

A Study of the Determinants of Child Labour in State of Uttarakhand, India – A Case Study

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Abstract – Child labour is done by any working child who is under the age specified by the law of the nation. Child labour is a hazard to the way of children's mental, physical, social, educational, emotional and spiritual development. Thus, it is obvious that any child who is employed in any occupation in any trade, business or industry or involved in any activity with purpose to feed self or family is known as child labour. Countries like India are allowed to fix the minimum age at 14 years in accordance with their socio-economic circumstances. According to the Statistical Organization of International Labour Organization (ILO), child labour is work performed by children under 18 of age which is exploitative, hazardous and inappropriate for their age and which is detrimental to their schooling or social, mental, spiritual and moral development.

It is not only confined to work on family farm or in traditional family robs and occupation but it has spread to other fields and you may find child labour working in mess and canteens of so many universities and higher education institutions in India in general and in Uttarakhand in particular. The child labour is also prevailing in agriculture and allied activities, unorganized small sector and even in organized industries.

The problem of child labour is a complex problem and it is a consequence of the system under which the Indian economy is functioning. At present the problem of child labour has become the most challenging and alarming not only in state of Uttarakhand but in allover India and directly related to human resource development of the country. The practice of child labour is legally, morally, ethically and even psychologically very wrong, however efforts have been made by the Governments, NGOs and other social organizations for the eradication of this burning and serious problem but still it is continues in the present 21st century not only in India but even in industrialized and advanced countries and the problem has not been fully eradicated and resolved.

The researcher strongly feel that imposing a complete ban on child labour, without providing any alternative to them and their family would not be effective, but likely to be counterproductive. In fact, it is a socio-economic-demographic problem and can't be tackled by merely passing the legislations.

Key Words: Child labour, Occupation, Robs

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1. INTRODUCTION

As we know, child labour is done by any working child who is under the age specified by the law of the nation. Child labour is a hazard to the way of children's mental, physical, social, educational, emotional and spiritual development. Thus, it is obvious that any child who is employed in any occupation in any trade, business or industry or involved in any activity with purpose to feed self or family is known as child labour.

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children under 18 of age which is exploitative, hazardous and inappropriate for their age and which is detrimental to their schooling or social, mental, spiritual and moral development.

The above definition excludes from the child labour category many instances of work done in and around the household. In fact, child labour does not include activities such as helping out, after the school hour and completion of home work, with light household or garden chores, child care or other light work. Now, it is clear that the concept of child labour stands for the participation of children below 14 years of age in the labour force for paid or unpaid work. Now a days this is a wide spread phenomena. It is not only confined to work on family

farm or in traditional family jobs and occupation but it has spread to other fields and you may find child labour working in mess and canteens of so many universities and higher education institutions in India in general and in Uttarakhand in particular. The child labour is also prevailing in agriculture and allied activities, unorganized small sector and even in organized industries.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This empirical work is an attempt in defining nature and problems of child labour in state of Uttarakhand which is situated in India and also known as western UP, a beautiful, small hill state. Through this research work an attempt has been made to identify the various causes of child labour and its impact on the socio-economic development of Uttarakhand and the country as a whole. The researcher aims at to measure the role of NGO's and the Governments in eradication of the problems of child labour in the state.

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The study is heavily relied on primary data made available through a questionnaire of envisaging different aspect of child labour with purpose to examine its impact on socio-economic conditions of child labour by using random sampling method. In fact, the study is based on the answers given by the child workers. 100 samples from male child labour and 100 samples from female child labour have been taken for the study with utmost care and respondents from all castes, categories and religion have been included. As secondary source of information books, journals, magazines have also been consulted.

- a. The basic determinants of child labour in Uttarakhand are accurate poverty, illiteracy and large size of family with specific geographic existence i.e. hilly region and isolated villages with poor infrastructure etc.
- b. The role of Governments both state and central Government and NGO's has been ineffective in eradicating child labour in state of Uttarakhand.
- c. Child labour is found in hazardous and non-hazardous work in state of Uttarakhand.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A number of researches have been conducted to examine the prevailing position of child labour in state of Uttarakhand and in the different parts of the world. Here, efforts have been made by conducting survey and going through available literature with purpose to identify the basic causes of child labour. Gilbert and Gugler (1992) found that children are the cheapest workers of all and this makes them attractive to employers who otherwise might hire adults from the

large pool of available labour. In fact, child laborers are available at low wages in comparison to their adult counterpart.

