CHAPTER – 6
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
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It is the good care and attention given for children today that produce the future responsible generation. However, millions of children in the world are living and working in the most hazardous and exploitative situations by putting their lives at risk. Although child labour exists both in developed and developing countries but the majority of working children are found in developing countries. As far as the child labour is concern, it hinders economic development and perpetuates poverty by keeping vulnerable children out of school and limits their prospects for upward social mobility. Thus the prevalence of child labour is a bolt on the conscience of society which represents a fundamental abuse of child rights and a violation of international and national laws. Like other developing countries, child labour is a major problem in India and whatever form it takes it is undesirable and illegal.

In India, most of the working children are found in unorganized sector rather than in organized sector, because in organized sector a number of laws prohibit employment of children. In informal sector, child labour employed in various types of occupations such as agriculture, manufacturing and mining, hotels and restaurants, and in domestic homes. It is generally propounded that, child labour is a result of lack of social security, poverty, unemployment and excess population. Besides, lack of appropriate education facilities is crucial factor of existence of child labour. Though the education in India for the children below the age of 14 years is completely free but still the education facilities are poor and ineffective,
which are unable to encourage the poor parents to send their children to school. So
the poor parents send their children to work instead of keeping them idle.
Most child labourers begin working at a very young age, are malnourished, and
work long hours in hazardous occupations which can harm not only their physical
development but also spiritual and mental development. From various exploitative
forms of child labour, domestic work is one of the most abusive form of child
labour. Initially, this particular occupation was not considered hazardous and was
out of the prohibited activities for the children. So, the children were being largely
employed in the homes for care activities and domestic chores. Though, later child
labour in this particular activity was also prohibited by revised Child Labour
(Prohibition and Regulation) Act, but still a large number of children can be found
working in Indian homes. A large number of households are more inclined to
employ females and children as the domestic helps as they are more obedient and
less harmful. They are also cheaper as compared to the adult male servants. So, this
study examines the problem of child labour in the context of domestic work.

This study has reached to the following conclusion:-

It has been observed that globally the activity rate of children declined from 16.2
per cent in 2004 to 14.5 per cent in 2008. The Asian-Pacific region has the largest
number of child workers (96.4 million in 2008). Except Sub-Saharan Africa, all
regions showed a massive decline in the number of economically active children
from 2004 to 2008. An attempt has also been made to find the magnitude of the
problem of child labour in India and Punjab by examining data from Census as well
as the NSS (National Sample Survey). According to the Census, there is an
increment in absolute number of economically active children in the age group of 5-
14 years during a decade (1991-2001) from 11.3 million to 12.7 million. But, the
proportion of working children out of total child population declined from 5.37 per
cent in 1991 to 5 per cent in 2001. While NSS showed a sharp decline in the number of working children from 13.3 million in 1993-94 to 4.98 million in 2009-10 and in the mean time the percentage declined for both boys and girls. In case of boys this percentage declined from 6.4 per cent to 2.7 per cent and in case of girls it declined from 6.1 per cent to 2.3 per cent respectively.

It has also been found from the rural-urban distribution of child labour that the number of working children is much higher in rural areas than urban areas especially in the age group of 10-14 years. But the working children declined sharply from 11.6 million in 1993-94 to 4.2 million in 2009-10 in rural areas as compared to urban areas where it declined from 1.7 million to 0.7 million during the same period. It is also observed from the NSS data that about 66.7 per cent of working children worked in agriculture during 2004-05. On the other hand, the gender distribution of working children by their activity status show that the percentage of male child workers is higher than the female workers while in non-worker and out of school category the percentage of female workers is higher than the male workers. Therefore, the labour pool is higher for females as compared to the males while the percentage for the school going male children is higher than the female children.

