Chapter - V

FACTORs RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD LABOUR
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Child Labour - Soft Petals Turn to Iron

Child labour is one of the many disastrous problems that India faces today. It results in the decline of the economic status of the country and promotes social inequality. Child labour also affects the physical and mental attitude of the children. Today nearly 5-13% of children in our country are labourers. The financial and economic position of a family makes them take this step and immerses them into a haunted world of poverty. Many children, due to lack of adequate means of livelihood, end up as labourers. They then develop bad habits and lead to deployment of integrity.

Human beings are the most intelligent creatures in the whole world. But many children ending up as labourers create a sort of discontentment and in that way we have lost and still are loosing many great minds that could have been great in their future. Children, the soft petals turn to hard iron. Our Government should take necessary steps for the abolishing of child labour for the prosperity and development of the country.1

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Is poverty the cause of child labour

Most people think that poverty is the cause of child labour, but that doesn't always seem to be true. That is the result of a research in Pakistan. In the research it becomes clear that rich parents go less to school, and work less than poor parents with children.

Of course this research is about one certain country, Pakistan. And it's about one sector, the agriculture sector.

But that's not the only example. Because in one of the poorest provinces of India (Kerala) almost all children go to school. That's because the remunerations of the employees isn't so divided as in other provinces. The employees are well organized, and can look after themselves, so they get better paid and their rights and their children's are more respected.

In most sectors poverty will be on of the causes of child labour, think about the service sector. Children in a city often leave their parents, and have to take care of themselves. So they have to work for money, here poverty certainly plays a role with child labour.

Poverty does often play a role with child labour, but in some cases it does not. So before we jump to conclusion we have to research it well.

Child labour is a significant problem in India. The prevalence of it is shown by the child work participation rates
which are higher in Indian than in other developing countries.

The major determinant of child labour is poverty. Even though children are paid less than adults, whatever income they earn is of benefit to poor families. In addition to poverty, the lack of adequate and accessible sources of credit forces poor parents to engage their children in the harsher form of child labour - bonded child labour. Some parents also feel that a formal education is not beneficial, and that children learn work skills through labour at a young age. These views are narrow and do not take the long term developmental benefits of education into account. Another determinant is access to education. In some areas, education is not affordable, or is found to be inadequate. With no other alternatives, children spend their time working.

India has all along followed a proactive policy with respect to the problem of child labor, and has stood for constitutional, statutory and developmental measures to combat child labor. Six ILO conventions relating to child labor have been ratified three of these as early as the first quarter of this century.

The first Act in India relating to child labour was the Enactment of Children (Pledging of Labour) Act of February 1933. Since then there have been nine different Indian legislations relating to child labor. The strategy of progressive elimination of child labor underscores India's legislative intent, and takes cognizance of the fact that child labor is not an
isolated phenomenon that can be tackled without simultaneously taking into account the socio-economic milieu that is at the root of the problem.

Although a major cause, poverty alone does not cause child labour. As ILO rightly warns, "Poverty is not the only reason for the existence of child labour. The picture varies across households and across regions and countries. Countries which are equally poor may yet have relatively high or relatively low levels of non-school-going children or of working children. Underlying child labour obviously also is the pull factor, the desire to maximise profits and to command an utmost docile and flexible labour force. The absence of a strong (adult) labour movement and a strong civic society in general, in combination with the inertia of government institutions will allow these tendencies a free hand." Thus, child labour is essentially associated with inequality in society.

In India, the correlation between child labour and regional poverty is inconclusive. Some of the poorer states, for different reasons, have a lower child labour count, and some of the richer states have a higher count.

Agricultural development as such may not reduce the incidence of child labour as much as direct efforts to improve the living conditions of marginal farmers and landless labourers. The intensity of child labour, it could be said, rather relates to the
female labour-force participation rate. Literacy rate is another variable which is often used to explain the differences in child employment ratios. Empirically, Kerala furnishes a strong correlation between literacy and the decline of child labour. It is not merely the economic advancement but the overall social development, including education, which plays a major role in the incidence of child labour. This is why Kerala has a lower incidence of child labour than Punjab, Haryana and several other states which have lower poverty ratios. Other states with a relatively high literacy level, like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, however, have an above average child labour ratio, indicating that the demand for labour on the pull side is not balanced by a desire for education on the push-side. Educationally backward states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, on the other hand, have a relative low child labour ratio because of a falling demand for child labour.