Edwards (1996) has rightly observed that losses incurred can never be made good and a failure to support children as children have permanent effects on society's to develop. It means if children are deprived by the rights of children in future they can't contribute to the development of the nation efficiently and effectively.

R. K. Chatterjee (2005) found in his study that children in rural India compare to their urban counterpart are generally exploited and less tortured in their work place or in course of their work. It is an important area for further research because the researcher is also belong to rural India and observed that the rural employer are more sympathetic and empathetic due to closeness with the families of child labour and having 'we feeling' because the child labour belongs to the village of the employer. Subhash Garg (2008) found in his study (conducted in Bihar) that the percentage of street children is quite high in Bihar in comparison to other states including state of Uttarakhand. But, presently the scene has been changed in Bihar due to efforts made by the present Government and almost all children are attending school but again it is not any guarantee to eradication of child labour in Bihar. The children of poor families are attending school as well as working as labour with purpose to boost the economic condition of their family. Some same sort of condition is prevailing in Uttarakhand also. It is observed by the researcher as Bihar is his birth place and Uttarakhand is work place.

5. CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR: AN ANALYSIS

The child labour is a universal problem but it is more prevalent in India particularly in state of Uttarakhand. Some common cause of child labour are poverty, parental illiteracy, social apathy, ignorance, lack of education and exposure, exploitation of cheap and unorganized labour. As per the social trend the family practice to inculcate traditional skills in children also pull little ones in the trap of child labour, as they never get the opportunity to learn other skills. Absence of compulsory education at the primary level (now theoretically compulsory but practically not), parental ignorance regarding the bad effects of child labour, ineffectiveness of child labour laws in terms of implementation, non availability and non accessibility of schools, boring and unpractical school curriculum and cheap child labour in comparison to adult labour are also responsible factors for emergence and existence of child labour.

The child labour is prone to exploitation because it is very difficult for immature minds and undeveloped bodies to understand and organize themselves against exploitation of employers in absence of proper adult guidance.

Poverty and over population have been identified as major causes of child labour. Parents are forced to send their little children into hazardous jobs for survivals, even when they know it is wrong and an obstacle in the way of natural development of their children. Actually, monetary constraints and the need for food, shelter and clothing drives their children in traps of child labour. Population explosion in some regions creates paucity of resources. When there are limited resources and more mouth to feed children are forced to commercial activities and deprived from their development needs. This scene is prevailing in most Asian and African countries.

It is not possible for the illiterate and ignorant parents to understand the need for wholesome proper physical, cognitive and emotional development of their children. They are uneducated and unexposed, so they do not realize the importance of education for their children. Another cause of child labour is adult unemployment and urbanization. Adult often find it difficult to get a job because employers or business owners find it more beneficial to employ children at cheap rates rather than employing adults at high rates. This type of exploitation is highly visible in garment industries situated in urban areas. Adult exploitation of children is also seen in many places because adults relaxed at home and live at the labour and earning of the poor helpless children.

The industrial revolution has also had a negative effect in this regard by giving rise to circumstances which encourage child labour. Sometimes multinationals also prefer to employ child workers in the developing countries due to less pay and more work can be extracted from the children without any union problem. This prevailing attitude also makes it difficult for adults to find jobs in factories, forcing them to drive their little child to work to keep the fire burning at their homes.

The problem or incidence of child labour would diminish considerably even in the face of extreme poverty, if there are no parties to exploit them. Strict implementation of child labour laws, practical and healthy alternatives to counter and eliminate this evil can go a long way to solve the problem of child labour.

