

STUDY OF WORKING PROFILE OF CHILD LABOURERS IN URBAN SLUM AREAS OF RAJKOT CITY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Detail statistics on various aspects of working profile of child labourers is of key significance for research, policy, planning and implementation of program for elimination of child labour.

Aims & Objective: To study working profile of child labourers.

Material and Methods: This was Cross sectional done which included 30 slum areas of Rajkot city. 372 child labourers were taken by cluster methodology from May 2005 to July 2005. Data were collected using a pretested semi structured questionnaire from each child labourer during house-to-house visit. Statistical analysis was done by Z test and Chi – square test.

Results: 58.6% were working for more than 6 hours in a day. 16.1% did not get rest during work and 11.6% not received weekly holiday. 8.3% child labourers were not paid. Mean monthly income of child labourers is 689.15 ± 299.73 . 25.3% stated that they were exposed to sun or rain during work. 78.2% stated that there was no toilet facility and 94.3% stated that no medical care facility at work place.

Conclusion: Majority of female child labourers engaged in Household work and male child labourers engaged in manufacturing sector. Working hours and monthly income of child labourers increases with the age. There were poor facilities at work place.

KEY-WORDS: Child Labourer; Wage Status; Working Condition; Incentives

Introduction

Child labour is both a worldwide and nationwide problem. Child labour is linked to many other problems like illiteracy, malnutrition, poverty etc. It is estimated that there were some 306 million children ages 5 to 17 in employment in the world in 2008 and this accounts for almost one-fifth of all children in this age group (19.3%).^[1] Out of the total population, aged 5-14 years, 126.67 lakhs (5.00%) are Workers in India and 4.85 laths (4.28%) are workers in Gujarat.^[2] The share of workers aged 5-14 years in the total work force works out to be 3.15% and 2.28% in India and Gujarat respectively.^[2] There is consistently felt the need of detailed data of working characteristics of Child labourers. Detail statistics on various aspects of working profile of child labourers is of key significance for research, policy, planning and implementation of program for the health and well-being of child labourers.

Materials and Methods

The study group was selected based on the definition given by Operation Research Group, Baroda i.e. children of 5 –14 years, must be on remunerative work (paid or unpaid).^[3] All the children in the age group of 5 to 14 years were selected for this study.

The cross sectional study was carried out in the urban slum areas of Rajkot City from May 2005 to July 2005. Child labourer population was calculated based on census 2001 data and prevalence of child labourer in India. It was decided to take 10% sample from child labourer population in the present study. Cluster Sampling Methodology was used for the selection of the sample. So, total 372 child labourers were studied out of 30 slum areas.

Data were collected using a pretested semi structured questionnaire from each child labourer

during house-to-house visit. Informed consent was taken prior to study. The child labourer was personally interviewed. For certain questions where the child labourer failed to give any reliable answer (especially on account of ignorance due to young age); the mother of child labour (if present) or any other elderly or responsible family member was interviewed. The questionnaire contains information regarding general characteristics, working profile and environmental conditions at the work place of the child labourer.

Modified Prasad's classification was used for socioeconomic class. Classification of various sectors of occupation of child labourers is done as "industrial worker" (e.g. work in factories, in silver industries, in clock industries, in house hold industries etc.), "labourers" (e.g. worked in market yard as labourers, as masonry or in brick making or other labour work), "household worker" (e.g. as a cook, preparing bangles at home, filling work at home or sewing etc.), "self-employed activities" (e.g. as a hawker, had own vegetable hand cart or shop, hair cutter etc.), "service" (as a peon, in office or washing clothes or vessels etc. and some were employed in shops, in hotels or in hand carts).

The information about working condition was obtained by asking the relevant questions to the child labourers. Ventilation was considered "adequate" if at least 2 windows were present and also if they are open in the working place. Ventilation was considered "partially adequate" if 1 open window was present in the working place and "inadequate" if no open window present in the working place. "Adequate lighting" was considered if the child felt that there was enough light to work in the working place. Questions regarding availability of drinking water facility, toilet facility and medical facility exclusive to the work place were also inquired from the child labourers. "Toilet facility" implies a confined, segregated enclosure offering privacy for micturition and bowel movement, being present in the working place of the child labourers.