An attempt has also been made to find the relationship between magnitude of child labour and government expenditure in social sector and especially on education. Although there is a negative relationship between government expenditure in social sector and on education with the incidence of child labour but the correlation between incidence of child labour and the government expenditure on education is found to be statistically significant rather than total government expenditure in social sector.
Further, regarding the incidence of child labour in Punjab, it has been found that as per Census, the number of working children in Punjab declined from 0.23 million in 1971 to 0.14 million in 1991 but increased during the decade (1991-2001) with 0.17 million. But NSS data showed a continued decline from 7.0 per cent in 1993-94 to 2.9 per cent in 2009-10. As per Census data, for the decade 1991-2001 in Punjab, it has been found that the percentage of male workers declined by 1.11 per cent but the percentage of female workers increased by 1.51 per cent. In rural areas the percentage of male workers declined from 5.92 per cent in 1991 to 4.32 per cent in 2001 but the percentage of female workers is increased during the same time period from 1.11 per cent to 2.97 per cent. While in urban areas the percentage of both males and females increased from 2.72 per cent to 3.13 per cent and 0.36 per cent to 1.36 per cent respectively. On the other hand, the NSS data showed a declining trend for both males and females during 1993-94 to 2009-10. It has also been found from the table that the percentage of working children in Punjab is less for the age group of 5-9 years as compared to 10-14 years.

The district wise census data shows that the share of child labour in Punjab in some districts such as Amritsar, Moga, Mansa, Nawanshahr is a little higher than their share in total population. As far as Bathinda district is concerned, it has been found that the percentage share of child labour in Bathinda district is 6.72 per cent which is higher than its corresponding share in total child population (4.83 per cent) of the state.

While examining the area specific determinants of child labour, it is observed that although there is a negative relationship between the incidence of child labour and the work participation rate in any district but the coefficient is not statistically significant. However, the share in total migrants has a significant positive impact on the incidence of child labour in a particular area. Similarly, a positive relationship
has been found between the share of a district in total small scale industries in the
state and the incidence of child labour, and this relationship becomes weaker in the
areas which have higher share in large and medium scale industries. The study also
found that the districts with higher literacy rate and higher income index have
negative impact upon the incidence of child labour and vice versa.

Further, while examining the household level determinants of the child labour in
Bathinda district, it has been observed that the medical expenses incurred by the
family, absence of social security and irregular job status do not have any
significant impact on the probability of a child not going to school. But, higher
monthly per capita expenditures incurred by the family and lower social status
increase this probability. Mostly bigger sized families are less likely to send their
children to work. Similarly, the education status of the head of the family also has
negative impact on the probability of the child not going to school.

The sample survey of child labour as domestic servants, in urban areas of Bathinda
district of Punjab showed that the number of female child workers is more than the
male child workers in domestic services and among these workers, a majority of
them belong to the scheduled castes. It has also been found that about 44.14 per
cent female workers are in the age group of 6-8 years while a higher percentage of
43.88 per cent of male workers are in the age group of 9-11 years.

The study also found that the size of the family is also associated with the
employment of children. About 46.13 per cent of child workers have a family size
of 7-10 members. It seems that larger families meant more mouths to feed,
compelling children to seek employment. This result comes in contrast to the result
shown by the secondary data. It is also observed that about 75.26 per cent of child
domestic workers belong to the nuclear families. Actually, due to lack of extended
family support, the poor families are found to send their children to work to make
both ends meet. Less adult earning members in the family causes the employment of children, this is observed from the study about 54 per cent of child workers’ families have 1-3 earning members in the families. This also support the fact that the incidence of child labour falls in the joint families as in joint families, more earning member are found which reduce the need of the children participation in the labour market.

It has been observed that a big majority of 60.31 per cent of fathers and 79.38 per cent of mothers of child domestic workers are illiterate. Further, it has also been found that the mothers of a significant proportion of these child domestic workers are also working as domestic servants. Thus, it has been observed that the chances of a child being employed as domestic servant are higher if their mothers are also working as domestic servants. This is particularly true in case of girl child workers. However, in case of the occupation of the father, a big majority of them are involved in a variety of other petty jobs mainly in the informal sector.

In this study, an attempt has also been made to observe the status of siblings of child domestic workers of the same age group and found that the majority of siblings of child domestic workers are also working except too young siblings of the age group of 6-8 years. This indicates that as the age of these children belonging to the family of the child domestic work increases, their status shift from being a student to a worker. Ironically, this status changes much before they attain adulthood. From the study it has been found that the poverty and the failure of education delivery system are the most prominent factors which are more likely to push the children to work. About 60 per cent children are working as domestic servants due to poverty, while 10 per cent are working due to inappropriate school facilities, about 13 per cent due to failure in exams and 7 per cent due to lack of interest in studies.
As lack of education is found most prevalent among the child domestic workers, it has been observed that the children belonging to scheduled castes are most deprived from education because about 53 per cent children belonging to schedules castes were never admitted in schools. In this category, the percentage of the children going to informal schools is higher than in other social category.