As we know, children who are born out of wedlock, orphaned or abandoned are especially vulnerable to exploitation. This category of children are forced to work for their basic survival when there are no adults and relatives to support them and thus livelihood consideration drive a child into dirtiest forms of child labour such as prostitution, beggary, smuggling etc. in organized form.

This research work is an attempt to find out the causes of child labour in state of Uttarakhand, a survey has been conducted in the leading districts of Uttarakhand. The findings of the survey have been mentioned in the form of tables and being analyzed here under:

Table: 1

Causative Factors of Child Labour

Sl. No.	Causes of Child Labour	Boys -100		Girls -100		Total-200	
		No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
1	Poverty	72	72	75	75	147	73.5
2	Lack of Proper Education	24	24	26	26	50	25.0
3	Death of Parents	30	30	46	46	76	38.0
4	Large Size of Family	64	64	60	60	124	62.0
5	Bad Habits of Parent	16	16	14	14	30	15.0
6	Own Desire	07	07	01	01	08	04.0

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from Table 1 that an equal no. of boys and girls (72 out of 100) which constitutes 73.5% out of 200 are compelled to work as child labour because they are poor and facing extreme poverty. 24% boys (out of 100) and 26% girls (out of 100) a total 25% (out of 200) are bound to work as child labour due to lack of education. 30% boys (out of 100) and 46% girls (out of 100) a total 38% children and adolescent are working as child labour because of the death of one or both parents for their basic survival: whereas 64 boys (out of 100) and 60 girls (out of 100) a total of 62% (out of 200) are working because of the big size of their family with purpose to support the basic expenses of their family. 16% boys (out of 100) and 14% girls (out of 100) constituting a total of 15% (out of 200) are facing this sever problem because of their bad habituated parent or father who spends money on alcohol, gambling and prostitution etc. and children are working with purpose to meet the losses incurred by their parent to the family; whereas only 7 boys and 1 girl a total 4% (out of 200) children are said that they want to work and working due to their own desire though their parents wants them to go to school.

Table 2

Age wise Distribution of the Child Labour/Respondents

Sl. No.	Age Group	Child Labour		Total	
		No.	%age	No.	%age
1	Between 4-8 Years	08	04.0	08	04.0
2	Between 8-10 Years	18	09.0	18	09.0
3	Between 10-12 Years	114	57.0	114	57.0
4	Between 12-14 years	30	15.0	30	15.0
5	Between 14-16 Years	30	15.0	30	15.0
6	Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Primary Data

It is crystal clear from table 2 that maximum no. of child labour found between 10 to 16 years of age group and constitute a total of 87% (out of 200) which is really detrimental for growth and

development of Indian society in general and society of Uttarakhand in particular.

The researcher has taken an effort to know the real conditions of child labour in the state by asking certain questions relating to their caste, religion, and parent's occupations. The sample size consist maximum no. of Hindus and smaller no. of Muslims keeping in view their participation in existing population of the nation or state. During the preparation of master chart and table it is found that 88% respondents or child labour belongs to Hindu religion, 10% respondents are Muslims and only 2% respondents are Christians.

It was also observed by the researcher during the survey that maximum no. of respondents, 60% out of 200, belongs to scheduled caste and backward caste whereas 12% child labour belong to Brahmin, 13 % to Kshtriya and only 10% to Vaishya community. Further, 62 % children have both parents alive, 7 % have lost both parents, 19 % have only father alive whereas 12 % have only mother alive. Thus, we can say that most of the respondents have their parents alive. However, 31 % respondents are suffering from the absence of either father or mother.

The research further shows that most of the respondents (40 %) belong to a family of 7-8 members and 26 % respondents belong to a family of 9-10 members, 23 % belong to a family of 4-6 members, 6 % belong to a family having the size of less than 4 members and 5 % belong to a family having the size of more than 10 members.

