

Facts and Magnitude of Child Labour -Case Study is in Nagaon District, Assam

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Abstract

The unequal distribution of economic resources among the citizens of the country always creates two classes as 'Haves and Have not'. It is the prime cause of poverty. Child labour is due to poverty along with some other causes like shortage of educational institution, environment, parental loss, ignorance of parents about child potentiality, unbearable cost of education. In fact, child labour is revolving among the poor destitute family who are living in interior places. Child labour depletion always requires the abolition of poverty and then on others. This paper highlights on facts and magnitude of child labour. The rise in income of the household changes the standard of living of the people and enable to feel them the usefulness of education. It impacts on the knowledge of skilled labour and unskilled labour.

Keywords: child labour, poverty, environment.

INTRODUCTION

Child is the future of the nation (Bhatty, 1998). Today child is the citizen of tomorrow. Human capital index of a country determines the growth trend of the economy. The base of human capital is the proper development of children (Hassan, 1998). So, the adequate facilities regarding education, nutrition and playing towards children necessary to develop the potentiality are vital attributes.

Unfortunately, the fundamental barrier to child development is the child labour. It hijacks the child development from right tracks by depriving school education, social touch, games and sports. The most important fact is the economic crisis of the parent/guardians (UNICEF, 1997). In Zambia, the children are working not because of poverty but because of inadequate school facility, ignorance of parent, school

expenses and environment (Nielson, 1998). In Consequence, skill labour is inadequate in the rapid growth rate of the economy.

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD LABOUR

Various study groups defined child labour differently. Singh (1998) defined that child labour are school deprived children and recruiting them in abysmal situation in an early days of life. 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva (2008) defined child labour as employed in three different activities -

- a) Hazardous activities affect the mental and physical calibre of child (long work, night work, unhealthy environment, unsafe equipment, heavy load, dangerous locations and abuse are the examples.)
- b) Social evil and moral degraded activities like slavery, used for prostitution, pornography, forced begging and stealing.
- c) Age and time related activities like absence of school attendance.

Article – 24 (Indian Constitution) directed to prohibit the employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines or any other hazardous employment. Moreover, Article-21(A) state about the free and compulsory education in between the age group of 6-14 years.

FACTS AND MAGNITUDE OF CHILD LABOUR

Trade liberalization in industrial transition, immigration and flow of migration in USA makes the child labour and trade off the adult employment [Emerson and Andre Portela Souza (2003), Caselli and Coleman (2006), Wahba Jackline (2006), Diana Kruger (2007), Krisztina Kis-Katos and Robert Sparrow (2011), Richard Hornbeck and Suresh Naidu (2014)].

In developing countries, child labour is still prevalent due to high poverty and poor schooling opportunity. Sub Saharan Africa witnessing the highest incidence rates of child labour in the age group 5–14 (Loretta Bass, 2004).

Helen Sekar (2001) stated the important facts of child labour in India as: poverty, parental illiteracy and ignorance, tradition of making children learn the family skills, absence of universal compulsory primary education, non-availability of and non-accessibility to schools, irrelevant and non-attractive school curriculum, social and cultural environment, in formalization of production, employment's preference to children for their cheap labour and inability to organize against exploitation, family work, level of technology, apathy of trade unions.

The facts of child labour in Assam for Subash Koul, former director of SOS (Save Our Soul) (2014) Children's Village, Guwahati are poverty, parental illiteracy, social apathy, lack of education and growing population (Assam Tribune, 2014).

The following tables focus the magnitude of child labour in the World, India and regional level.

Table: 1: World Level Child Labour: Children Involvement in Child Labour and Hazardous Work (2000-16)

Age		2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
5-17 years	Child labour	245,500,000	222,294,000	215,209,000	167,956,000	151,622,000
	Hazardous work	170,500,000	128,381,000	115,314,000	85,344,000	72,525,000

Source: Global Estimates of Child Labour Results and Trends, 2012-2016

Following table: 2 and 3 depict the child labour in Indian context. In census report reflects the good symptom that child labour is in declining trend.

Table 2. Working Children in India
Working children in National level (5-14 years old)

Country	Census				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
All India	10753985	13640870	11285349	12666377	4353247

Source: Indian Census on Working Children.

Table 3. Child Labour (5-14 years old), 2009-10

Country	Male	Female	Total
All India	3057998	1925873	4983871

Source: NSSO (66th round Survey), 2009-10.

Following Table: 4 and 5 represents the magnitude of child labour in North-East States of India.

Table 4. Child Working in North-East States of India in the age group of 5-14:

State	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Assam	239349	-----	327598	351416	99512
Arunachal Pradesh	17925	17950	12395	18482	5766
Manipur	16380	20217	16493	28836	11805
Meghalaya	30440	44916	34633	53940	18839
Mizoram	-----	6314	16411	26265	2793
Nagaland	13726	16235	16467	45874	11062
Sikkim	15661	8561	5598	16457	2704
Tripura	17490	24204	16478	21756	4998
All India	10753985	13640870	11285349	12666377	4353247

Source: Census Report on child labour (N.B. In Assam 1981 census could not be conducted and in 1971 census Mizoram was in Assam.)