It is also observed that about 25 per cent male workers and about 54 per cent female workers are illiterate while 72 per cent of males and 32 per cent of females are school dropouts. Out of total dropouts, about 63.38 per cent of males and 84.04 per cent of females have reached only up to primary level, but the percentage is high for the male workers than female workers who have attained education up to secondary level. Still about 65 per cent male workers and about 98 per cent female workers wants to continue their studies. A big majority of parents of these children have no idea about changing their decision of sending their children to work as for them it is unthinkable to be deprived of a source of income and to spend on education.

As far as the living status of these working children is concerned, it has been found that they are living in very poor conditions. A majority of them i.e. about 65 per cent children live in a one room rented house with average family size of 7 members. The percentage is low for the families of these children who live in their own houses (16.75 per cent). Another 18.30 per cent of these working children live in unauthorized places (i.e. slums) under poor conditions. Apart from the housing status, most of these working children are deprived of other basic amenities such as electricity, water, sanitation etc.

Regarding the economic status of the family, it has been found that about 45 per cent families of these children earn less than Rs. 3500 per month household income. Only about 7 per cent families have more than Rs. 5000 per month. It is observed from the study that higher income of the family leads to low employment of
children in the family. Although the income of child domestic workers is very low as about 31 per cent earn less than Rs. 800 per month but these children contribute a significant proportion in the family income. A significant proportion of them i.e. 43.56 per cent children contribute up to 25 per cent in the total family income and about 30 per cent contribute between 25-50 per cent. Despite the contribution of children, a majority of (79.38 per cent) families of these children have no ability of savings and those who are able to save, could save only up to Rs. 300 per month. Only about 4 per cent are able to save more than Rs. 300 per month. It is observed from the data that due to a huge gap between income and expenditure or due to insignificant amount of savings the families of these children have to borrow to meet their daily expenses or sometimes during the time of exigencies such as marriage, ailment etc. More than 55 per cent of the families of the child domestic servants are under debt. The incidence of indebtedness among the upper castes that is upper Hindus and others is found to be higher as compared to the lower social groups. The size of debt on the upper Hindus and others is mainly above Rs. 10000. 93 per cent families belonging to upper Hindus under debt owe more than Rs. 10000 and this percentage is 91 per cent for others. The main source of debt for more than 50 per cent of the families is their close relatives and friends. Few families that is about 4 per cent borrowed money from institutional sources such as banks.

As far as working conditions are concerned, it has been observed that child domestic workers are living and working in tough conditions. About more than 53 per cent male child domestic workers live with their employer while about 89 per cent female workers live with their parents. Actually, in case of both male workers and female workers, the younger children mainly tend to live with their parents. However, in case of male domestic workers in the age group of 9-11 years and 12-14 years, a bigger proportion lives with their employers. But out of those who live
with their employer about 68 per cent of males and 51 per cent of females visit their family once in a month. Further, it has also been found that these child domestic workers started work at an early age. About 75 per cent males and 96 per cent females started work in the age of 9 years. Only about 4 per cent of females and 25 per cent of males started work after attaining the age of 9 years.

It is observed from the study that about 78 per cent male workers and about 56 per cent female workers never changed their workplace. About 18 per cent males and 13.10 per cent females changed their workplace only once. Interestingly, about 21 per cent female domestic workers have changed their workplace many times while no such case was found in case of male workers. It has also observed that for majority of those who changed their previous workplace, the main reason of change was lower wages.