Results

Some findings related to general characteristics of child labourers showed in Table-1

Table-1: General Characteristics of Child Labourers

Determinants		Child Labourers (n=372) N (%)
Age group (years)	≤ 10	22 (5.90)
	10 – 12	83 (22.30)
	12 – 14	267 (71.80)
Sex	Male	322 (86.55)
	Female	50 (13.45)
Religion	Hindu	307 (82.50)
	Muslim	65 (17.50)
Type of Family	Nuclear	305 (82.00)
	Joint	19 (5.10)
	Three generation	48 (12.90)
No of Family Members	< 4	11 (3.00)
	4 – 6	278 (74.70)
	7 – 8	69 (18.50)
	> 8	14 (3.80)
Socioeconomic Status	Didn't know family income	70 (18.80)
	Social class 2	12 (3.20)
	Social class 3	140 (37.20)
	Social class 4	147 (39.50)
	Social class 5	3 (0.80)
Parental Literacy	Father illiterate	135 (38.50)
	Mother illiterate	244 (66.80)
Parental Abandonment	Both parents alive	341 (91.70)
	Father dead	25 (6.70)
	Mother dead	6 (1.60)

Half of the child labourers initiated work by the age of 12 years or above. 38.2% initiate work between 10 and 12 years of age and 11% initiated work below the age of 10 years. More male child labourers (54.3%) as compared to female child labourers (28%) started work at the age of 12 years or more ($Z = 3.8, P < 0.05$) and more female child labourers (54%) as compared to male child labourers (35.7%) started work in the age group of 10 to 12 years ($Z = 2.43, P < 0.05$).

The majority of child labourers (56.2%) stated "inadequate family income or poverty" as the chief cause followed by 11.3% felt "compulsion by parents" as the main reason. It is noteworthy that none of the female child labourers opined likewise! Whereas 14.2% stated their "personal desire" as a reason, 5.9% stated that "death of father", 4.8% stated "participation in family work" as a reason work and only 1.9% stated that they worked due to their "father's addiction". While 5.6% child labourers told "other reasons" like not being interested in study, learning, avoidance of playing, father's retirement, due to heart attack of father or due to vacation etc.

Table-2: Distribution of the Child Labourers according to the Age of Initiation of Work, Rest, Weekly Holiday, Wage and Working Hours in Relation to Occupation of Child Labourers

		Occupation of the Child Labourers						Total (n =372)
		Industrial Worker (n = 186)	Shop/ Hotel etc. (n =101)	House Work (n = 23)	Service (n = 19)	Labourer (n = 28)	Self-employ (n = 15)	
Age of Initiation of Work (years)	< 10	21 (11.3)	13(12.9)	2 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.6)	3 (20)	40 (10.8)
	10 – 12	54 (29)	49 (48.5)	11(47.8)	10(52.6)	11 (39.3)	7 (46.7)	142(38.2)
	≥ 12	111(59.7)	39 (38.6)	10 (43.5)	9 (47.4)	10 (43.5)	5 (33.3)	190(51.1)
Rest	Yes	156(83.9)	88(87.1)	21 (91.3)	16(84.2)	20 (71.4)	10(66.7)	311(83.6)
	No	30 (16.1)	13 (12.9)	2(8.7)	3 (15.8)	8 (28.6)	5 (33.3)	61 (16.4)
Weekly Holiday	Yes	176(94.6)	88 (87.1)	23 (100)	12(63.2)	23 (82.1)	7 (46.7)	329(88.4)
	No	10 (5.4)	13 (12.9)	0 (0.0)	7 (36.8)	5 (17.9)	8 (53.3)	43 (11.6)
Wage	Paid	176 (94.6)	92 (91.1)	23 (100)	16 (84.2)	23 (82.3)	11 (73.3)	341(91.7)
	Unpaid	10 (5.4)	9 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	3 (15.8)	5 (17.9)	4 (26.7)	31 (8.3)
Working Hours (Hours/Day)	< 4	13 (7)	1 (1)	3 (13)	1 (5.3)	0 (0.0)	5 (33.3)	23 (6.2)
	4– 6	55 (29.6)	8 (7.9)	16 (69.6)	9 (47.4)	6 (21.4)	2 (13.6)	96 (25.8)
	6 – 8	23 (12.4)	10 (9.9)	2 (8.7)	4 (21.1)	5 (17.9)	4 (26.7)	48 (12.9)
	8 – 10	80 (43)	55(54.5)	2 (8.7)	5 (26.3)	12 (42.9)	3 (20)	157 (42)
	≥ 10	15 (8.1)	27(26.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5(17.9)	1(6.7)	48 (12.9)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Table-3: Distribution of the Child Labourers according to Wage Amount in Occupation (n = 341)

