



## Research Article

### STUDY OF GIRL CHILD WORKERS IN A RURAL AREA

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#### ABSTRACT

The problem of child labour has been prevalent in most economies, especially the developing ones. Children in the poor families are sent to work to supplement the family income and since the poor do not have enough resources to send them to schools, they send them to work instead of keeping them idle. Though India is signatory of various international conventions and agreements, there is growing number of child labour in India. Even though the magnitude of child labour in India is declining but still it exists in the society. The present study sought to examine the socio-economic profile of child labour in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Data was collected from child labour in ten villages of Gangadhara Nellore Mandal of Chittoor district. Small Land holdings in agricultural areas and caste system in rural areas is the main reason for child labour. The results revealed that majority (72%) of the respondents were engaged in Agriculture as agricultural labourers or working in their own fields. Almost all the respondents were engaged in work at an early age to supplement family income. The data concluded that Poverty is the main cause of sending their children to work. Illiteracy, unemployment, lack of good schools, awareness on the education of the girl child and growth of informal economy are considered as the other major causes and consequences of increasing the number of child labourers. A re-energized worldwide movement is necessary to create a political climate for enhanced national efforts. A stronger involvement of the social partners in the development of National Action Plans, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and in sectoral, workplace and community activities could further enhance capacity, and strengthen and re-energize the worldwide movement, as could better targeted and more ambitious advocacy efforts

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## INTRODUCTION

For many years, child labour has been one of the biggest obstacles to social development. It is a challenge and long-term goal in many countries to abolish all forms of child labour. Especially in developing countries, it is considered as a serious issue these days. Child labour refers to children who miss their childhood and are not able to have the basic amenities which a child should have. Recently the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2013) estimated that there are around 215 million children between the ages five to fourteen who work worldwide. India has the largest population of child labour which constitutes nearly seven percent of the work force.

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Child labour restricts the right of children to access and benefit from education and denies the fundamental opportunity to attend school. Child labour prejudices children's education and adversely affects their health. In spite of Globalization of Indian Economy, the poor households could not find better alternative sources of income except to work. Child labour has become a part of developmental process at National and International level. Still in modern world, it is becoming an abuse of child and human rights in third world countries including India. Child labour has direct relation to poverty, education, adult employment, human development and overall development of the society. The most rapidly and widely ratified International human rights treaty in the history has been signed by 193 countries worldwide by UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). India has a dubious distinction of having largest number of Child laborers (2nd largest number) in the world.

Over 85% of child workers in India are employed in agriculture and allied occupations while remaining are engaged in different occupations in forestry, mining, fisheries etc and umpteen number of activities in hotels, restaurants, automobile shops, industries. The planning commission report on child labour says that according to 2011 census there are 2.26 crores economically active children in the age group of 5-14 years. Among the states, Uttar Pradesh has almost one-fourth of child labour in India followed by Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh stands third in India in the concentration of child laborers in multiple economic activities such as agriculture, sheep rearing, chili processing, brick kiln, beedi rolling, scrap collection etc. The girl child laborer is particularly alarming due to gender discrimination in large part of the society

### Facts and Figures

- Child labour is mainly a rural issue. Out of 215 million of child labour worldwide, 129 millions are in agriculture alone.
- About 60 percent of child labourers aged between 5-17 years work in agriculture, in contrast to 7 percent in industry and 26 percent in services.
- Agriculture is among the three most dangerous sectors to work in at any age, and even more dangerous for children. Data show that around 60 percent of hazardous work of children is in agriculture.
- Only 1 in 5 child labourers are in paid employment – the large majority are unpaid family workers.
- Rural children, particularly girls, tend to begin work at a very young age, sometimes when they are 5-7 years old.
- Without considering household services, on average, boys make up 63 percent and girls 37 percent of child labour in agriculture in the age group 5-17 years.
- But 92 percent of girl child labour in the age group of 5-14 also perform household chores, as compared with 67% of boys

Besides legislative measures, the constitution of India has also provided protection to child workers. The Implementation of Right to Education Act of 2010 ensures free and compulsory education for children between the ages of 6-14 years.

