Child Labourer : An Economic Supplementation

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ABSTRACT: The research stud was undertaken to find out socio-economic condition and nutritional status of child labourer in the slum of Rourkela city of Orissa state where from 200 samples were randomly chosen and information were collected through structured interview. Form the stud it has been observed that the socio economic conditions and their working conditions were very poor where the range of working hours varied from 6 ours to 17 hours per day ad maximum percentage of samples were used as economic supplementation by imposition of the family. It has also been found that their poor food pattern had affected the nutritional status of 59.5 percent of samples.

INTRODUCTION

Children, the future of the nation are the most victimized segments in our society. They are the critical human resources. Investment on children is directly related to the socioeconomic development of a action. But unfortunately 2/5 the of India’s massive population happens to be under the age of 14 years where the number of child labour is nearly 18 million which is the World’s largest child labour population. According to U.N. estimation of every five working children one is from India. In a developing state like Orissa about 8, 30,664 child laborers are engaged in various field of activities. (Sambad, 1997).

Certainly children in every society have been assisting their parents in different activities which can be considered as natural work, but when the works imposed on children are not conducive to their growth and well being, we become social evil Any sort of imposition on children will be hazardous and armful to them. Involvement of child in work always does not mean child labourer but when the work is not conducive to child’s growth and development it is called a child labor.

According to reports, about 250 million children throughout the world are forced to sacrifice their childhood, health and future to work as bonded labourer. So child labour as a global phenomena is a direct blow to the edifice of the society. Children are always used as additional help for domestic, agriculture, business or industrial work. Inspite of legislative measures and constitutional protection children in worksphere remain neglected. In the above context this stud is an attempt to explore the problems of the child laborers.

OBJECTIVES

• To investigate the working conditions of the child labourers.
• To determine the income of the samples
• To know about the food pattern of the child labourer
• To assess the nutritional status of child labourer
DESIGN

The present study is diagnostic in its type. The sample groups form both gender groups belonging to the categories of child labourers of different age groups starting from 6 years to 14 years were collected randomly.

The study was carried out in Rourkela city of Sundargarh district of Orissa state. Rourkela City is the second largest city of Orissa having a population of 5 lakhs. Rourkela as a significant place in the field of industry in India and also in World having 198 slum clusters wherein more than there thousand child laborers were engaged in different activities like hotel works, household works, mechanical works helpers and some are engaged in small scale industries. For the purpose of achieving the objectives 200 number of samples were taken.

Structured interview schedule was used to collect information on food consumption pattern and socio-economic status. Samples were inter viewed information pertaining to intensively in order to gather family size, income, occupation educational status of parents, housing conditions and the food habits of children were also gathered in order to find out the causative factors responsible for their nutritional status. Along with all these nutritional status of the samples were assessed on the basis of Waterlow’s classification.

An appropriate statistical procedure was adopted to analyse the data obtained on the basis of interviews. Simple statistical index like percentage was adopted for qualitative interpretation. Besides this, a graphical presentation was prepared wherever necessary.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results are discussed under the following headings

BACKGROUND PROFILE

Table -1 depicts the number of male and female samples of different age groups, starting from 6 years to 14 years of age, selected for the study.

The educational status of sample group was found to be very poor, where the number of illiterate boys were 59 number (29.5%) and of girls 31 number (15.5%); 7 number (3.5%) of girls samples were just literate; 44 number (22%) of boys and 17 number (8.5%) of girls labourers had education up to primary level whereas 24 number (12%) of boys and seven number (3.5%) of girls were educated upto secondary level. Only two number (3.5%) of boys and one number (0.5%) of girl labourers were under metric.

CATEGORIES OF WORK

While looking into the data in respect of types of employment (Table – II), it was found that, they were engaged in varied types of works. It was found that, 72 number (36%) of male and two number (1%) of female child labourers were classified as helpers (Mechanical); 58 number (29%) of male children were categorised as hotel boys; 10 number (50%) of male children were grouped as mechanical work assistants; three number (1.5%) of female children were labeled as household servants whereas eight number (4%) of female children were daily wage laborers.

INCOME OF WORKERS
Table -111 reveals the pattern of economic gain of the children where out of 200 samples. One percent of child workers were never paid for his/her work. 17 percent children were earning monthly income ranging from Rs. 20/- to Rs. 1000/- , 25 percent of children ad monthly income in the range between Rs. 101/- to Rs. 250/- 33 percent of children had their monthly income in the range between Rs. 251/- to Rs. 400/- 16 percent of children had their monthly income varied from Rs. 401/- to Rs. 700/- ad 8 percent of children had monthly income between Rs. 701/- to Rs. 950/-.

Information about occupation of both the parents reveals tat 21.5 percent of mothers were daily wages laboures and 16.5 percent of mothers were working as household servants and rest of the mothers did not have any occupation, only they were concerned, 18 percent of them were daily wage workers, 2 percent were doing petty-business, 10.5 percent were rickshaw pullers, 10 percent were working as household servants, 2 percent were SAIL employees, 2.5 percent working as farmer, 3.5 percent did not have any occupation.

It has been found tat 56 percent of child labourers had 5 to 6 number of family members whereas 30 percent of child labourers had 7 to 8 number of family members whereas 30 percent of child labourers had to 8 number of fail members.

