

Urban Child Labor: A Sociological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Child labor is a global issue, particularly in underdeveloped nations. Africa and Asia together account for more than 90% of overall child employment. Children labor for several reasons, including poverty and the urge to improve their circumstances. Working children face acute exploitation due to long hours and little remuneration. Their working circumstances are sometimes harsh and do not promote physical or mental growth. However, eliminating child labor immediately may not be the best strategy to avoid abuse. Any scheme for abolition relies on education. The state may encourage children to attend school by giving dietary supplements and enhancing the value of education. To relieve a kid of the burden of working, a struggling family's economic situation must improve. Research was conducted to substantiate these assertions. This study examines urban child labor in Navi Mumbai from a sociological perspective, including their socio-demographic characteristics, employment conditions, and the prevalence of child abuse in the workplace.

Keywords: Poverty, Abuse, Child labour, Exploitation, Abolishment

I. Introduction.

Child work is a widespread issue across the globe, particularly in underdeveloped nations. Africa and Asia account for more than 90% of all child labor. Children labor for several reasons, including poverty and the urge to improve their circumstances. Children in impoverished nations make significant contributions to family income, despite their low pay. Schooling issues, such as inaccessibility and a lack of quality education, encourage parents to send their children to more lucrative jobs.

In certain nations, inflexible cultural and social norms hinder schooling and contribute to child labor. Working children face acute exploitation due to long hours and little remuneration. Their job circumstances are sometimes harsh, lacking stimulation for healthy physical and mental growth. Many of these youngsters live lives of extreme hardship. However, there are issues with the simple solution of eliminating child labor to avoid such abuse. Abolishing dependency education is not a viable option. The state may encourage children to attend school by giving dietary supplements and improving the quality and value of education. To release a kid from labor, a struggling family's economic situation has to alter. Family subsidies may contribute to this assistance.

Even though most countries have child labor laws, many youngsters nonetheless work. This vulnerable status exposes them to exploitation. According to the International Labour Office, children

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work the longest hours and get the lowest pay among all workers. Employees face health risks and possible maltreatment in their workplace. Employers take advantage of children's docility, since they are unable to establish unions to improve working conditions. Such meddling stifles the growth of youth. The workplace circumstances do not promote good physical and mental growth. These youngsters are denied the basic delights of childhood and instead live a life of hardship. However, there are issues with the simple solution of eliminating child labor. First, there is no worldwide consensus to define child labor. Countries have distinct minimum age work limits and rules depending on the kind of employment. This makes the boundaries of child labour very murky. While most believe that a six-year-old is too young to work, it's questionable if a twelve-year-old is as well. It will be very difficult to eliminate child labor unless there is a worldwide agreement that can identify incidents. Some argue that labor may enhance a child's sociability, self-esteem, and training. The issue is not child labor itself, but the circumstances under which it occurs. Research is conducted to evaluate these claims.

This study examines urban child labor from a sociological perspective, including their profile, socio-demographic characteristics, employment conditions, and the prevalence of child abuse in specific categories in Navi Mumbai.

II. Objectives

1. To determine the socioeconomic characteristics of working children in certain groups in Navi Mumbai.
2. To investigate the nature, causes, and working conditions of child labor.
3. To investigate the nature and prevalence of child maltreatment in workplaces.
4. To propose policies and programs for the wellbeing of working children.

III. Methodology

The research is confined to certain occupational categories of child laborers within the Navi Mumbai area.

- 1) Motorized two-wheeler service units.
- 2) Restaurants and tea booths
- 3) Domestic service.

The unorganised work categories of child laborers in these divisions were determined. The final research included around 45 child laborers. This section provides information on the job, working conditions, duties, salaries, and employer-provided benefits. Questions about the different types of abuse in familial and workplace contexts were also raised. These included verbal and physical abuse. The research on child labor examines several factors of a kid's home, job, and attitudes towards both.

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The current research found three basic forms of abuse: verbal, physical, and psychological. Abuse actions were categorized and classified as follows.

1. Verbal abuse includes filthy language, harsh words, scolding, nagging, and threatening.
2. Physical abuse includes pushing, slapping, bruising, and physical abuse with an instrument.

IV. Study limitations.

Despite the investigator's best efforts, certain gaps may occur throughout the survey. The study's results are limited to the representative sample and cannot be applied to the whole population of child workers.

V. Profile of child labour

This section covers the age, religion, caste, education, and migration of child laborers. The bulk of working youngsters (66.7%) are between the ages of 12 and 14 years. These individuals often fall into this age category due to their ability to use instruments and do manual tasks. Approximately 33.3% of workers are between the ages of 5 and 11, contributing to the rising number of child laborers in economic activities. Working children of Hindu faith account for about 90% (89.6). Over half (54.3%) of child laborers are from the backward classes (B.C), with 27.3% being from the S.C. The population in the open category was not small (15.7), with the remainder belonging to S.T.