Wage Amount (₹ / Month)	Sex		Total (%)	Z test	P value
	Male (%)	Female (%)			
Not decided	5 (1.69%)	0	5 (1.46%)		
1 (≤ 200)	5 (1.69%)	2 (4.34%)	7 (2.05%)	Z = 0.86	P > 0.05
2 (201 to 400)	35 (11.86%)	20 (43.4%)	55 (16.12%)	Z = 4.18	P < 0.01
3 (401 to 600)	97 (32.88%)	17 (36.95%)	114 (33.43%)	Z = 0.53	P > 0.05
4 (601 to 800)	67 (22.71%)	3 (6.52%)	70 (20.53%)	Z = 3.69	P < 0.01
5 (801 to 1000)	59 (20%)	3 (6.52%)	62 (18.18%)	Z = 3.12	P < 0.01
6 (> 1000)	27 (9.15%)	1 (2.17%)	28 (8.2%)	Z = 2.56	P < 0.05
Total (%)	295 (100%)	46 (100%)	341 (100%)		
Mean ± SD	717.83 ± 298.99	506.12 ± 235.14	689.15 ± 299.73	Z = 1.64	P > 0.05
Median	700	450	600		

It was observed that the majority of child labourers 50% (186) were engaged in “manufacturing sector” (e.g. work in factories, in silver industries, in clock industries, in house hold industries etc.). 27.2% (101) of the child labourers were “employed in shops, hotels or in handcarts” and they were all male child labourers. 4.6% (17) were “labourers” (e.g. worked in market yard as labourers or other labour work. 6.2% (23) were engaged in “household work” (e.g. filling work at home, as a cook, preparing bangles at home or sewing etc), 4% (15) were “self-employed” in activities (e.g. as a hawker, had own vegetable hand cart or ‘pan’ shop, hair cutter etc), 5.1% (19) were doing “service” (as a peon, in office or washing clothes or vessels etc) and only 3% (11) were engaged in “construction work” (e.g. as masonry or in brick making etc). Male child labourers employed in “manufacturing sector” (52.8%) were more in proportion than female child labourers (32%) and this difference were

statistically significant (Z = 2.905, P < 0.01). The proportion of female child labourers engaged in “household work” (42%) was more than male child labourers (0.6%) and this difference was statistically significant. (Z = 5.92, P < 0.01)

It was observed that (Table – 2) more proportion of children who initiated work at 12 years or above were “industrial worker” and children who initiated work at less than 10 years of age were “self-employed” out of the total child labourers in the respective occupation. More proportion of children initiated work between 10 to 12 years of age were doing “service”, “house work” and employed in “shop, hotel, handcart etc.” out of the total child labourers in the respective occupation.

It was observed that (Table – 2) more proportion of children who did not get rest during working hours and weekly holiday were “self-employed” as compared to children in the other occupation. The

observed difference among different occupation of weekly holiday ($\chi^2 = 48.7$, $df = 5$, $P < 0.001$) and wage given ($\chi^2 = 15.57$, $df = 5$, $P < 0.05$) was statistically significant.