EMPLOYMENT WORKING CONDITION

Results in Table-IV shows the reasons for taking up jobs. From the collected data, it has been found that because of keen self interest in supplementing family income 21 percent of male and 6.5 percent female child labourers had taken up various jobs, 34 percent of male and 15.5 percent of female children required to take up jobs because of imposition as their parental income being insufficient to meet family expenditures and 11.5 percent of male and 4 percent female child labourers had taken up jobs because of their interest of availing entertainment facilities form the employers and lastly, because of their interest of availing entertainment facilities form the employers and lastly, because of certain benefits (Study facilities) being provided by their employers 5 percent of male and 2.5 percent of females samples felt to remain engaged in various activities as they were not engaged otherwise.

It has been observed that, 49 percent of children were going to their work place by walk though their work place was far away from their houses. Due to lack of money the were unable to take up any conveyance facilities whereas rest of the child laboures were using bus facilities and their own cycles to reach their working place.

About 20 percent of children were occupied since last 2 years to 4 years and 40 percent were engaged since 4 years to 7 years in their jobs, 27 percent of children were occupied since last 7 ears whereas 13 percent of children were occupied since last 6 months.

It has been found that 60 percent of children spending 12 to 17 hours in their works whereas 38 percent children were working for 6 to 10 hours a day and only 2 percent children were working for 4 hours daily

70 percent of child labourer were very much interested for continuing stud but due to lack of time as well as money the were unable to continue their study. Those who had time did not have facilities for their study.
NUTRITIONAL STATUS

Nutritional status of sample group was assessed and ten factors responsible in their under nourishment areas also ascertained. The nutritional status was assessed on the basis of NCS standard height. Waterlow’s classification (1972) was adopted for the purpose where height for age index as used to assess the nutritional status of child labourers. Which was later modified as weight for height based on percentage medium as described below.

Weight/Height (as % of Reference Median)
>90%  Normal
80-90% Mild (I degree)
70-80% Moderate (II degree)
< 70% Severe (III degree)

Associated with poor overall economic condition. While interpreting the date it as been found in the male group 61 number (30.5%) and in the female group 20 number (10%) of samples were noted to be of normal nutritional status; 45 number (2.5%) of male and 20 number (10%) of female labourers were categorized as mildly undernourished; and 37 number (18.5%) male child labourers and 17 number (8.5%) female child labourers were moderately undernourished. Which is evident form the graphical representation in figure-1.

It has also been found that, almost all the samples were having poor food pattern which might be an important causative factor for their under-nourished growth. It was observed that 78 percent of child labourer ad two major meals in a day and the average calories consumption in a day was only 1434 whereas 22 percent of child labourers were taking two major meals and one breakfast/snacks in a day where the calorie consumption was 1618 per day. Thus, the report showed that the child laborers were consuming less calories than the recommended calories (ICMR) required for them.

CONCLUSION:

It has been found form the result interpretation that, the child workers were engaged in various types of activities. There was neither any fixed wage nor fixed working ours for the workers. The causative factors for taking up jobs might be due to their larger families as found with majority of the samples. Due to their unfavorable environment conditions 70 percent of samples inspite of their interest towards study, were not able to go t schools, Poor socio-economic, working conditions and poor food consumption pattern of the sample groups affected the nutritional status of noticeable number of samples, where the under nourished growth has been observed.

In this premise it can be said tat were the interest of children are violated knowingly, the authorities have turned out to be mere spectators. Tough it has been claimed by the authorities that, child labour will be obliterated in the next five ears, no such remarkable attempt has yet been taken. No constitutional provision can be successful in abolishing child labour unless there in attitudinal changes in the society.

REFERENCE:

1. Sambad (1997), “Sishu Shramik”, 14t March, Daily news paper, Orissa.
Table – 1
Distribution of Samples According to their Sex.

| Age | Male | Female | Total |
|-----|------|--------|-------|
| 6   | 2    | -      | 2     |
| 7   | 2    | -      | 2     |
| 8   | 2    | 2      | 4     |
| 9   | 4    | 4      | 8     |
| 10  | 7    | 10     | 17    |
| 11  | 22   | 10     | 32    |
| 12  | 24   | 8      | 32    |
| 13  | 50   | 15     | 5     |
| 14  | 30   | 8      | 38    |
| Total | 143 | 57 | 200 |

Table – II
Distribution of Samples in Respect of Occupation.

| Types of Occupation | Male | Female |
|---------------------|------|--------|
| Helpers             | 36%  | 01%    |
| Hotel boy           | 29%  | -      |
| Mechanical Work     | 05%  | -      |
| Servant             | 1.5% | 23%    |
| Daily Wage Labourers| -    | 04%    |

Table – III
Distribution of Samples in Respect of their Earnings.

| Income Range | Number in (Percentage) |
|--------------|------------------------|
| 20-100       | 01%                    |
| 101-250      | 17%                    |
| 251-400      | 25%                    |
| 401-700      | 16%                    |
| 701-950      | 16%                    |

Table – IV
Distribution of Samples According to Reasons for Taking up Employment.

| Reasons                        | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Self interest to supplement    | 21%  | 6.5%   | 27.5% |
| Family Income                       | Male | Female | Total |
|------------------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Imposition                         | 34%  | 15.1%  | 49.5% |
| To avail entertainment facility    | 11.5%| 0.4%   | 15.5% |
| To avail benefits                  | 05%  | 2.5%   | 7.5%  |

Figure 1: Distribution of Samples in respect of their Nutritional Status.