

Analysis of Child Labor in India

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between child labor and NSDP, literacy rate, urban population and rural population. The data has been collected from census of India and economic survey for the period 1991, 2001 and 2011. The simple regression model has been run for the empirical estimation. It was found that child labor was positively affected by all the independent variables. Therefore, it is necessary for the government to make laws and implement those laws effectively to curb the problem of child labor.

Key Words: Child labor, NSDP, Total number of literate population, Urban population and rural population

INTRODUCTION

Child labor is a concrete display of violation of a range of rights of children and is recognized as a serious and complex problem of society in India. Working Children are denied from their right of survival, education, talents, mental and physical abilities and protection from abuse and neglect. The International Organization estimates that 182 million children in the world are child laborers, mostly living in developing countries [1]. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed by 191 countries. Despite this widespread condemnation, around one out of every eight children worldwide aged below (10-14) years participates in the labor market. The incidence of child labor is quite high in developing countries; it is approximately 26.2% in Africa, 12.8% in Asia and 9.8% in Latin America [2].

Any work, manual or mental, which is undertaken by a child, who is below 14 years of age, for monetary consideration, is called child labor. According to Homer Folks, the chairman of the US National Child Labor Committee, the term 'child labor' is generally used to refer, "any work by children that interfere with their full physical and mental development, the opportunities for a desirable minimum of education and of their needed recreation [3].

There is difference between child labor and child work. Traditional child work includes light natured activities,

in which the child indulges for a little time in a day. Moreover these activities don't interfere with schooling and other related activities of children. Child's work as physical and mental involvement in a family or social activity can be gradual initiation into adulthood and a positive element in the child's development. Light work properly structured and phased work is not child labor. Work which does not distract from other essential activities of children, such as leisure, play and education is not child labor. Such activities includes helping parents in household activities, light natured agriculture etc. These activities turn into child labor when they consume a lot of time of the children and start interfering with other activities. Child labor is such work which weakens the health and growth of children.

India is one of the countries in the Asian region where there is a significant use of child labor. In India child labor has been defined differently in various studies. According to the committee on child labor "child labor, however, can broadly be defined as that segment of child population which is working either paid or unpaid". The term child labor is commonly interpreted in two different ways: first, as an economic practice and second, as social evil." In the first context it signifies employment of children in gainful occupations with a view to adding to the total income of the family. In the second sense the child labor is now more commonly used. In assessing the nature and extent of social evil, it is necessary to take into account the character of the jobs on which children are engaged, the danger to which they are exposed and the opportunities of development of which they have been denied [4].

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The various studies show the cause of child labor. Sampa (1994) found the foremost cause of taking up employment by children was poverty and also deprivation of child from education and lowering aspirations, which indicates blunting of mental faculties [5]. Kaushik B and Hoang V P (1998) found that child labor as a mass phenomenon occurs not because of parental selfishness but because of the parent concern for the household survival [6]. They showed that

sending children out to work is an act of desperation on the part of the parents then it seems reasonable to expect that parents would not send their children if their own wages were high or employment prospects are better. Sudharshan C and Skyt N. H (1999) found that poverty is one of the main determinants of child labor; however other determinants like cost of school, attendance etc also causes child labor [7]. John C (2000) concluded that both poverty constraints as well as income opportunities both play an important role in the decision to send children to school or to work [8]. Naidu M.C and Dasaraths R K (2006) found the prevalence of child labor as one of the most important problems need to be taken care of especially in developing countries like India [9]. The study found that in many cases, the child labor is mainly necessitated by economics compulsion of parents. The main reason which enforces children to take up the employment is widespread unemployment and under employment among the adults, sharp growth of population.

Different studies on child labor revealed that the relationship of child labor with different variables, sectors etc. are mixed. Some studies have taken primary data, some have taken secondary data. Some scholars found that the foremost cause of taking up employment by the children is poverty. Some scholars found that there is a positive relationship between child labor force and a high fertility rate. On the supply side, children work because of poverty so as to get more income for betterment of the family. Normally, they are demanded for being cheap labor, they cannot form trade unions. The supply of child labor was mainly from the family where parents themselves are engaged in low wages. Some studies emphasized on the family income. Due to low income level they are unable to provide formal education and training to their children. In some cases ignorance of parents are also responsible for child labor. In this paper, an attempt has been made to measure statistically the relationship of child labor with net state domestic product (NSDP), total number of literate people, rural population and urban population.

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

The study is based on the secondary data. The data is used for the period 1991, 2001 and 2011. The data is collected from various sources. Census of India, Economic Survey has been used for data purpose. The

study has made use of single regression equation model.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X$$

Where, Y is child labor and dependent variable, X is an independent variable (NSDP, total number of literate people, rural population, and urban population).

Empirical Estimation

Table 1 represents the relationship between child labor and NSDP. It is observed that p- value comes out to be 0.023 for the year 1991. That is NSDP is significant at 5 percent level that is B value. In simple words B value comes out to be 88.777 which indicates that one crore increase in NSDP results in an increase in the number of child labor by 88.777. Hence on the basis of regression results null hypothesis is rejected and alternate is accepted. Similar result was found for the year 2001 and insignificant for 2011. The result is surprising as it is assumed that with the increase in NSDP, child labor must fall. But here positive relationship exists between child labor and NSDP.

This could be possible as with growing NSDP there is increase in informal sectors in the states which are giving rise to child labor. Migration is also one of the causes of the positive relationship between child labor and NSDP. Another reason could be increase in poverty and slums area due to rise in inflation leads to positive relationship between child labor and NSDP.