Table 5. Child Labour in Assam (2009-10)

State	Male	Female	Total	% Share of Child Labour
Assam	156488	32666	189154	3.80

Source: NSSO (66th Round of Survey)

As per this report of census, the magnitudes of working children are falling due to implementation of Government Schemes like Sarva Siksha Aviyan and establishment of Schools for free and compulsory Elementary Education in between 6-14 years old.

Objective of the Study

- 1) To find out the facts and figures of child labour in the study area.
- 2) To state the solutions of child labour problem

METHODOLOGY

It is an explorative study. It follows both quantitative and qualitative data. Field survey in the study area has been done in terms of schedule questionnaire. Secondary sources of data are getting from census report, NSS report, statistics hand book, journals, books and websites.

Facts and figures of child labour in the study area

Nagaon (initially spelled by Nowgong) is one of the largest districts of central Assam. It has 18th Block Development Office as per census, 2011. Agriculture is the backbone of the inhabitants of Nagaon District. About 78% population are engaged in this sector. Table: 6, focus the population of Nagaon District as per census, 2011.

Table 6. Population of Nagaon District

District	Population			Rural	Urban
Nagaon	Total	Male	Female	1440307	1385699
	2826006	2457906	368100		

Source: Census, 2011

As per census 2011, Nagaon District has 18th numbers of Development Blocks. The study considers 30% of the development blocks, namely- Pakhimuria Block, Khagorijan Block, Kaliabor Block, Juria Block and Bajiagaon Block. From each block, 15 numbers of child labours are interviewed as sample in between the age group 6-14 years and interpreted in the following tables. Total sample of child labour is 75.

Table 7. Distribution of child labour

Age	Pakhimuria		Khagorijan		Kaliabor		Juria		Bajiagaon		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
6-8	2	-	-	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	5	2
9-11	4	3	5	2	3	1	5	4	6	4	23	14
12-14	2	4	3	4	5	4	3	1	3	2	16	15
Total	8	7	8	7	9	6	10	5	9	6	44	31

Source: Field Survey during the year 2016. (Note: 'M' for Male and 'F' for Female)

In table: 7, total male child labour is 44 and female child labour is 31 in five development blocks. 58.6% are the male child labour and 41.3% are the female child labour found in the study area. Male child labour is highest in the age group of 9-11. Female child labour is highest in the age group 12-14 years. Table: 8 represents the percentage of child labour in five development blocks. Male child labour is more than female child labour. Male can come out easily to the economic field while female could not.

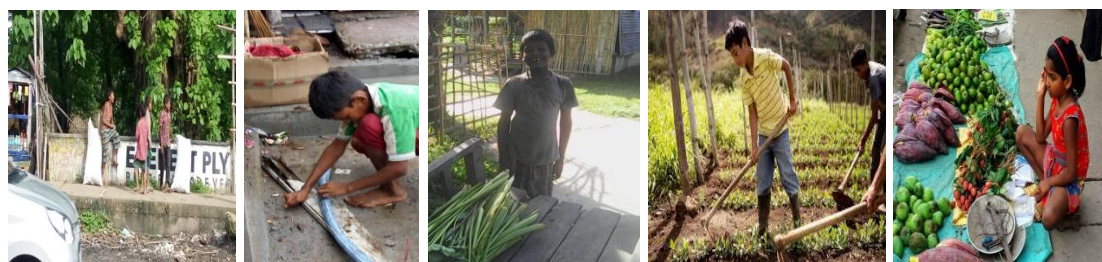
Table 8. The Percentage Of Child Labour In Five Development Blocks.

Gender	Pakhimuria	%	Khagorijan	%	Kaliabor	%	Juria	%	Bajiagaon	%	Total
Male	8	18.1	8	18.1	9	20.4	10	22.7	9	20.4	44
Female	7	22.5	7	22.5	6	19.3	5	16.1	6	19.3	31

Source: Field Survey during the year 2016.

Important facts of child labour are: poverty (45%); ignorance of parent/guardian about child development (24%); shortage of food (15%); social apathy/environment (4%); parental loss (2%); migration (4%); indebtedness (6%). Economic crisis is the prime cause of child labour. Child labours are found in Muslim community 45 (60%), Tribal community 22 (29.3%) and Hindu community 8 (10.6%).

The area of child labour is found in paddy field 41%, small tea garden used for tea plantation 23%, domestic slavery 5%, street business 7%, picked up plastic materials from garbage/street without safety measures 13%, factory 6% and hotel 5%. Some of the spot verification pictures are given below:



MEASURES

Following are the measures need to be followed to make awareness to the people against the practice of child labour:

- a) Administrative machinery should have positive role to prevent child labour. Migrated people should be established with fair income so as to fulfil their basic necessities. Abolition of poverty measures (welfare schemes) should cover the needy sections of the society so as to remove the problem of survival.
- b) Child care agencies should find out the source of child labour and awareness programme should be organised so as to motivate the parent/guardian of destitute children.
- c) Adequate fund should be released to NGO for smooth functioning and makes proper guidance about government welfare scheme necessary to the livelihood of the parents/guardian of children.
- d) A special care should be taken for school education of child labour by providing incentives like scholarship. A noble close relationship between teacher and guardian is to be set up so as to understand the potentiality of the children.

CONCLUSION

Child labour is the World-wide problem and prevents the economic growth rate of the country. Child labour problem can be reduced only when people realize the child potentiality. It is necessary to take preventive measures by public and government agencies together against the practice of child labour. The slogan should be work together to ban child labour from the economy.

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