 sample respondents have studied primary level. The majority of 120 (60 per cent) sample tribal child labour expressed their reasons for not attending schools and their parents do not show any interest to send children to schools and family economic problems/ poverty. 90 per cent of sample respondents are not attending school at present.

### **Abusing, Harassment and Health**

The study presents that 95 per cent sample child labour expressed that, most of the time owner start abusing sometimes threaten. It is observed that objection rose by owners for late attending to work 58 per cent sample respondent's opinion that they faced scolding/ abusing, followed by 27 per cent harassment and 15 per cent reduction of wages. It is evident from the survey psychological harassment from their employers. Social and emotion are very important in present-day children. 81 per cent out of 100 sample respondents

expressed their opinion 'Yes', they are subject to suffering from psychological harassment.

75% of respondents' opinion that they didn't take sufficient required food. And not being served sufficient food daily. The study reveals that when child labour gets ill-health, their parents have to take care of child labour health. 59% sample child labour respondent's opinion that 'No' salary is paid during ill-health. It is observed that 70% sample child labour respondents expressed their views on existing of child labour in rural and urban areas is family economic problems. It is evident from the survey that 86% respondent's opinion that they have got debt. 63% of respondents borrowed money for their medical and health problems (ill-health).

**Chi-Square Test Analysis**

**Null Hypothesis-I**

There is no relationship among Size of Family, Poverty and cause of tribal child labour. There is a significant relationship among Size of Family, Poverty and cause of tribal child labour. Since the calculated Pearson Chi-square test value at 5 per cent significant level. The Null Hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Test	Sample Size	Value	DF	Sig
Pearson Chi-Square	200	27.040	1	.000

**Null Hypothesis- II**

There is no relationship between poor economic conditions of family and child labouring. There is a significant relationship between the poor economic conditions of the family and child labouring. Since the calculated Pearson Chi-Square test value at .05 per cent significant level, The Null Hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted. As such it is calculated that it is significantly different.

Test	Sample Size	Value	DF	Sig
Pearson Chi-Square	200	25.000	1	.000

**Null Hypothesis- III**

There is no significant relationship between working hours and children psychological stress. There is a significant relationship between working hours and children psychological stress. Since the calculated Pearson Chi-square test value at five per cent significant level. The Null Hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted. As such it is concluded that it is significantly different.

Test	Sample Size	Value	DF	Sig
Pearson Chi-Square	200	38.440	1	.000

All three hypotheses are proved tested and validated. The null hypotheses were rejected and alternate hypotheses were accepted.

**Correlation Analysis**

Variables	Age Group	Occupation	Income per month	Family Income per Annum
Age Group	Pearson	1.000	.318(**)	.613(**)
	Correlation			.316(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.000
Occupation	N	200	200	200
	Pearson	.138(**)	1.000	.397(**)
	Correlation			.425(**)
Income per Month	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200
	Pearson	.613(**)	.397(**)	1.000
Family Income Per Annum	Correlation			.533(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

1. The study observed from the above table that there is a positive correlation between Age, Occupation, Income of child labour and Child labour family income. Further, it can be seen that age and occupation moderate correlated with r value of .318. The analysis also observes that age and income of child labour have highly correlation (r values.613) among the variables. Also, age and family income of child labour has again moderate, with r value of .316
2. Age Vs Occupation: The correlation between Age, Occupation is 0.318. This shows that there is a relation between age and occupation. It can be observed from the above table that there is a moderate correlation with r value being 0.397 between age and occupation. From this, it can be understood that if people are younger, the occupation will be high earning.
3. Earn per Month and Family Income: Income of child labour per month and Family income of children per annum has a highly positive correlation at r value 0.533 and correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), hence higher the earning of child labour boost family income of child labour among sample respondents.

Hence this study concludes that age, occupation, an income of child labour and family income are influencing to child labour and supplementing to family income.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Still, poverty is the root cause of child labour in rural areas of the study. Therefore, the social development model is the only alternative for eradicating child labour problem. The process of development for poorer sections through the promotion of compulsory education, health and skill development. The government schools are ineffectively functioning in the study villages contributing to child labour and out of school children. Effective and efficient management of the schools is a prerequisite for the solution. Promotions of non-agricultural economic activities like micro, small and medium industries are the best alternatives to improve employment and income generation for the rural poor. The department of labour has been making frequent raids against the abuse of child labour. The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all

children between the ages of six to 14 years in such a manner as the state may by law determine.

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