The study showed that out of total male respondents, most of them (60.20 per cent males) are full time workers while out of total female respondents, most of them (about 88 per cent of females) are part time workers. The percentage is high for the full time workers in the age group of 12-14 years as compared to the 6-8 years age group. Similarly about 61 per cent males and about 81 per cent females are paid workers. Out of total unpaid workers a big majority i.e. about 89 per cent females are in the age group of 6-8 years but this share for male workers is 42.11 per cent in the age group of 6-8 years and 47.37 per cent for the age group of 9-11 years. It is observed that these child domestic workers are engaged in various forms of domestic work. A big share that is about 61 per cent of male workers are involved in all kind of domestic works including babysitting while remaining 39 per cent work as helper. On the other hand, the female workers are engaged in various types of work such as, cleaning floor, washing dishes, washing clothing and babysitting. Also a significant proportion of working children work as helper.
It has been found that the working hours of these child domestic workers, generally depends on their status of employment as full time workers work for more than 8 hours while working hours for the part time workers varies from 5-8 hours. It is also observed that in case of long working hours (more than 8 hours) the percentage is high for the male children in the age group of 9-11 years and 12-14 years as compared to the age group of 6-8 years. In the age group of 6-8 years, about 52 per cent male workers spend 5-8 hours per day while 52.34 per cent female workers of the same age group spend 1-4 hours in work per day. Though the full time workers work for 8 hours; the working hours are also not less for the part time workers who spend additional time in commuting from one household to another. Due to long working hours, about 36 per cent male workers and about 47 per cent female workers did not get any leisure. Out of total part time male workers majority of them get more than 2 hours as leisure time while out of total full time workers majority of them did not get any leisure time. But in case of female workers, out of total part time and full time, a significant proportion did not get any leisure time. And majority of these working children who get leisure time seems to be spending their leisure time to take rest.

As about 67 per cent male workers work up to 25 days and about 63 per cent female workers work for 25 to 30 days, it has been observed that about 47 per cent male children get leave twice in a month while this proportion is only 13 per cent in case of females. About 41 per cent females get leave only once in a month. Even, 7.14 per cent male and 11.04 per cent female domestic workers do not get any leave in a month. It is also observed that the all full time child domestic workers get at least one holiday per month. If they take any extra leave they are not paid for that leave. This leads to a cut in their meager earnings. It is found that about 34 per cent male child domestic workers are paid between Rs. 1200 and Rs. 1600 but these workers are mainly full time workers who work for more than 8 hours. On the other hand,
about 42 per cent females are paid less than Rs. 800 per month for 5-8 working hours per day. About 39 per cent males and 20 per cent females are not being paid at all. The children in the age group of 6-8 years earn less as compared to the children in the age group of 9-11 and 12-14 years as they are too young to perform heavy task so mostly they work less and paid less accordingly. The segregation of these workers into full time and part time workers also revealed that the part time workers earn less than the full time workers.

Child domestic workers are not only paid less but did not even get appropriate increment in their income. It has been found that more than 50 per cent child domestic workers do not get any increment in their earnings and remaining gets an increment once in a year. About 65 per cent male workers get an increment between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100 while majority of female workers get increment only up to Rs. 50. Only about 6 per cent females get more than Rs. 100 increment in their earnings but this percentage is high in case of male workers. It has been found that these workers are generally not paid for overtime work. Very few that is only 6.12 per cent males and 29.66 per cent females are paid for overtime work. Study also inferred that about 53 per cent males and about 49 per cent females get only festival allowance including other minor benefits, while all unpaid workers get only meal and clothing.

Since the workers are small children, mistakes are bound to happen sometimes. 35.71 per cent males and 15.52 per cent females are punished with regular scolding. Mostly females are just warned for their mistakes. Only 17.35 per cent males and 25.52 per cent females were never punished for their mistakes. As far as illness and injuries at work is concerned, this study indicates that 36.21 per cent male workers and 43.79 per cent female workers reported body pain including headache during
work, while among the part time workers 23.47 per cent males and 13.10 per cent females were never been hurt at work.

The working conditions are also determined by the work environment at homes that is the nature of the relationship with the employer as well as co-worker. It has been found from the study that about 39 per cent males and about 27 per cent females have a fair relationship with their employers. A significant proportion of female children have a cordial relationship with their employers but this percentage is low in case of male workers. Even about 30 per cent males and about 21 per cent females have a bad relationship with their employers and most of the child domestic workers give regular scolding as a major reason for their bad behaviour with the employers. Similarly, most of the child domestic workers have a cordial relationship with their co-workers.

Finally, it has been observed that more than 50 per cent child domestic workers are not satisfied with their present job. About 45 per cent male workers are not satisfied with their job due to tedious work while about 59 per cent females are not satisfied due to low wages. Yet 27.55 per cent male workers and 40.69 per cent female workers are willing to continue their due to present job citing that they have no other option. These working children are too young to find new job as about 44 per cent males and about 53 per cent females are not able to find new job and majority of them that is about 83 per cent males and 93 per cent females are not aware of existing laws regarding child labour. Remaining child domestic workers are aware but still working economic compulsion.