Data from the study showed that as the age increased, the hours of working of child labourers were also increased. Comparatively more female child labourers worked for less working hours (e.g. 80% worked for less than or equal to 6 hours). Significantly more female child labourers (22%) did not receive any weekly holiday as compared to male child labourers (9.9%). ($\chi^2 = 6.160$, $df = 1$, $P < 0.05$)

8.3% of child labourers were not paid in the present study. Those child labourers who got remuneration (341), the pattern of wage amount showed in Table-3. It was also found that monthly earnings of the child labourers with the age of the child labourers. More female child labourers received less wage amount (≤ 400 Rs / month) than male child labourers. Only 10.8% child labourers were getting incentives like food, clothes, overtime or bonus etc. The present study showed that 96.8% child labourers were satisfied with their occupation. Out of the total non-satisfied child labourers (3.2%), half of them (1.6%) stated "low wages" as a reason of non-satisfaction followed by "feeling tired during work" (0.8%) and "ill treatment by employers" (0.8%).

It was observed that most of child labourers (90.8%) spend their wages to support family followed by saving of the wages (5.6%). Very few (1.8%) child labourers spend their wages in recreation or tobacco/alcohol consumption.

Out of the total child labourers, majority of the child labourers (82.5%) said that they had adequate ventilation and 91.4% said they had adequate light at their work place. 25% stated that they were exposed to sun or rain during work at work place. Very few (4%) child labourers stated that they did not have drinking water facility at work place. 78.2% stated that there was no toilet facility and 94.3% stated that there was no medical care facility at work place.

It was also observed that majority of children who worked as "industrial worker" stated that they

had inadequate ventilation and lighting at their work place as compared to children in the other occupation. 91.3% of them stated that they had no medical facility. More proportion of the children who were "labourer" and those employed in "shop, hotel, handcart etc." were exposed to sun or rain during work.

Discussion

The present study shows that 94.1% of child labourers were above 10 years. Similar result was observed by Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata and Ch. Koteswaramma, G. Nagaiah, M. Ramprasad^[5] (2004) in Hyderabad who observed 92.7% and 92.5% child labourers were from the age group of 10 – 14 years respectively.

Half of the child labourers initiate work at 12 years or above in the present study. Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata found that 45.3% of the working children started work between 11 – 13 years and 54.7% below 10 years. Mehta MN, Prabhu SV, Mistry HN^[6] (1985) in Bombay observed that 22% of the child labourers had started working before their tenth birthday. Mean age of starting work in the present study was observed to be 11.30 ± 1.4 years. This finding is consistent with the finding by Nitin N Ambedkar, Shirin N Wahab and Nayantara D Vasudeo^[7] (1998) in slum areas of Nagpur city who found that the mean age for starting job was 11.1 years. While Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata found lower mean age of starting work (9.8 years).

Variation in occupation of child labourers is observed by different authors depending upon site of study. The study by Sarmila Malik et al (2002)^[4] in Kolkata revealed that 42.7% of the child labourers worked in garage, 24% were domestic helpers, 14.7% were rag pickers, 6% worked in hotels and tea-stalls, 6.6% were doing miscellaneous activities like as hawkers, washing cars and van pulling. Nitin N Ambedkar, Shirin N Wahab, Nayantara D Vasudeo^[7] (1998) in Nagpur found that 32.7% work in workshops/garages, 28.3% in domestic work, 6.7% in hotels and tea-stalls, 8.1% labourers, 1.8% as hawkers, 1.3% tailoring, 16.7% in other works. T Nivethida, G Roy^[8] (2005) in Pondichery found that children

are employed in homes (35%), shops (48%), and workshops or in companies.

Inadequate family income is the chief cause stated by majority of child labourers in present study. Similar observation found by Nitin N Ambedkar et al^[7] (1998) who found that majority (74.4%) of child labourers stated inadequate family income as a cause of child labour followed by compulsion by parents (20.6%), death of father (4%), father's addiction (0.9%), child's desire (12.6%), participation in family work (11.2%), separated parents (0.9%), others (14.4%).^[7] T Nivethida, G Roy^[8] (2005) in Pondichery found 85.2% of the child labourers said that they worked due to poverty in the family. Tabassum F, Baig LA^[9] (2002) in Bhutta village, Pakistan observed that besides majority (89%) gave the reason to support the family as a reason of child labour other reasons given by child labourers were parent's pressure (5%), fond of work (4%), learning the skill (1%) and self-support (1%).