Table 3

Parent's Occupation wise Distribution of Respondents (100+100=200)

SL No.	Occupation of Parents	Father		Mother		Total	
		No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
1	Agricultural Worker	10	10	04	04	14	07.00
2	Factory Worker	26	26	06	06	32	16.00
3	Construction Worker	32	32	20	20	52	26.00
4	Household Worker	04	04	35	35	39	19.50
5	Peon	10	10	05	05	15	07.50
6	Non-working	12	12	22	22	34	17.00
7	Others	06	06	08	08	14	07.00
8	Total	100	100	100	100	200	100

Source: Primary Data

It is clear from table 3 that maximum no. of parents (26 % out of 200) of the respondents are working as construction worker and 2nd largest no. is occupied by work as house servant with a percentage of 19.50 where as a total 16% out of 200 are working as factory worker. Further, a total 14% out of 200 are working either as agriculture or as other types of workers with equal participation whereas 7.50 are working as peon but 17% are either non working or having no existence in the universe. These workers are either illiterate or having maximum primary education and they are not capable to understand the importance education for their children. They are significantly contributing to continuance of child labour. In their perception more children means more source of income in form of two

hands of earning without any investment and thus they are also contributing in population explosion in the country. Thus, a very low quality human resource is being created by this type of parents which is likely to contribute in all developmental processes of the nation as a whole. If, the society or the Government will not break this vicious cycle of child labour there will not be any concrete solution and the problem will continue and hamper the prospect of the nation in occupying the position of a developed nation.

Table 4

Occupation wise Distribution of Respondents

SL No.	Occupation of Respondents	Boys		Girls		Total	
		No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
1	Agricultural Worker	10	10.00	10	10.00	20	10.00
2	Factory Worker	00	00.00	00	00.00	00	00.00
3	Construction Worker	00	00.00	00	00.00	00	00.00
4	Household Worker	40	40.00	70	70.00	110	55.00
5	Hotel Worker	30	30.00	00	00.00	30	15.00
6	Shop Worker	15	15.00	00	00.00	15	07.50
7	Others	05	05.00	20	20.00	25	12.50
8	Total	100	100.00	100	100.00	200	100.00

Source: Primary Data

According to table 4 a large no. of respondents or child labour (55 %) are working as household worker, 15 % are working as hotel worker, 10 % are engaged in agriculture, 7.50 % are working as shop worker and 12.50 % are engaged in other works whereas no any child is working either as construction worker or factory worker. It is perhaps due to risk involved in factory work or construction work. Actually these works are more hazardous in comparison to the other works.

Table 5

Distribution of Respondents by their Hours of Work

SL No.	Hours of Work of Respondents	Boys		Girls		Total	
		No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
1	2-4 Hours	02	02.00	00	00.00	02	01.00
2	2-6 Hours	06	06.00	12	12.00	18	09.00
3	2-8 Hours	60	60.00	40	40.00	100	50.00
4	2-10 Hours	15	15.00	30	30.00	45	22.50
5	2-12 Hours	12	12.00	10	10.00	22	11.00
6	More than 12 Hours	05	05.00	08	08.00	13	06.50
7	Total	100	100.00	100	100.00	200	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 shows that most of the respondents (boys and girls) are working for 6-8 hours and they constitute 72.50 % of the total boys and girls surveyed. 17.50 % boys and girls are working for either 12 hours or more than 12 hours a day whereas only 10 % boys and girls are working for 4-6 hours a day. Now, we can say that 90 % boys and girls are working for longer hours and their wages are very low. It means, the child labours in state of Uttarakhand are compelled to work for longer hours on very low wage and there is no any provision for overtime payment for them.

Table 6

Earning wise Distribution of Respondents

Sl. No.	Earning /Monthly of Respondents (In Rs.)	Boys		Girls		Total	
		No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
1	200-400	02	02.00	05	05.00	07	03.50
2	400-600	10	10.00	22	22.00	32	16.00
3	600-800	28	28.00	63	63.00	91	45.50
4	800-1000	60	60.00	10	10.00	70	35.00
5	Total	100	100.00	100	100.00	200	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is crystal clear from table 6 that earning of the respondents is limited between 200-1000 rupees per month which is very low. Any respondent is not getting more than 1000 rupees per month. If they will purchase 1 liter milk for their family per day they will be required to pay 1200 rupees at the rate of 40 rupees per liter milk. This fact is evident that their condition is very miserable. Only 80.50 % respondents are earning between 800-1000 rupees/ month whereas 19.50 % respondents are earning between 400-600 rupees / month. The analysis of table 5 and table 6 is evident that the conditions of the child labour in the state is very critical and the State & the Central Government are required to pay attention on this pity conditions of the child labour. If, they are not competent in eradication of the problem of child labour then at least they should regulate their hours of work & wages.