A significant proportion of child laborers, 23%, are illiterate. When asked whether child laborers would be willing to learn via non-formal or adult education programs without affecting their employment, they responded as follows. After a day of hard work, 53% acknowledged a lack of enthusiasm in continuing their study. Despite their willingness to learn, some youngsters believed that job and school were incompatible. Approximately 36% of the children relocated with their parents. Approximately 20% of youngsters moved to the city on their own to find work. In addition, friends (12%) and relatives (11%) assisted some youngsters in relocating to the city and finding employment. Approximately 21% of child laborers were not migrants.

5.1 Work-related characteristics of child laborers

Children are frequently forced to labor by their parents to augment their family's income or fulfill their personal wants. Parents may send their dropout children to work to keep them from becoming vagrants or staying at home. Due to the high expense of living in cities, children may need to start working at an early age. As a result, an inquiry was conducted to determine the causes for child employment. Child laborers were asked to prioritize their reasons for seeking work. Children choose job for several reasons, including poverty, supplementing income, lack of education, and parental preference. There were other reasons, too. More than half of youngsters choose to start working at a young age due to compulsion. Half of child laborers live within a 2-kilometer radius of their workplace. Data shows that 23% of youngsters have at least three years of job experience.

5.2 Working conditions for child laborers

In the unorganized sector, labor circumstances such as hours, lunch breaks, salary payment, and

working days follow a consistent pattern. The working conditions for the kid labours are as follows: Research indicates that 76.6% of child laborers work more than 8 hours each day, with some working up to 14 hours. As a result, they lack time with their siblings. Over half of working children (55%) receive monthly pay, while child laborers in two-wheeler service units receive daily wages. Domestic laborers, on the other hand, are paid as needed by their employers, and some do not receive pay at all.

Working days in a week: Children are often required to work throughout the week, with little opportunities for vacation depending on their employment. According to reports, 70% of youngsters do not get a weekly vacation. This is especially true in the domestic service industry, where employers may not be able to provide employees with vacation time.

Government-designated public holidays prevent 70% of youngsters from taking time off. Domestic workers are not permitted to quit work over the holidays, and they may work longer hours to avoid spending time with their families. Other issues: 80% of kid laborers eat their lunch only after 5 hours of work. In some situations, even after seven hours. It was reported that 56% of employees eat their lunch at work.

5.3 Difficulties and Prospects for Child Labourers

Child laborers often cite issues such as high stress, long hours, and health and safety risks. Other issues include working beyond one's physical and mental abilities, confrontations with bosses, and a small fraction reporting no difficulties with their employment.

The chances for child laborers are limited. Children are sometimes forced to labor and are worried about their future. When asked about their choices for better jobs with more compensation, the response was clear. A better employment offers superior possibilities and working circumstances. 60% want a better career and salary. Children in the domestic service industry are more likely to transfer employment due to restricted scope and lack of opportunities for advancement. The child laborers provided more specific information about their ambitions. They were given the option of continuing or seeking a comparable position. We gathered information on their intent to start a self-employed business or pursue other opportunities. When questioned about their future possibilities, 37% chose to stay in their current work due to a lack of knowledge and confidence. Approximately 23% of youngsters face a dark future and are unsure of their course.

5.4 Abuse of child laborers

1) Verbal abuse is using harsh words, threatening punishment, and pestering a youngster. Approximately 68% of child laborers face maltreatment at employment.

2) Employers and coworkers reprimanded or chastised child laborers.

3) Despite low pay, employers pressure child workers to maximize productivity.

4) Threat: Threats represent significant problems for child laborers. Employers often threaten juvenile laborers with firing if they do not do their duties adequately. Approximately 44% of child laborers are intimidated by their employers. Physical abuse in the workplace mostly involves

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slapping and shoving.

VI. Conclusion

In 2011, there were 43,54,247 child laborers in India, primarily in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh. However, no concrete measures have been implemented to protect these workers. This issue has been a source of concern for leaders, planners, social workers, and trade unions. Policymakers should prioritize addressing issues such as children's vulnerability, prejudice, lack of protection, loss of education, health, and development, and involvement in unlawful and risky labor. As children make up a significant portion of the population, it's important to prioritize their wellbeing. Child protection legislation must be reformed and suggested for execution. A well-protected youngster benefits the whole country. The government must protect the legal rights and interests of child laborers to provide a pleasant and tranquil existence for the future of the country.

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