In the present study, 58.6% were working for more than 6 hours in a day which was found as 66% and 97% respectively by Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata and Pati and Swain's^[10] (1991) in Bhubaneswar city. Mehta MN, Prabhu SV, Mistry HN^[6] (1985) in Dharavi, Bombay found that 40% work more than 12 hours a day. Tabassum F, Baig LA^[9] (2002) in Bhutta village, Pakistan observed that majority of the child labourers (56%) worked for more than seven hours in a day. T Nivethida, G Roy^[8] (2005) in Pondichery found that nearly half of the children work for less than 5 hours a day. This finding may be due to author studied 196 students of 4 schools who were working outside the school hours (part-time basis) in Pondichery city. Survey by PSM Deptt of RMC, Loni^[11] (2002) found that 83.08% percentage of child labourers worked for less than 6 hours in a day. This may be due to authors including those child labourers who were looking after their young brothers and sisters.

It was observed that 16.1% did not get rest during work in the present study. This finding is consistent with the finding of Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata who observed that 16.7% of the working children did not get any rest. While Tabassum F, Baig LA^[9] (2002) in Bhutta village,

Pakistan observed that 57% of child labourers stated that they got no time to rest. It was observed that 11.6% did not receive any weekly holiday in the present study, whereas, Das et al^[12] (1992) in Visakhapatnam observed no holiday for 79% of workers. The study by Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata revealed that 54.7% of working children were enjoying a weekly holiday.

8.3% of child labourers were not paid in the present study. A study by Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata revealed that 17.3% of the child workers were not paid any wages, which is found to be slightly higher than the present study. T Nivethida, G Roy^[8] (2005) in Pondichery found that 17.8% children were not paid in cash because they were given incentives like food, old clothes etc.

In the present study mean wage amount per month of child labourers was ₹ 689.15 ± 299.73. Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata observed that average remuneration of child labourers was found to be ₹ 164.30 per month which was quite lower than the present study. Nitin N Ambedkar, Shirin N Wahab, Nayantara D Vasudeo^[7] (1998) found that mean daily wages of child labourers were ₹ 8.6. T Nivethida, G Roy^[8] (2005) in Pondichery found that the average income of working children was ₹ 62 per week and 60% of the child labourers earned below this average amount.

The present study revealed that 90.8% spend their wages to support family. Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) revealed that majority of working children (77.4%) spent almost whole of their income to support their family. A survey by PSM Deptt of RMC, Loni^[11] (2002) found that 24.62% of the working children contribute to the family income. This may be due to authors including those child labourers also in the study who were engaged in looking after their young brothers and sisters and involved in other non-economic activity in the household.

Only 3.2% were not satisfied with their occupation in the present study. Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata observed that 76% of working children were quite satisfied. Contrary to this finding, Nitin N Ambedkar, Shirin N Wahab,

Nayantara D Vasudeo^[7] (1998) in the slums of the Nagpur found that only 16.6% child labourers were satisfied with their job. Same was observed by Bansal RK^[13] (1991) in Surat. Tabassum F, Baig LA^[9] (2002) in Bhutta village, Pakistan observed higher percentage (79%) of unsatisfied child labourers.

Considering the working environment, Sarmila Malik et al^[4] (2002) in Kolkata revealed that 18% of working children worked totally exposed to sun and rain, 11.3% had to work partly under open air, 20% in ill-ventilated working places and 17.3% in inadequate light. 69.3% of the child labourers stated no drinking water facility and 65.3% stated no latrine facility at their working place and 62.2% had both facilities absent. This observation was also similar to present study that there were poor facilities at working place of child labourers.

Conclusion

50% of the child labourers initiate work by the age of 12 years or above. Majority of child labourers (56.2%) stated "inadequate family income or poverty" as the chief cause for their work. Majority of female child labourers engaged in Household work and male child labourers engaged in manufacturing sector. 58.6% child labourers were working for more than 6 hours in a day. Comparatively more female child labourers worked for less working hours and received less monthly earning. Some child labourers did not receive rest, weekly holiday and wage. Working hours and monthly income of child labourers increases with the age of child labourers. There were less toilet and medical facilities available for child labourers at work place. One fourth of child labourers exposed to sun or rain during work at their work place.

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