### Girl Child Labourers in India

Over 80 percent of child laborers are found in rural sector and 20 percent are found in urban sector. The degree of urbanization in India is 27.57%. The rural girl child laborer is generally engaged in household activities as compared to a female urban child laborer, who also work in the informal and unorganized sector, which includes small scale cottage industries and factories. The girl child laborer is also found in the domestic work and prostitution, in urban and rural areas. Generally girl child laborers work in hazardous industries, domestic service, agriculture and cultivation, fetching firewood, cutting grass, milking, cooking as bonded labour, working as rag-pickers, vendors and sex workers.

### OBJECTIVES

- To identify the activities in which the child workers participate.
- To assess the causes/reasons and contributing factors to become child labour.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in ten villages in Gangadhara Nellore Mandal of Chittoor district. Agricultural laborers were plenty in number in this area. The total sample consisted of 100 girl child laborers in the age group of 6-14 years. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of respondents. Interview schedule was developed to collect the data. The data collected was analysed using percentages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Age and education of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents includes information on age and educational level which are tabulated and presented in percentages:

**Table 1. Profile of the Respondents**

Items	Percentage N= 100
Age	
a.6- 8	4
b.9- 11	36
c.12- 14	60
Education	
a.Illiterate	8
b.Primary school	60
c.Secondary school	22
d.High school	10

It is evident from Table 1 that the sample comprises of children with age ranging from 6- 14 years. Higher percent of the sample (60%) is represented by the age group of 12- 14 years followed by 9-11 years (36%) and rest 6-8 years. Regarding the educational status, more than half of the sample (60%) studied upto primary school and 8% are illiterate. As there is better access to primary school than high school there are more dropouts after primary schooling with out going to highschool. Almost all the parents of child labour were illiterate and agricultural labour.

### Occupational status of the respondents

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on occupation**

S. No	Source of Income	Percentage N= 100
1	Agriculture	10
2	Agriculture labour	62
3	Others	28

The data in the above table shows that the majority of respondents (62%) were engaged in agriculture labour. The major source of income was agricultural labor. Those who work in their own farms also work for wages in others farms whenever there is no work to supplement the family income. The other sources of income constitute work in match box factories and domestic work ie.. servant maids in others houses

### Nature of work of respondents

**Table 3. Distribution of respondents by Nature of Work**

Sl. no	Nature of Work	Percentage (N=100)
1	Unskilled	11
2	Semi-skilled	50
3	Skilled	39

The data in the above table reveals that majority of child labour were semi-skilled (50%). 39% were skilled workers. Many children were semi-skilled which suggests that their skill and productivity is affected due to their engagement in labour at early age stunting their physical growth and hampering their intellectual development.

#### Place of work of respondents

**Table 4. Distribution of respondents by their Place of Work**

Sl. no	Place of Work	Percentage (N=100)
1	Within the Village/Town	94
2	Outside the Village/Town	06

The data in the above table shows that majority of child labour work within the village. It is because there is work available in the village and even at times when there is no work, as the respondents are girl children they are not sent to other villages for work.

#### Causes of taking up of work

**Table 5. Distribution of respondents by causes for taking up work**

Sl. no	Causes	Percentage (N=100)
1	Self-dependence	15
2	Economic compulsion	75
3	Taking care of siblings	10

The data from the above table indicates the causes for taking up work. Majority of respondents (75%) took up work for supplementing family income as all the respondents were below poverty line. 15% of the sample were school dropouts, parents did not want them to continue their studies and as they are idle engaged in income earning activities and are self dependant.

#### Conclusion

The problem of child labour poses a challenge before Nation. The practice deprives them of their childhood and is harmful to their physical and mental development. The present study reveals that poverty, lack of awareness on girl child education due to illiteracy of parents, and lack of enforcement of labour laws are considered as the important causes of child labour. Awareness of childrens rights and of the hazards of child labour in agriculture is required at many levels, combined with improved political coherence on the issue. Ensuring an adequate number of productive, quality jobs, which provide income to cover at least basic needs of the families may reduce the problem.. Efforts may be made by the Government for creation of advanced research facilities, Human resource development, environmental and occupational health cells and development of database information system to be maintained to monitor and overcome the problem of child labour.

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