Table 1: Relationship between child labor and NSDP

Year 1991			
Model	B	t	p- value
Constant	26135.800	0.906	0.382
NSDP	88.777	2.614	0.023
Year 2001			
Constant	125320.045	.523	0.611
NSDP	21.628	2.983	0.011
Year 2011			
Constant	33993.738	1.110	0.289
NSDP	4.436	1.598	0.136

Note: Authors' calculation

Table 2, shows the relationship between child labor and total number of literates. It is observed that p values come out to be significant at 10 percent level for the year 1991 and 2001 while at 5 percent in the year 2011.

Here again positive relationship exists between the dependent variable and independent variable. The p value found to be significant at 10 percent for the year 1991 and 2001, while statistically significant at 5 percent for the year 2011. In other words, with the increase in total number of literates there is increase in child labor as well. This could be explained as there are many loopholes in the definition of literacy rate. With increase in literacy rate there is increase in the skilled labor which leads to more employment of children in unorganized sector where unskilled labor is used.

Table 2: Relationship between child labor and total number of literate people

Year 1991			
Model	B	t	p- value
Constant	396504.849	1.255	0.234
Total no. of literates	0.029	1.907	0.081
Year 2001			
Constant	309575.631	1.273	0.227
Total no. of literates	0.018	2.156	0.052
Year 2011			
Constant	63850.451	0.269	0.793
Total no. of literates	0.017	3.370	0.006

Note: Authors' calculation

Table 3 shows the relationship between child labor and rural population. It is observed that in this case also the p values are significant. Here p values are significant at 5 percent for the year 1991 and 2001, while statistically significant at 1 percent for the year 2011. Therefore, there exists a positive relationship between child labor and rural population.

Table 4, shows the relationship between child labor and urban population. The p values was found to be significant at 5 percent level for the year 1991 and 2001, while at 10 percent for the year 2011. Though child labor is decreasing in absolute terms but its impact is still visible. Therefore, through all the results discussion it is seen that there is increase in child labor. There is not a significant fall in child labor in any case. Therefore, it is very important to seek solution to curb this social evil.

Table 3: Relationship between child labor and Rural population

Year 1991			
Model	B	t	p- value
Constant	335052.587	1.320	0.212
Rural population	0.0171	2.730	0.018
Year 2001			
Constant	189235.224	0.995	0.334
Rural population	0.014	3.542	0.004
Year 2011			
Constant	64492.551	0.450	0.660
Rural population	0.015	5.873	.000

Note: Authors' calculation

Table 4: Relationship between child labor and Urban Population

Year 1991			
Model	B	t	p- value
Constant	266426.773	1.042	0.318
Urban population	0.063	2.981	0.011
Year 2001			
Constant	164156.723	0.758	0.463
Urban population	0.042	3.164	0.008
Year 2011			
Constant	366202.879	1.418	0.182
Urban population	0.023	1.857	0.088

Note: Authors' calculation

CONCLUSION & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The present study is based on the secondary data published by Census of India and Economics survey. The data has been collected for the year 1991, 2001, and 2011. The simple regression technique is used for analysis purpose. The empirical results are indicating that the changes in NSDP and literacy are not playing significant role in reducing the problem of child labor in India. On the other hand two remaining variables, rural and urban population are increasing the problem of child labor.

The institution of child labor is global phenomenon and is quite penetrating over time. However, it is more concentrated the third world countries (developing countries) as compared to the developed economies.

The problem of child labor is acute in developing countries. India with an ever increasing population has the highest number of working children. Though the government has been taking several steps to curb the problem of child labor, yet it is unable to get rid of it completely. It is found one of the unresolved problems of 21st century. The development of any nation highly depends upon the healthy treatment of its children. Following are the suggestions which could be adopted to combat the problem of child labor in India.

1. Equal distribution of income: from the analysis it is observed that though income is increasing in absolute terms still it is contributing significantly to child labor. So to reduce this problem it is necessary that increase in income should be coupled with equal distribution of income. The increased income should reach to maximum people so that standard of living could be increased for larger population. A big push is required to reduce the child labor.

2. Opportunity for employment: one of the reasons of child labor was lack of job opportunity amongst adult population and poverty. Therefore, steps should be taken to create job opportunities for adult population which will also curb the problem of poverty as both are interlinked. Though government has launched many poverty elimination programs but these are not effectively implemented. Hence it is very important to implement these programs effectively so that the beneficiaries are poor people.

3. Improvement in educational system: illiteracy is another very important cause of child labor. Article 45 states to provide free and compulsory education to all children until the complete the age of 14 years. The concept of free education means it should be free in real sense that is it should include the fees, the cost for books, stationary, transportation, meals etc. The quality of education should also be improved. Besides the theoretical knowledge the technical knowledge the technical knowledge should also be provided to the children so that they can enhance their technical skill and can attain better jobs in future. This will help to balance the cost of education of a child and returns from child labor. In this way our economy will move on the path of development.

4. Role of NGOs: non- government organization play a very important role in reducing child labor. Since these organizations work at grass root level, they can help to

enlighten the poor regarding the negative effects of child labor and positive effects of child education.

5. Law enforcement: the government of India has made various laws against child labor. But these laws will work only if effectively implemented. For this purpose the enforcement forces should be more active, vigilant and operational. The laws should be uniform for all the sections of the society. There should be no corruption; anybody found violating the law should be punished strictly by the law. This will help to reduce this social evil.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

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