An important fact that has been established by many surveys is that access to education is a general wish among parents and children, but this remains unfulfilled due to the lack of properly functioning government schools.

Poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, exploitation and above all lack of concern are some of the chief factors which are primarily responsible for the unprecedented emergence of child labour. There is, however, another important factor which apparently
looks like traditional but basically economic, is the social and parental apathy. This apathy has deprived hundreds of girl children from their childhood opportunities for preparation for a proper adult life. In the traditional societies girl children are still a neglected lot. Their exploitation differs from boys because their mobility from one job to another is dismally restricted and stereotyped.

In this chapter we have discussed the factors responsible for child labour. These factors are divided into three categories i.e. Social Factor, Economical Factors and Psychological Factors. These factors are further divided as under:

1. Social Factor:
   a) Effect of education/literacy.
   b) Effect of indebtedness.
   c) Effect of orphanage.

2. Economical Factors:
   a) Effect of poverty
   c) Effect of family occupation.
   d) Effect of family size.

3. Psychological Factors:
   a) Effect of compulsion of parents.
   b) Effect of sense of responsibilities.
   c) Effect of substance abuse.
Lack of education or literacy exploit the life of children. Literacy rate is another variable which is often used to explain the differences in child employment rations. Empirically, Kerala furnishes a strong correlation between literacy and the decline of child labour. It is not merely the economic advancement but the overall social development, including education, which plays a major role in the incidence of child labour.

Parents are engra in indebtedness which leads to child labour. It is difficult for parents to fulfill their basic needs in their income and above that indebtedness pushes their children into child labour.

Children who have lost their parent/parents have to work for their own livelihood. Some have migrated from rural areas to urban area in search of employment and leading their life in adverse circumstances.

The major determinant of child labour is poverty. After studying the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and through observation while conducting survey, researcher found that maximum child labour were poor, they were working to fulfill the primary needs of the family because the family income is very low.

Parents of child labours are themselves engaged in such kind of occupation that their family income is low and family size is large. Children of such families are left with no other option than working as child labour.
Some parents compel their children to work so that there can be increase in family income and the child don't move as vagabond, as in their opinion education is not beneficial, and children learn work skills through labour at young age. Some children have to bear sense of responsibility because they were elder in the family. There is also substance abuse (i.e. father is alcoholic) in the family so the child forced to take the responsibility of the family on his shoulder.
There are many factors which give birth to child labour. These factors can be divided into three parts: **Social Factors**, **Economical Factors**, and **Psychological Factors**. It is evident from the social factors that majority i.e. 52 percent respondents believe that lack of education, illiteracy leads to child labour. Illiteracy among parents leads to illiteracy in children because they are not aware of the importance of education. Further, the table reveals that 39.3 percent respondents are of the opinion that orphanage is one of the social factors responsible for child labour. While 37 percent respondents opined that indebtedness also results in child labour. Parents of child labour are indebted due to low income, alcoholism, and other reasons, therefore they engage their children in different work to earn money for livelihood.
Economical factors include poverty, family occupation and family size. The major determinant of child labour is poverty as 80 percent respondents opined. 76.7 percent respondents think that family occupation as also the cause. Their parents are involved in such kind of occupation that monthly income is low and so the child is also involved in that occupation like beedi making, vendor, hawker etc. In the opinion of 67.3 percent respondents large family size is responsible for small children to work. Monthly income of the family is not sufficient to fulfill their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. Earnings of child labour play important role in family income.

Psychological factors are also responsible for child labour. Majority i.e. 73 percent of the respondents said that they have to indulge in child labour because of compulsion of parents, 8.3% of respondents have to work to fulfill some responsibilities that include indebtedness of parents, being elder in the family, lost their father etc., other 8.3 percent respondents father was alcoholic so they torture the child to fulfill his family needs and do the work.

This table concludes that poverty alone is not responsible for child labour but there are many factors responsible for a child to work which can be psychological or economical, it depends on the family background of each child labour and also the area or region. In this Bundelkhand region indebtedness, poverty, illiteracy, compulsion of parents are the main factors. As ILO rightly warns "Poverty is not only the reason for the existence of child labour". But this is also very true that 'Poverty' is the mother of all the factors responsible for child labour.
Graph No. - 12

GRAPH SHOWING EFFECT OF SOCIAL, ECONOMICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD LABOUR

Social Factors

Economical Factors

Psychological Factors