Table 7

Distribution of Respondents by Their Feeling of Job satisfaction

Sl. No.	Parameters of Job Satisfaction	Boys (100)				Girls (100)			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
1	Likeness of Job	68	68.00	32	32.00	66	66.00	34	34.00
2	With Present Work	60	60.00	40	40.00	45	45.00	55	55.00
3	Employers Behaviour	65	65.00	35	35.00	62	62.00	38	38.00
4	Feeling to be Exploited	58	58.00	42	42.00	55	55.00	45	45.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 7 shows that most of the working boys and girls 68 % & 66 % (out of 100 each) respectively like to work but boys have more liking for their work, 60 % boys are satisfied with their present work but 55 % girls are not satisfied with their present work. It means most of the boys are satisfied with their work whereas most of the girls are dissatisfied with their present work. 65 % boys and 62 % girls' respondents in their separate category are satisfied with their employer's behaviour. It is interesting to know that these are the employers who are giving very low wages and engaging the respondents for longer hours but they are well behaved. 58 % boys and 55 % girls are of the view that they are being exploited in their present work by their employers.

7. SUGGESTIONS:

It is very clear from the above facts and analysis that the problem of child labour is a complex problem and it is a consequence of the system under which the

Indian economy is functioning. At present the problem of child labour has become the most challenging and alarming not only in state of Uttarakhand but in all over India and directly related to human resource development of the country. The practice of child labour is legally, morally, ethically and even psychologically very wrong, however efforts have been made by the Governments, NGOs and other social organizations for the eradication of this burning and serious problem but still it is continues in the present 21st century not only in India but even in industrialized and advanced countries the problem has not been fully eradicated and resolved.

In spite of the legislative and administrative action of the Government, involvement of voluntary organizations, social groups, trade unions and so many Non-Governmental organizations which are indispensable but the problem is still existing at large scale and day by day it is becoming more complex puzzle of the universe.

The society as a whole will have to be highly conscious against this great social evil and its practices in any segment of the society by anyone, anywhere and in any form of work. The recent amendment in the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, banning the employment of children in the entire hazardous unit has not made any kind of difference but it has helped the authorities to collect more money from the owners of these units against the employment of the children. In fact, this amendment has raised the issues of corrupt practices on the name of prohibition and regulation of child labour. Thus, with purpose to effectively tackling of this problem following suggestions can be made-

- Authorities should empathically handle this problem and ensure with honesty that every child of their jurisdiction is attending school and pressurize the parents to send their children to school.
- There should be provision of school near the slums for the children and curriculum should be as such which makes them self-employed.
- At least till the completion of secondary education, there should be total ban on children's employment in any sector or in any form of employment.
- With purpose to lessen the burden on children agriculture and rural sector should be developed in a manner to create more employment to adults male and female and curve down children's employment.
- There should be arrangement even in rural and slum areas for vocational training to the children. Vocational training will make them

self-dependent and self-employed in future and they will automatically send their children to school not to work.

8. CONCLUSION:

Actually, this problem is very serious and can't be seen in isolation with other social problems and change. Hence, the researcher strongly feel that imposing a complete ban on child labour, without providing any alternative to them and their family would not be effective, but likely to be counterproductive. In fact, it is a socio-economic-demographic problem and can't be tackled by merely passing the legislations. If, we have to eradicate it properly firstly we have to eradicate the problem of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, inequality, low wages and the problems of population explosion. At national level, a pro-poor growth and development plan and strategy is required and urgent along with other measures to solve this problem. It is necessary to tackle this problem from all related angles so that as a whole the impact may be visible, useful and effective.

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