To sum up we can say that the living and working condition of the child labour are very pathetic. Among the various factors, poverty is the major determinant which forces children to join labour market at an early age. Since the poor families do not have the resources to send their children to school so they send them to work in
order to augment family income and acquire some work skill. Children work under poor conditions, work beyond normal working hours, perform heavy tasks and get very less in return. Even though the children are paid less, but whatever income they earn is of benefit to poor families.

**Policy Suggestions**

The problem of child labour is deep rooted and it is clear that the strategies for doing away with the problem would have to include both long term and short term measures. So based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions can be given to minimize the employment of child labour in India as well as Punjab.

From the current magnitude, trends and pattern of the child workforce in India, it must be inferred that there is a need of different policy intervention for different categories of children. Children with ‘nowhere’ status may need a variety of collaborative policies to encourage them to join schools and the children with work status need to be withdrawn from the work first, by following coercive policies along with set of incentives. A strategy for eliminating child labour must recognize that both push and pull factors operates in perpetuating the problem. Among the factors that push children into the labour market, poverty is clearly the frontrunner. Basically, the problem of child labour is intertwined with the basic survival issues of their families so its elimination cannot be thought of without considering income generation measures for their families. Study found a significant negative correlation between income and the incidence of child labour, therefore income support programmes for the poor people must be introduced and effectively implemented. These measures should be integrated in various local, national and international programmes as well as programmes implemented by the government and voluntary organization. We have observed that apart from poverty, various other factors may be responsible for the variations in the incidence of child labour.
in India as well as among the districts of Punjab. Like distribution of population, the
distribution of child labour is also affected by the rate of urbanization, share of
particular area in total non-agriculture investment, total migrant inflows, illiteracy
level etc. Thus, these factors also should be kept in mind while making policies to
eradicate child labour and area specific measures should be taken to control the
incidence of child labour. We have observed the flow of migrants increases the
incidence of child labour, strong steps should be taken to enroll the children of the
migrants in schools. Similarly, a bigger share in small scale industries also leads to
higher incidence of child labour. Since the small scale industries are mainly
informal by nature and so do not follow any labour law, there is need of regulative
inspections/raids by the authorities to such industries as well as the homes
(particularly in urban and industrial areas) to prohibit them to employ children.

Among the pull factors that draw children into labour market and keep them out of
schools are the lack of appropriate education facilities. As education plays a very
crucial role in the development of the child and a key component to eliminate child
labour. Significant negative correlation exists between social sector expenditure and
the incidence of child labour. Therefore, primary emphasis should be given to the
significance of education. For this, significant schooling facilities and quality
education are needed to be provided so that children are not forced to drop out from
schools early and join labour force. Study has found that many children are also
going to informal schools for attaining education, thus there should be simultaneous
efforts on establishment of non-formal education classes for the working children
with flexible time pattern and revision in the education curriculum to make them
more interesting. From the study it has also been found that the girls are less
enrolled in schools than boys especially in the rural areas. So the education of the
girl children needs to be especially taken care off.
Although the universal and free and compulsory education is provided by the government for the children but it has been observed from the study that indirect cost of schooling such as books stationary etc. also discourage the parents of working children to send them to school. So to make education policies effective, these basic amenities should be provided regularly to the children. It is seen that in many cases parents of child labour see the futility in educating their children, and hence utilize them as extra earning hands for supplementing the family income therefore incentives should also be offered to the parents so that they are encouraged to send their children to schools.

So far, most of the efforts to eradicate child labour largely focus on the supply side, there must also be emphasis on the demand side and anybody found violating the rules must be severely punished. Although there are such rules that punish the employer of the children, but in most of the cases the employer are successful in evading the punishment by shifting the onus on the child or his/her parents. We have heard a lot about raids by officials in hotels, restaurants, factories premises etc. but little has been done in homes where a big majority of them suffer unnoticed. Until such labour laws are not strictly applied, people will try to take advantage of availability of these cheap and docile shoulders to bear the burdens of their domestic chores.